

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GDP

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is GDP although I am better known as GDP. My date of birth is 1962. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Dundee and spent most of my young life there. My parents were and and both are still alive. I have three sisters called , the oldest, and . I am the second oldest.
3. I don't recall much of my early childhood other than the occasions when we would all be packed into dad's car and went to a caravan in Kinkell Braes in St Andrew's. I wouldn't say I had a close relationship with my dad which was maybe mainly due to the shame I brought to the door through getting into trouble by doing silly things like driving offences and stealing cars.
4. I attended St Vincent's Primary and then St Xavier's Secondary Schools. I had no problems at St Vincent's but when I went to St Xavier's I was constantly bullied which lead to me skipping school a lot which lead to me getting chastised by my parents.
5. Due to the fact that I was skipping school I ended up in front of the children's panel which may have been the first time my family had contact with the social services. However, I have since learned that social work may have been involved earlier due to financial problems my parents had though I can't be sure of this.

6. The trouble I was getting into certainly didn't help things and that was my fault. The first time I went to a children's panel was about a year after I started secondary school. Again, this was due to the fact that I was skipping school because I was getting bullied so much.
7. When I was getting bullied, I was trying to reach out to people but there was nobody I could speak to and, because I was skipping school, the children's panel in Dundee put me into Burnside Detention Centre, Dundee in 1976. It's possible I had been in that establishment once before but I'm not sure. I'm only suggesting that from records that I've been told about but not read.

Burnside Detention Centre, Dundee

8. I can't remember for sure if it was my mum and dad or a social worker who first took me to Burnside. I don't recall much about my first day other than I just remember that when I first arrived I was scared because I didn't know what I was walking into. I had a fear that bullying was going to happen all over again but I knew I had no choice but to go.
9. The place had about fifty or sixty boys and girls aged from about eleven up to fifteen. I think there were between six and twelve members of staff who rotated duties. The only member of staff I recall was Mr Pendrick who was a nice old man but I'm not sure what his job there was. The only other member of staff I recall was the chef called **GTV**. His second name might have been **GTV**. I think the building had two levels but I don't remember if it was dorms or single rooms.

Routine at Burnside Detention Centre, Dundee

10. We would get up at about 7:30/8:00 am though I don't recall how we were woken up. I think we then got washed or showered then got dressed, made our bed then went downstairs for breakfast. We all ate in the dining room, maybe four to a table.

11. After breakfast we went to classes until about 3:00 pm when we had recreation time. We would then have a wash before tea followed by more recreation time before being sent to bed at about 9:00 pm. I don't recall if staff supervised us at night but they would have been in the general vicinity.

Mealtimes/Food

12. I have no special or fond memories of the food in Burnside. We all ate the same thing. I don't recall feeling I was underfed. If you didn't eat something you simply went hungry until you got a biscuit or bit of cake at night. There was no forced feeding or anything like that. There was no punishment if you didn't eat something.

Washing/bathing

13. I recall a line of basins and I think there were a couple of showers. Staff would be on hand but only to make sure there was no trouble or anybody stepping out of line. I wouldn't say they were watching just for the sake of watching us.

Leisure time

14. We had a big room which had a pool table and a table-tennis table and I think we had a TV.

Trips and holidays

15. I have no recollection of us ever being taken out on a day trip.

School

16. I recall having to do English and maths or arithmetic but I don't remember if teachers came into Burnside from the Council or if they were part of the staff.

Healthcare

17. There was a nurse in the home but I think we went outside the home if we needed a dentist. I don't think I was there long enough to get regular check-ups.

Birthdays and Christmas

18. I think I got home from Burnside for Christmas, which makes me think I was there more than once and, I think for your birthday, you got to see your family but the home itself didn't celebrate your birthday.

Visits/Inspections

19. I think my mum and dad visited me a couple of times but I can't be sure about that. I couldn't phone home but I think you could get a member of staff to phone home for you to see if you were getting a visit from them. I don't recall writing many letters when I was in residential homes.
20. I know some people came in to inspect the place but, if memory serves me right, it was only staff that they ever spoke to.

