

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

QAH

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is QAH My maiden name was QAH  
My date of birth is 1939. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I grew up in when it was still a small village. There were only 2000 inhabitants back then. I lived there until I got married. Then we bought a small house in Paisley. My parents had twelve children altogether. I was the fourth youngest. I went to primary school in and secondary school in. I left school when I was fifteen. I worked at a factory called JP Coates in Paisley for twelve years. I worked in the office. I only left when I got married.
3. I always wanted to work at Quarriers. I knew Quarriers because I used to ride my bike up around the village when I was growing up. I would tempt myself to go in and ask them for a job. There were Quarriers adverts on at Christmas. I would watch them with my mum. I would always tell her that one day I would work there.
4. When I was married the Quarriers advert came on again at Christmas time. It was the Director of Quarriers speaking towards the camera. I said to my husband that I would love to work there. He said "What's stopping you?" I said "Well I'm married now". said that he didn't mind. I couldn't believe my ears.

5. I applied speculatively to be a house parent at Quarriers. There hadn't been a job advertised. I waited for a month and I heard nothing from them. I thought "Oh well, maybe it's not meant to be". Then I got a phone call from Quarriers. They asked me for an interview. The director of Quarriers, Dr Davidson, interviewed me. I received a letter saying that there wasn't a cottage available to be a house parent immediately. They asked if I would come to work as a "reliever" until a cottage became available. The job was to "relieve" the existing house parents. They needed help with relief straight away.

### **Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir**

6. It was 1971 when I first arrived at Quarriers. I was 30 years old. I was living with my husband [REDACTED] in Paisley at the time. I would get the train through to Quarriers every day. To begin with [REDACTED] wanted to keep his other job just in case things didn't work out at Quarriers. I worked as a "reliever" from April until October when a cottage became available. After a short while my husband was interviewed and came to work at Quarriers with me.
7. [REDACTED] and I became house parents of Cottage 33. We took over from a couple called the Youngs. We met them and they brought us up to date on all of the children. They told us everything we needed to know. We took over the care and control of all of the children that were in Cottage 33. There were fourteen in total. It was mixed. The youngest was four and the oldest was fifteen. Some children were at Quarriers on a permanent basis and others were getting ready to go home.
8. There were forty cottages at Quarriers altogether. Three cottages were used for purposes other than looking after children. There was a school, sports centre, youth club and church.
9. There was a section of the village dedicated to caring for epileptic children and adults. They split the village into two parts called the "upper village" and the "lower village". The upper village was for all the epileptic adults. The lower village had two

cottages for epileptic children. One cottage was for boys the other for girls. There was also a special epileptic school. It was separate to the Quarriers school.

10. I had no formal qualifications when I applied to Quarriers but I had previous work experience with children. I had been a babysitter for the Manse in [REDACTED] so I had looked after other people's children. I had also run two brownie packs for 10 years. I felt that all the work I had to do with Brownies, how to train them, how to control them was all part of my training for Quarriers. I also went to the Girl Guide cadets. The Girl Guide cadets course was training on how to be a Girl Guide or Brownie leader. There was training on how to deal with children and how to discipline them. The course lasted two years with meetings once a week. I had to get a train through to the training school. After I had completed the course I became Brown Owl of the Brownie packs I was in charge of.
11. I did not receive any training prior to starting at Quarriers. I learnt on the job. To begin with when I was a "reliever" I would help the house parents and then take control when they had days off. I worked five days a week. When I became house mother I worked from 9 am until 10 pm every day except for one day off a week.

### **Routine at Quarriers, Bridge of Weir**

#### *Routine*

12. We were not instructed by Quarriers as to what the children's routine should be. We were left to make a routine ourselves. We were encouraged to make the cottage and routine as near to "home" as possible.

#### *Layout*

13. Cottage 33 was a large house. [REDACTED] and I lived in a double room upstairs. We were supposed to have two rooms, our double bedroom and a single bedroom. We gave the single room to one of the older children. We had a private sitting room too but we

just opened it up so that all of the children could use it. Where we were, the children were.

14. The children slept in dormitories. The cottage had large rooms. There were three or four beds in each dormitory. The beds were measured out to ensure that there was enough space for each child. There was plenty of room. The boys slept in separate dormitories to the girls.

#### *Children*

15. It was mostly long-term children that we got. When we arrived there were three families in Cottage 33 who were in preparation for going back home. We would get new children to fill the vacancies. We could accommodate fourteen children.
16. Some of the children would come in a "right mess". They would be socially challenging and find it difficult to socialise with other people. Sometimes they would be physically damaged. I would sit with them and chat to them.
17. When we got new children the local authority social worker would tell us a bit of background about the child. They would explain the parent situation and what had happened. They would give us a report about the child that we would put into the child's folder.
18. Towards the end of my time at Quarriers, I had to look after one epileptic girl who was pregnant. Her name was [REDACTED]. She had quite severe epilepsy and was having a baby. There were arrangements made between the girl's doctor in Dundee and Dr Minto. Dr Minto had asked if I would take [REDACTED] and look after her until the baby was two and a half. The baby was then to go back to [REDACTED] Grandmother who was a social worker. [REDACTED] was put under my care because she was pregnant and we had lots of vacancies at that time. I had no formal training on how to look after epileptic or pregnant children. However, information on how to appropriately look after children in these conditions was available if required. My husband [REDACTED] also

worked at workshops with residents in the epilepsy centre, so the house father in my unit did have formal epilepsy training.