Personal possessions

21. There must have been a wardrobe or small cupboard in our rooms for keeping things in but I don't remember having much in the way of possessions.

Running away

22. I think I did run away a couple of times and it was the police who brought me back. I always went on my own but I don't think I ever went too far and when the police asked me why I had run away I just told them that I didn't like the place. I would never have gone into any great detail as I have never liked the police and they would never have believed me anyway.

Abuse at Burnside Detention Centre, Dundee

23. Now and again some kids would be fighting and they would get a clout over the head. I got the odd clout for doing things I shouldn't have been doing but I don't have any issue with that and never suffered any injuries as a result of it. This was common practise, a smack over the back of the head if you did something wrong. I couldn't tell you the names of those who dished out the smacks.
24. There was a lot of bullying amongst the kids themselves including boys and girls and it was typical of the sort of things that went on in most schools in those days. If you didn't stick up for yourself then it got worse but I have never been a person who got involved in violence.
25. [GTV] was a cook in Burnside and a member of staff. I don't recall his surname but it was something like [GTV]. In 2017 he was sentenced to two years for child abuse. I know this because I traced somebody on facebook who said that not only had her husband been in Burnside but that he had also been abused by the cook and it was she who told me he had been sentenced. All I know is that she goes by the name of [GTV]. [GTV] is 85 years old now and [GTV] sent me a picture of him and he certainly looks like the [GTV] that worked in the kitchen at Burnside though I would really have to see younger photos of him to confirm his identity.
26. [GTV] was a heavy set man who used his weight to push me about in the kitchen and grope me on my private parts. I can't say how often he did this but it was several times. I clearly remember his sweat and bad breath. There was nothing I could do to stop him and nobody I could go to tell. You were always told to keep your mouth shut. The abuse always happened in the kitchen where I think I was allocated to work.
27. I didn't see him abuse others but I've recently heard from the woman [GTV] via Facebook, that her husband was abused by him. Another woman called [GTV] or [GTV] recently told me that she was also in Burnside and was abused there though she didn't say who by. [GTV] was a woman whose daughter I had a relationship with and who I got into a conversation with one day and it turned out she had also been in

Burnside. I didn't hear others at the time talking about being abused by him but that would never have been the sort of thing we would have spoken about.

28. A lot of the staff in Burnside were good, strict but fair, but others were heavy handed. **GTV** was the only one who abused me sexually.

Leaving Burnside Detention Centre, Dundee

29. I left Burnside after a few months and went home. However the bullying at school continued so I started skipping school again. My recollection is that, because of this, I got sent back to a children's panel who, if my memory is correct, gave me a choice of going back to school or going to a List D School. Because of the bullying I chose to go to a List D School. This would have been in 1977.

St John's List D School, Springboig

30. I was taken there by a social worker and I recall going up a drive-way through red brick pillars into a courtyard. It was a big building with at least two levels and was square shaped with the courtyard in the centre. On the lower levels were offices and classrooms with dorms on the upper floor.
31. I heard that St John's was run by Brothers or monks but I learned later that it was run by Glasgow District Council or Strathclyde. It was an all-boys school with about sixty boys aged between fifteen and eighteen. I would say there were about twenty staff covering the day and night shifts.
32. I was in a dorm with more than a dozen boys which was open-planned with beds down each wall. No staff slept in the dorm though staff had an office they used at night and I only recall staff coming into the dorm if there was a discipline problem in the dorm.

Routine at St John's List D School, Springboig

33. I don't remember how we were awoken but we would get up, get washed and go for breakfast. We would then go to school on the premises where there would be a break at lunchtime and in the afternoon we would go back to school or do some jobs that would be allocated to us like gardening or brushing up the courtyard. These jobs weren't necessarily supervised as you were trusted just to get on with things when you worked outside.
34. We would have a meal in the evening followed by recreation which included things like playing pool or table tennis or watching TV. There was also a separate recreation room as I'm sure they were two such rooms. After recreation we would go to bed after having a cup of tea.