### *Siblings*

19. We received sibling groups and always tried to keep them together if we could. We had training on the importance of keeping siblings together. There was only one occasion when we had to split a family up temporarily. That was only because the girl was difficult and needed to be settled before moving her back together with her brothers.

### *Staff*

20. Dr Davidson was in charge of Quarriers. He lived on the edge of the Village and spent most of his time in the offices. He was a medical doctor with a special interest in epilepsy. He would attend to the children if need be.
21. Mr Mortimer was the manager or "Superintendent" in charge of all staff.
22. There were three or four social workers. I can remember George Gill, Bill Dunbar and Joe Nicholson. The social workers were to support the house parents and children. The staff or children could go to speak to them if they were not happy.
23. There was also a medical doctor called Dr Morris for the children. There was a Matron McCreth too. Dr Minto arrived two years after I had started at Quarriers.
24. In our cottage we had one assistant to start with it. She worked in cottage 33 but didn't sleep there. She lived in her own cottage in the village. Her job was to assist me with the children and to help get them ready for school, get them fed or to go to bed. She would be referred to as "Aunty" by the children.

25. Quarriers increased the capacity for assistants from one to two. I don't know why. We were simply told by Quarriers that was happening. So we ended up with two assistants. Often Aunty's would leave after a short time. They were young and moved on. Most of them came from Balmulloch College. They could do a childcare course there. Our two assistants were fantastic and stayed with us for the whole time that we were at Quarriers. As they stayed for so long they knew the routine and what to do to help. We also had a domestic who would help with the cooking and cleaning.

#### *Chores*

26. All of the children had a chore. I thought it was important for them to be a part of the family. They didn't have to do much. I had two assistants and a domestic for most of the housework. The chores the children did were things like going to the store to collect potatoes before school or dropping off the wet-sheets outside the cottage. The adults always washed and dried the dishes.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

27. In the morning I would wake the children at 7.45 am. The staff and I would help to get the children dressed and ready for school. We would all have breakfast together and then the children would go to school. They would return to the cottage for dinner and for tea.
28. The children would go to bed at different times according to their age. Supper would be given to them at different times according to their bedtimes.

#### *Homework*

29. I liked the children to have their tea before doing their homework. Homework was normally reading or writing. The staff and I would help the children. We shared it out between us. After homework the children were free for the rest of the evening until bedtime.

*Mealtimes/Food*

30. As house mother I was responsible for cooking all of the meals for the children. I had help from our two assistants and the domestic. There would be breakfast, dinner and tea. All meals would be made in the cottage. It was a rule of Quarriers. Dinner was at 12 pm and tea was at 4.30 pm. The children could ask their friends from school to come for tea in the cottage.
31. I had no formal training in catering for large numbers. However, in my initial interview with Doctor Davidson, I was specifically asked about my capability to manage large families. I informed him that I came from a family of 12 children and therefore managing a large family unit was natural to me. Again, my background at Quarriers, in that I started as a relief parent in a unit, gave me a good insight into the proper methods of looking after a large number of children. At that time we didn't go out to buy food. Quarriers would buy all of the food in. Meat came from the butchers and the vegetables and bread were delivered. It was left up to us to cook for the children. We would all eat together except for supper which would be at different times according to the child's bed time.
32. The children were usually very good at eating their food. If they didn't like something I would find them something else or I would tell them to leave the bit that they didn't like. That is how I dealt with children not eating.

*Staff training*

33. Not long after we started we received in-service training from a man at Quarriers. I can't remember his name but his job was to train the staff. I think we had to go twice a week.
34. Bill Dunbar was in charge of training before Dr Minto arrived. Bill Dunbar would take us to Dumbarton with the social work department for a whole week. We would be trained about how to handle children. We were taught what we were allowed to do and what we were not allowed to do. I think I went to two of those training sessions.

35. When Dr Minto joined Quarriers he introduced whole weekend training sessions. Quarriers took all of us at different times to Peebles Hydro and Dunblane Hydro for full weekend training sessions. There would be external staff that came with us. They were a lot of senior social workers.
36. In terms of training for the emotional needs of the children, we learnt on the job over the years. Dealing with children with different emotional needs meant that we learnt from our experiences. If a child was very mixed up we would seek help from the social work department or the Quarriers psychologist.
37. Every month we would have a staff meeting. They were held in the church building. Mr Mortimer would take the meetings and they were for every member of staff. All of the house parents and assistants had to be there. We would be told about any changes in the law or anything that we needed to be aware of that had come from the local authority. If I had a problem with a child I would not raise it at the staff meeting. I would raise it separately with a social worker or Mr Mortimer. I only ever had to do that once.

#### *Social work department*

38. The in-house Quarriers social workers came if and when we needed them. It depended entirely on us needing them. They were in the village and would be there any time that we wanted. I think each cottage was allocated a social worker to call upon.
39. The local authority social workers were seldom around. We were lucky if we saw them once every six months.

#### *School*

40. Initially the children went to school within the Quarriers Village. It was a local authority school and not run by Quarriers staff. It had nothing to do with Quarriers.



I've never said this before but where Quarriers failed children was in education. The education was not good. There were very junior teachers and the children would act up. The local authority teachers couldn't cope with the children. The children ran riot. When a child sees that they can carry on and run riot they do.

41. The school would give us feedback and send for us if a child was playing up. It happened on two occasions that I can remember. The school phoned me as the house parent to come and collect a boy who they said was "going mad". I took him home to the cottage and had a chat with him. He went back to school and apologised to the teacher and that was that. The teachers had no training on how to deal with difficult children.
42. An incident where a child was sent home from school would be recorded on the child's file. It would detail my comments as house parent. I wouldn't be required to contact or report the incident to the social work department or anyone else. Unless it was something beyond us we would simply record it on the child's file.
43. Dr Minto came from a teaching background. He had been a head teacher so when he joined Quarriers he spoke to the Local Authority and got the children moved to outside schools.

#### *Trips/Holidays*

44. If there was anything on in the local vicinity or Paisley we would take the children. We would take them to the cinema, to shows or out for the day to Largs, Saltcoats or occasionally to Glasgow. Quarriers had three mini-buses that we could use to take the kids out on trips
45. We would take the children on a two week holiday every year. We would go in the Quarriers mini-bus. We didn't always stay at one of the other Quarriers homes. We took the children to Arbroath YMCA one year and they loved it so much we returned there for seven or eight years running. Even though there were alternatives available the children only wanted to go to Arbroath YMCA.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

46. Every child got a choice of what they wanted for Christmas. We got money to buy presents for the children and there were also donated presents to be shared out. We always had a Christmas dinner of turkey and all the trimmings. The children would play with their toys on Christmas day.
47. For birthdays every child had a birthday tea. We would all eat together and there would be presents and a cake. We would sing Happy Birthday.

*Visits/Inspections*

48. Occasionally parents would come to visit their children on a Saturday. The parent or the child's social worker would contact me to say that they were coming. Most of the children came from Glasgow so their parents didn't have that far to come.
49. The local authority social workers would come to see the children once a year. Sometimes they would come every six months depending on the child. They would come to see how things were going. They would take a few notes.
50. The local authority social work department would also do spot checks of Quarriers. They would arrive and pick a cottage at random. They would just come into the cottage. We wouldn't know that they were coming. It would happen once or twice a year. They would come and have a look at the house, the cutlery, the food. I don't know if they looked at the records. Mostly they arrived when the children were at school. I had one inspection at Cottage 33 by them.
51. There was a level of oversight in respect of each individual unit. This would come in the form of annual inspections by a member of Quarriers staff who checked the unit to ensure that the interior and furniture were meeting the standard expected and the needs of the children in the unit. We also had a ladies committee at Quarriers. Each cottage was given a particular lady visitor who came regularly, perhaps once every 2

or 3 months. Their role was to inspect the unit to ensure the unit was running smoothly. This included the checking of our routines and ensuring the house parents had the support required. If there had been a problem, I felt that Quarriers Social work would be there to assist me or the children. Quarriers were always there and around but there were no formal arrangements to inspect the cottages, other than what I've said, that I can remember.

### *Healthcare*

52. Dr Morris was the medical doctor for the children. Dr Davidson was a medical doctor too but he was mainly involved with the epileptic children. There was a matron based on site too. The children had a medical examination every year in the Elise Hospital. At some stage the procedure changed and the children had to have their medical examinations at the local doctor's office. Alternatively the local doctor would come to the cottage to do the children's check-ups. The children were all individually seen. I think legally it had to happen.
53. If there were any medical issues they would be dealt with by Matron McCreath. She was based in the Elise hospital. If a child had measles or an infectious disease I would take the child up to the hospital to prevent it from spreading to the other children. The Elise was open every day except Sunday.
54. No child ever died in our cottage from ill-health or otherwise. There was a little boy who had died in Cottage 33 before we arrived. His brother and sister were still there and we cared for them. They went home to their parents eventually.

### *Recreation*

55. The children were all part of one family and we would all play together. If the children wanted to go out of the cottage with each other they could. It was a big village and there was always something going on. There was a youth leader called QDY who was fantastic. The children could go to the sports centre or the youth club after

homework in the evening. Each cottage had one night that they could use the swimming pool.