Washing

35. There was a room with sinks on both sides of the wall. At the end of this room were two doors for going in and out of the showers which had cubicles. You got a shower every day though I don't recall how they coordinated that though there were at least nine or ten showers there. If you had been working outside you could ask permission to take a shower.

Food

36. I remember that we got mince and tatties a lot as well as stews and pies and things like that. The food was nothing spectacular and I don't recall ever going hungry. I don't recall any problem with the food.

Health

37. I think there was a doctor or a nurse there who you would see if there was actually something wrong with you. You wouldn't see them every day. The same would happen with dentists. If you had toothache they organised for you to see one.

Schooling

38. I think the teachers were brought in by Glasgow District Council. I would say it was standard education and on par with what you would have got in an outside high school. I eventually left school without any qualifications. We also worked in various workshops on things like engineering, electrics and woodwork in buildings away from the main area and I think I learned some painting and decorating.

Chores

39. We did things like gardening, brushing the courtyard, mopping the floors and cleaning the walls. You also helped out in the kitchens although I don't remember much about that. The chores were done on a rota and you were normally left to get on with it.

Birthdays/Christmas

40. I think I might have got home for Christmas but I'm not sure. For our birthdays there might have been a cake or some juice laid on but I have no real recollection of birthdays being celebrated.

Trips

41. We went to East Kilbride swimming baths in a mini-bus every now and again. This would be a privilege for those who behaved themselves. We didn't travel much in the way of outside sports but we played a lot of football in the courtyard and the various grounds which were massive.

Visits

42. I think my mum came to see me once when I was in a play as Pontius Pilate. This was possibly because I would get home on leave some weekends. I don't recall my dad being there. I think the fact they had to travel all the way from Dundee made it difficult

for them to travel to visit me as they didn't have the money to make such journeys often.

43. I honestly don't know if there were any official inspectors who came in to look at the place but, if there was, it's unlikely we would have known about it.

Running away

44. I didn't run away as such but sometimes I wouldn't return after leave and would walk the streets. The police would pick me up and take me to Burnside and then I would be transferred back to St John's. I think one of the main reasons they sent me to a List D School in Glasgow rather than Dundee was to make it more difficult for me to run away given the distance I would have had to travel back to Dundee.

Abuse at St John's List D School, Springboig

45. You would get a clout over the head if you stepped out of line from whatever member of staff who was supervising. You would also get the strap over the hands from the headmaster which I got a couple of times. I heard from other boys that they also gave out the cane but I never got that. I would assume they kept a record of such punishment. I can't recall what was different in what you did that got you the strap rather than a clout over the head, maybe when you spoke back to the staff.
46. Within about a week of arriving at St John's I was being sexually abused by other boys in the place. They worked as a group, in packs. There were four or five of them and it would be any two or three at a time.
47. I was attacked in the showers, the toilet cubicles and in the dorm and it was always when there were no staff about. If I was in a shower they would contain me in the cubicle and force me to do a sex act on whoever was standing in front of me while I was on my knees. On at least one occasion I was in the toilet when they kicked in the door and, again, I had to perform a sex act on whoever was standing in front of me.