*Personal folders/Records/Reports*

56. Each child had their own folder. The staff and I would note down any misdemeanour or information relevant to the child and keep it in their folder. We would note down who had visited the child, when the child had seen the doctor and how they were getting on. There were blank sheets in the folder that we would write on. The files were mostly used if there were problems. If the child was not well, if the parents had come or not come to visit.
57. The folders would be kept in a box within the cottage. The Youngs had shown us the folders and how to fill them in. I don't remember ever having to bank the files because the folders had become too full. We only wrote down short notes so you could get quite a lot on a single page. Only the cottage staff and house parents had access to the folders. The social workers probably did too but it was very seldom that the social work came. No one ever came to inspect or review the folders that I can remember. The folders were sent up to Head Office when the child left Quarriers.

*Bed Wetting*

58. Quarriers had their own laundry. If a child wet their bed the house parents would put the sheets into a special bag. I would ask one of the older children to drop the bag off at the end of the drive before breakfast. Sometimes children would get teased if they wet the bed. I deliberately asked an older child to deliver the laundry bag so that if anyone said anything the older child could honestly say "Not mine!". A van would collect the bag of sheets in the morning and return them in the evening.
59. We only had one child that wet the bed that I can recall. I think every cottage had at least one. That is why they had the wet-sheet van.

*Discipline*

60. If a child needed to be disciplined they would be spoken to by me. We would chat about the problem. If they were kicking off I would tell them to go to their room to calm down and I would speak to them later.
61. There was one boy who used to shout, bawl and scream when his parents came to visit him at the weekend. On one occasion he was shouting and bawling and grabbed a girl by the neck. I told him three times to go to his room but he wouldn't. He laughed saying "Ha ha ha I'm still here!". I called the social work department who were on call over the weekend. I spoke to Joe Nicholson and he came along to the cottage. Joe Nicholson told the boy to go to his room and the boy did. Joe left the cottage and the boy came back downstairs. He started laughing again saying "Ha ha ha look what that done". Eventually he said sorry and that was the end of it.

*Children leaving Quarriers*

62. When the children reached the age of sixteen they had the option of going to the Hostel within Quarriers village. Some of them stayed on with us, if they chose and we were happy to keep our children with us as long as they wanted. This was catered to by Quarriers. When the children were getting prepared to leave we would make plans with the local authority social work department. In some cases the children didn't want to leave. They wanted to stay with us. Some people within Quarriers thought that once a child reached the age of sixteen they should just go out to the Hostel. That wasn't my view. Most of the girls stayed on with us until they were married.
63. Our cottage was one of the last two cottages still running at Quarriers. We started off with fourteen children. Quarriers reduced it to twelve and then to eight children. When we left there was only one child left "in care", the others were all fostered by us. Dr Minto met the social work department and said "We have one cottage with one child. When that child leaves we will have to close". That was our cottage and

the child was [REDACTED] I think [REDACTED] was eighteen when she left us. She was the last person to leave Quarriers.

64. I think Quarriers re-thought closing down the cottages and in fact decided to continue using the cottages for large families.

#### **Allegations by [REDACTED]**

65. [REDACTED] was known as [REDACTED] when she was at Quarriers. When she married she became [REDACTED] and then she re-married and became [REDACTED]
66. We brought [REDACTED] up like she was our own child from the age of three until she was eighteen. She had come to us at the age of two or three. [REDACTED] had two sisters that were living with us. The social work department had gone through their records and discovered that [REDACTED] was their sister. The social work had apparently forgotten about [REDACTED] and left her in a homeopathic hospital. They asked us if we would take [REDACTED] and look after her and we said yes. We didn't have a vacancy but we took her in as an extra child.
67. I have been read certain allegations made by [REDACTED] that are contained in her statement to the Inquiry. My response to each allegation are as follows: [REDACTED] says in her statement to the inquiry *"For a long time, I believed that two of the girls in the house called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were my older sisters and all the others were my foster sisters and brothers. That's what I was told and, apart from sharing a room with my actual sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], I was kept away from them. I think it was because they had learning difficulties. I didn't have any kind of relationship with my sister [REDACTED] when I was there because I wasn't really allowed to. The other children all knew who they were related to"*
68. That is just not true. That is absolute nonsense. She even slept in the same room as her sisters, as per our policy of keeping siblings together. When we first found out



about <sup>QBX</sup> being in a homeopathic hospital, we took her older sister, to meet her there. <sup>QBX</sup> time in the hospital is referred to in the Social work report dated 1993 at the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph down on page 6. This report is in the bundle prepared for the inquiry. We always told her who her sisters were.

69. She also says *"I eventually found out and were my real sisters when social services gave me my birth certificate to show that I was related to them. Even after that, Mrs <sup>QAH</sup> used to say "But they're not really your sisters because you're different".*
70. That is absolute nonsense. <sup>QBX</sup> was always aware that they were her siblings, they shared the same surname. I know she's also made an allegation that her and her sisters were always treated differently because of who their mum was. I don't know how she can say that but also say that she didn't know who her sisters were.
71. <sup>QBX</sup> says *"My sisters and I were always the black sheep in the house and were treated differently from the others. I don't know why that was. It might have been because my birth mother was brought up in Quarriers and wasn't highly thought of. I think she caused a lot of trouble growing up and then turned out to be an alcoholic and abuser. I don't know if we were treated differently because of or because we were abused and damaged children. Perhaps the other children came from more respectable backgrounds. I just don't know"*
72. Nonsense. All I can say is nonsense. The photographs in the bundle show that she was treated the same as others.
73. She goes on to say *"Mrs <sup>QAH</sup> showed favouritism towards my foster sisters and She didn't allow me or to be bridesmaids or to go to my sister wedding. We were still at Quarriers at the time. She had a say because she paid for the wedding. was the bridesmaid and and went to it"*

74. Nonsense. [REDACTED] was a bridesmaid at [REDACTED] choice. It wasn't a big wedding. [REDACTED] and I paid for the wedding because they couldn't afford anything. [REDACTED] wanted [REDACTED] They were quite close and of similar age. The girls weren't there because nobody else was there. It was his mum and dad, [REDACTED] and I, his brother who was the best man and [REDACTED]. That was it.
75. QBX [REDACTED] says *"I wasn't allowed to get my ears pierced or have stylish clothing or hairstyles. My sisters and I were dressed in horrible clothes. When I was fifteen and sixteen my weekends consisted of singing in a choir, which I was forced to do. Others in the house got to wear fashionable clothing, have their hair cut stylishly and got the latest gadgets. I remember being so excited about getting a spiral perm when I was thirteen and I told everyone at school about it. I ended up with a hairdo like an old woman in Coronation Street, as Mrs QAH [REDACTED] wouldn't allow me to have it done. [REDACTED] was allowed to get it though. I remember bursting out crying when I saw my hair. Maybe Mrs QAH [REDACTED] got more money for looking after the others than she did for us."*
76. Quite honestly that is what it is all about. Money. It's what she thinks anyway. Everything you have said there I don't recognise at all.
77. She also says *"I don't remember anything special for my birthday – 13<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> – there was nothing. Other children were treated far better on their birthdays"*.
78. They all got a birthday tea and birthday cake. The pictures in the bundle show that there was birthday teas for children. There's also a photograph in there, under tab 2, of her smiling with her Christmas present one year. QBX [REDACTED] was never treated any differently.
79. QBX [REDACTED] says *"Mrs QAH [REDACTED] was quite an abusive and aggressive person. I was frightened of her. It's only when you grow up, you realise that the way she handled situations was not normal. I did realise she wasn't a nice person when I was younger but I didn't have anyone else"*.



80. That's awful.
81. **QBX** says *"If you didn't do what Mrs **QAH** wanted, you got sent to your bed. The lights were put out and no one was allowed to come to speak to you. You never got any warning. There was no counting to three as you do with your own children; it was just straight to bed. Other routine punishments were clips round the ear, wee nips, elbows to your body and wee slaps."*
82. That is not true. "Clips round the ear or wee slaps" never. Never once did I lift my hand. My first training with children was at the Girl Guide cadets. They taught me how to get attention from children and never once to lift your hand to a child. I babysat for the Minister and never once did I lift my hand. Never to any child. I have all these grandchildren. I wouldn't dream of it.
83. She says *"She used to smack me on the back of the head with the hairbrush if I said "Ouch" when she was brushing out a knot."*
84. If you look at the photographs you will see that **QBX** hardly had any hair at any time so she hardly had any hair to brush let alone anything else.
85. *"She would say "I'll give you something to cry about" and hit me. She was famous for that. She did that to my sisters aswell"*.
86. Lies. I'm sorry but that is all lies.
87. **QBX** says *"She hit me one time outside the C&A shop in Glasgow because I didn't want the skirt she was getting me."*
88. I don't remember ever taking her to C&A in Glasgow. It wasn't a shop I ever took the children. The cooperative in Paisley yes. That's where they got a lot of their clothes. But we never ever went to the C&A.

89. *She also says "It was a big horrible old fashioned thing. When she got me outside she took my pants down and smacked me on the bum because I'd made a scene in the shop. I was thirteen years old at the time. I think I reported it to social services but it's not in my records."*
90. That's lies. I'm sorry. How would anyone smack a thirteen year old in the street? The social work never spoke to me about her it simply didn't happen.
91. **QBX** says *"She smacked me hard across the face when I was fourteen for being cheeky. I reported that to social work but nothing happened"*.
92. Of course it didn't happen. I don't think the social worker even came to see her when she was fourteen. They never spoke to me.
93. *She also says "I remember running away four times to get away from her. I hid in the graveyard. I was gone for about two or three hours each time. There is nothing in my social work records about that"*
94. There is nothing in the social work records because it didn't happen. There was one time when she was sixteen. She told me that she was going out to see this boy that she had met earlier. The general director was coming down the avenue. He said to her "Where are you going?" and she told him that she was "just going out to meet some friends". She didn't come back that night until about 8 pm. I was worried sick. When she did come in I asked her where she had been. She said "Seeing a friend". That was it. She never ran away. She had nothing to run away from. She had everything.
95. **QBX** says *"Although Mrs **QAH** didn't know  personally from her time at Quarriers, she knew of her. She always used to say to me "You're going to turn out just like . You'll never be any better than her, you're a 'no-user'". A lot of other people at Quarriers said that to me too"*

96. Yes a lot of other people did say those things. I didn't know her mum. Her mum came up to see QBX maybe four times in all of her life. I never knew anything about her mum except that she was brought up in Quarriers. I only know that because one of the work men came in to the cottage and said "Oh no, that's [REDACTED] standing there looking at you". I said that I didn't know [REDACTED] and he said "You don't want to know her". At Thanksgiving every year former boys and girls used to come down to Quarriers. One woman said to me "Is that [REDACTED] daughter? I pity you. She was in our house and gave us a terrible time." That is all I know about [REDACTED]
97. She goes on to say *"When people say these things you start to believe them. She also used to say to me "No wonder your mother and father never wanted you." A lot of the things she said were really hurtful."*
98. Lies. Her mother was never visited. I think I can count on one hand the number of times [REDACTED] came to visit. There were people at Quarriers who knew that QBX mother was [REDACTED] who had also been a child at Quarriers. She left before I started working at Quarriers. I understand that people did used to say things about her mother, but my response was always to say "That is very unfair. I don't think you should say that about her mother, it could be very hurtful". That was my reaction. I thought it was unfair to say anything about her mother. She was only a wee girl and she didn't know her mother.
99. One time that [REDACTED] did visit that stands out in my mind was when she turned up with a black eye. Our boys were all whispering "Oooh she's got a black eye" and poor wee [REDACTED] said "She's only got one".
100. QBX says *"Mrs QAH thought of me as a troublemaker. It says it in my records that I was a problem child. That came from her not social services. It's in the records that I had to be told repeatedly what to do, that I was unpopular with the older children in the village because I meddled in everyone's business. I was only nine at the time. It seems from my school records that I was great there though."*



101. It's rubbish. I'm sorry, that's all I can think of to say. I never referred to her as a problem child. I knew that she was quite clever at School and we always supported her in that.
102. She says *"I tried to tell Mrs QAH for a long time that I was being bullied at school but she never believed me and used to say that I was talking rubbish"*.
103. That's not true. There was one time when I was sent for by the headmaster of the school. He said that QBX was getting into a bit of bother in school. He said that she was hanging around with a crowd and they were obviously not her "type". He said that she was "obviously in a different class from them". By "different class" I think he meant that she was copying the people that she was working with and getting herself into trouble at school. He never said what the trouble was. He said he knew what her upbringing was and that she was in the wrong company. He said that she had been with the school for a few years so I think she was about fifteen. I'm not sure.
104. QBX says *"I was bullied because of how I was dressed and wasn't allowed to do things after school. I used to have to give the bullies my dinner money and do their punishment exercises. I used to skip off school because of it."*
105. It's the first I've ever heard of it. The school got on to me when they thought they saw a change in her so I think they would have got in touch if she was dodging school. She was at Port Glasgow High School which was quite a strict school.
106. She says *"In third year a girl punched me when I was standing at the bus stop and I battered her. I had to learn to stick up for myself. I tried to explain to Mrs QAH that this was one of the people who had been bullying me for three years and she said "I don't care, you're such an embarrassment"*.
107. That's not true. I didn't know that QBX and this girl had fights or anything until two or three days later. It must have happened on one of my days off. If it had happened when I was there I would have known. I spoke to

and she said "I don't know what she was playing at". I think [REDACTED] got so fed up of listening to [REDACTED] she gave her back what she deserved. That's all I know about that.

108. She says *"She [Mrs QAH] was more interested in herself than me. I got put to bed and wasn't allowed out, which didn't really bother me as it meant I got out of doing church stuff for a week."*
109. [REDACTED] was desperate to go to church. Church stuff was when we all went to church together. They all loved church in those days. The minister there was all geared up for children. The place was packed to capacity upstairs and downstairs. People from Kilmacolm. People from Bridge of Weir. They all came and joined the morning service on Sundays. We all went. No one ever refused to go. The service was geared around them. They all quite enjoyed the church services.
110. [REDACTED] says *"I remember sneaking a pair of Bermuda shorts into my bag to wear to school on a roasting hot day. Everyone in my year was wearing them at the time and I had to wear a skirt which came down to my ankles. I thought I would be the bee's knees that day and no one would bully me because I would be wearing the same as everybody else. Mrs QAH knew what I had done and rather than coming to me she went to the headmaster and I was called out of class to his office. There she was sitting in his office with my school skirt, which she made me put on. When I got home that day she went on about me being an embarrassment to her and how I was going to end like my mother"*.
111. Where did she get them from? Its lies. I can't accept this. I never lifted my hand to any of those children in all my life.
112. She also says *"I remember reporting to social services that Mrs QAH had smacked me across the face when I was fourteen."*
113. I didn't do it. I just didn't do it.

114. She goes on to say *"Other people had already made reports about her. It's in my records. I don't know who I spoke to. They spoke to her but nothing happened. I believe some of the younger generation after me reported her too but nothing was done either. Mrs QAH is very manipulative and could convince people that others were liars. People thought she was a good Christian woman. Also, I had been made out to be a problem child who caused trouble so that's how she could get around it. But why was I a problem child? Did anyone ever think about that? Mrs QAH would make me out to be bad so she could look good."*
115. Unbelievable. Absolutely unbelievable. I always knew that she could make up stories but I never thought they were as evil as that.
116. QBX goes on to say *"My records show that I reported Mrs QAH again to social services in 1990. I was seventeen."*
117. A man came to the door one day. He said that he was from social work and wanted to see where QBX slept, what room she had, to look at her clothes etc. I had to show him her bedroom where she slept. He said it was fine and that "It was time she was out". I just looked at him and thought "Oh well". Nothing else was said.
118. I then got a phonecall from the social work in Renfrew to come down to see them and to take QBX with me. I didn't know what I was coming for. By this time QBX had gone to Renfrew and met this guy who beat her up on several occasions. She wouldn't listen to any advice to not go near him. The social worker was asking about her and when she was going back home. He asked if I would take her back home with me. I said "Yes but only if she gives up the boyfriend. I'm not bringing her home if that guy is beating her up". The social worker spoke to her in front of me and said QBX if he's done it once he will do it again. Why are you allowing it?". She argued with him. I said QBX I'm sorry dear, your room is there, your bed is there but I am not entertaining that man". And that was it. That finished it.

119. QBX [REDACTED] stayed in Renfrew for years after that. She called me and said that she had met a nice man. He was older but really nice. She said that she had gone to stay with him. A few months later I got a phone call from her at two o'clock in the morning. She was screaming and crying her eyes out. I said "What's wrong with you now QBX [REDACTED]?" She said "[REDACTED] has just battered me. We were at this pub and his ex-wife was there. He sat and talked to her all night and left me. So I left them. I took the keys and locked the door. I wouldn't let them in. At two o'clock in the morning he came back to his house and battered the door until he got in". I think he obviously beat her up. So she phoned me. I said QBX [REDACTED] it's two o'clock in the morning. All I can do is phone the police and let them know". She did phone the police. They asked her where she stayed. She wasn't coming to Quarriers. She said that she had a brother in Renfrew. It wasn't her brother. It was one of my oldest boys that she had grown up with. The police turned up on his neighbours doorstep at two o'clock in the morning. He was furious. He said "Don't you EVER come near me again". That was it.
120. QBX [REDACTED] also says *"I phoned and told them that she'd hit me and been saying hurtful things to me about [REDACTED] I don't remember anything being done about that"*.
121. It's lies. It wasn't anything to do with [REDACTED] It was to do with this man.
122. She says *"My time in care was just awful. I was mentally and emotionally abused and I don't think it is ever going to leave my head. It is always going to be stuck there"*.
123. I don't know what to say to that. I honestly don't know what to say. The only thing I can say is it's not true. I just can't understand, it just doesn't make sense, if she says that she was afraid of me and couldn't speak to me, why did she stay with us for so long and then continue to visit us with her husbands and children for years afterwards. All the family, including myself, attended the baptism of her son [REDACTED] who is now about 11.

### **Abuse at Quarriers, Bridge of Weir**

124. There were a number of allegations made against Quarriers in the 1990's. I was only aware of the allegations against John Porteous. All of the village was talking about it. All of the youngsters in his cottage were talking about him being in court. I was never spoken to by the police about any allegations involving Quarriers.
125. I never saw anything resembling abuse at Quarriers. The Village is a big place. Our cottage was right at the end part of the village. We had one neighbour on either side. They were big houses with big gardens. Anything could have gone on anywhere and we wouldn't have seen. I wasn't given any training on what to look out for but no, I never ever saw anything. If I had thought some form of abuse was going on I would have told the social work department or Joe Mortimer.
126. Everyone was too busy looking after their own children. To begin with I had fourteen children and in the end we had eight of them. The children are much more demanding now than they were then.

### **Leaving Quarriers**

127. By the time we left I felt that Quarriers was changing. It was becoming more institutionalised. The cottages were not family units anymore. The local authority wasn't putting so many children into care. They were fostering them out instead. Gradually more and more cottages were closed. I thought it was time to go.
128. A social worker from the local authority called Maureen had spoken to me about a family in Glasgow. The mother wasn't interested in her children. Maureen was trying to find foster parents for them. There were five siblings and they were going to have to be split up. Maureen asked me what I thought. The youngest was two years old and the oldest was fourteen. I thought it was a shame to split them up. [REDACTED] and I had already decided that we were leaving Quarriers and a house had come on the market that we were interested in. The house was in [REDACTED]



129. We had several meetings in Glasgow with Maureen and the children. We had bought the house and asked the children to come and help us with the bedrooms etc. The meetings in Glasgow continued. On the day that we finally moved into the house we found out that we were allowed to foster the children. The kids were all jumping for joy. We still have all of the children in our lives. All except one of them is married.

## Records

130. I have shown the Inquiry a folder containing a number of documents and photographs that I would like to be included as part of my evidence. The folder index contains seven items.
131. There is a social work assessment report by Maureen Corrance dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1993. She was the local authority social worker that asked if [REDACTED] and I would foster a family of five children as we left Quarriers. On page 6 paragraph 4 there is a section that details my relationship with [REDACTED] QBX [REDACTED] It states:
132. *QBX [REDACTED] aged twenty, younger sister of QAH [REDACTED] left the applicants care about a year ago. She came to them at the age of three, already very damaged having spent a long period forgotten in a children's hospital in Glasgow. Although a bright girl, QBX [REDACTED] seemed to gravitate to friends and company where she ended up having difficulties. Prior to her leaving home she spent most weekends living with a boyfriend and his family who seemed to use her and obtain money from her. QBX [REDACTED] insisted that she wanted her own tenancy and she left to live with [REDACTED] This caused both QAH [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] a lot of pain and they continue to be very anxious about her. QBX [REDACTED] will telephone QAH [REDACTED] daily and QAH [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] support her with financial help; they buy her clothes and often take her for days out and she is included in the family. QAH [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] always emphasise the positives about QBX [REDACTED] her generosity towards the younger children; and her sense of spirit and fun. They have made a conscious painful decision not to ask her to return home*

*when they move house. They do not believe that she would settle and feel that it is too late for a return home but they will always support her and offer help."*

133. I have shown the inquiry some photographs of [REDACTED] QBX
134. The first photograph is of a Christmas when we were all together. We are all sitting at the table having Christmas dinner. At the bottom right hand side of the photograph is [REDACTED] QBX Her head is looking up the table. One of my assistants is sitting next to her on one side and one of my boys is sitting next to her on the other side.
135. There is a second photograph of another Christmas. The boys are not there. [REDACTED] QBX is in the corner sat next to me. I was at the head of the table and she always came to sit next to me.
136. There is a picture of six children. On the bottom left hand side of the photograph is a girl wearing glasses. That is [REDACTED] QBX Behind her is her big sister [REDACTED]. The girl in the other corner in black and red is [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is also in the photo along with a wee boy and my niece.
137. There is a picture of two girls and on the left hand side is a girl in brownies uniform. That is [REDACTED] QBX.
138. There is a photograph from our oldest boy's wedding. [REDACTED] QBX is the young girl on the left hand side wearing glasses.
139. There is another wedding photograph of my daughter's wedding with [REDACTED] QBX [REDACTED] QBX as a bridesmaid.
140. There is a photograph of us all on an outing somewhere. [REDACTED] QBX is the one holding a baby. [REDACTED] QBX sister [REDACTED] is in black and white. Her sister [REDACTED] is on the left hand side wearing a tracksuit.

141. There is a photograph of <sup>QBX</sup> [REDACTED] wearing her school uniform. There is also a photograph of her in her primary school uniform. There is also a photograph of a her going to nursery.
142. There are some extra black and white photographs of children dressed up as firemen and policemen. It was for the fancy dress parade in the summer. <sup>QBX</sup> [REDACTED] <sup>QBX</sup> [REDACTED] and her sister's [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are all there.
143. There are also two letters from [REDACTED]. She was the mother of one of the first family's we looked after at Quarriers. She wrote to us after her children had returned to her care. One letter is dated 16<sup>th</sup> January 1974 and the other is dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 1980.
144. There is also a loose newspaper article clipping from Scotland on Sunday on the [REDACTED]. It is entitled "[REDACTED]". The article is about [REDACTED] and I and there is a photograph of me with six children. On the left hand side of the photograph going up the stairs, second on the left, is a girl in glasses. That is <sup>QBX</sup> [REDACTED]. She is next to her sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
145. I am still in possession of these items and would be able to provide them to the Inquiry.

### **Final Statement**

146. I could give the details of 6 girls and 6 boys who lived in Cottage 33 with <sup>QBX</sup> [REDACTED]. They are all married and have their own families. They will always be grateful for the care they received from [REDACTED] and I. They see us as their parents and their children as our grandchildren. It has been very difficult to hide these allegation from them. As a woman who is due to be 80 in March in poor health, I now suffer from extreme anxiety and have required a prescription for sleep medication from my GP because of this situation. I am not sure of my ability to cope should I be asked to give evidence to the Inquiry.

**Other information**

147. [REDACTED] and I fostered five boys and nine girls. Between them we have 23 grandchildren. They all still come to see us and are very much part of our family so I couldn't have been all that bad could I?
148. [REDACTED] who is the daughter of [REDACTED], who we discussed at paragraph 18 of this statement, still lives with [REDACTED] and me. We took her home from the hospital after [REDACTED] gave birth. She's lived with us for the best part of 30 years.
1. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

QAH

Signed

Dated 8. 10. 18