48. There were numerous times when they would force me down on the bed, hold me down and commit sex acts on me putting things where they shouldn't. I find it difficult to talk about these things and I really don't want to go into the detail of what they did. It was always the same guys but I don't know their names.
49. I heard the same sort of things happening to others and it was always those who couldn't stick up for themselves or had no friends. You could hear them abusing others in the dorm at night, you couldn't shut it out. Coming from Dundee I had no friends and was a loner. All of the lads inflicting this abuse were from Glasgow and in their mid-teens. If you shouted out or didn't comply then you got a kicking, literally battered.
50. The abuse happened throughout my time in St John's and happened whenever they got the opportunity to get me on my own. It happened too often for me to put an actual number to it and I would struggle to describe the frequency as it just happened whenever they could do it.
51. I climbed up on the roof a couple of times and up onto the water tower because of the abuse. I was having bad thoughts and I just wanted to get away from people and be on my own and I thought that higher up was the only place I could do that. When I was on the water tower the police were called and they talked me down.
52. I also got threatened by the electrical engineer who threatened to put electrodes on my testicles several times. I still don't understand why he did this and I don't know if he threatened others. I don't recall his name or if he was a member of staff. He never actually did this to me but the other kids used to think it was a great joke.
53. The only other abuse was the regular bullying that went on, mainly because I wasn't from the area as the others were. This would involve me being ridiculed or assaulted by somebody for no reason whatsoever. I don't have one good memory about my time in St John's List D School.

Leaving St John's List D School, Springboig

54. I left St John's List D School after about eighteen months.

Life after being in care

55. After leaving St John's I moved back to Dundee before going down to London for a couple of years and eventually spent most of my life doing one driving job or another. I ran a couple of taxis with two cars on the road and also did stints as a delivery driver. I got my driving licence after only three lessons and drove lorries doing distributions for a number of years. I got married when I was thirty and we were together for about eleven years eventually divorcing about 2005. We didn't have any children.

Impact

56. The first thing I did after leaving St John's, before I got a train back to Dundee, was to buy a bottle of whisky and I have been drinking ever since. I might stay off it for a few days but then I get the shakes, the sweats, and can't sleep and have to go back on it. I haven't had a relationship for ten years and am no longer interested in one. I have no kids of my own but love my all sister's children.
57. I wasn't close to my dad when I was younger but I've got closer to him as I've got older and he was proud when I set up my own business. I remember when I got married I could see the pride in his eyes.
58. I had coped throughout my life with what happened in care through drinking. However, when I started getting flashbacks I sought help. The flashbacks started when I was a lorry driver and started getting bullied by my boss and it brought back what happened to me as a youngster.

59. I was having to do crazy hours and driving 300 miles a day wasn't unusual. I would be getting told to do this and told to do that and If I didn't I wouldn't have a job. It got to the point that I even thought about taking my own life. I've always hated people in power who abuse their position.
60. Probably because of what happened in my time in care I hate confrontation. Recently I was doing voluntary work in a food bank but after a confrontation with this one man I felt I couldn't do it anymore.

Reporting of Abuse

61. The first time I ever spoke to anybody about what happened to me in care was in May or June 2016 when I spoke to my solicitor who is called George and worked with Lawsons of Dundee. I initially spoke to him about the problems I was having with the lorry firm I worked with that lead to me losing my job. This was after me refusing to drive ludicrous and dangerous hours. The conversation lead to us talking about my time in residential homes and that was when George recommended that I should speak to Thomsons and Co. I have never reported anything to the police.

Records

62. A man called Daniel Cannings, a solicitor with Thomsons, has helped me with my records. He says that although he has a substantial amount of reports there is still a lot missing. He has gathered a lot of social work reports and has put a lengthy 400 page report together though I have not yet read this on his advice and as I don't quite feel ready to do so. He also recommended that, when I do eventually read it, I should not be on my own.

Counselling

63. I saw a psychiatrist called Jenny Breen for roughly six months. I'm not sure when that was but it was once every two weeks. I was seeing her about 2017/2018 and was

brought on by the trouble I was having at work. We went into my drinking and why I was drinking and that's what brought up my time in care.

64. Just over a year ago I was diagnosed with PTSD by Roger Blake a psychiatrist. However, the last psychiatrist I dealt with last year I saw only once and his treatment of me was disgraceful as he kept cancelling appointments. Even the CPNs said his behaviour was dreadful. The only thing he said to me was to keep taking my tablets and that was after waiting for about two hours in his waiting room.
65. I was assessed by the Tayside unit for alcohol counselling and also had a mental health nurse who visited me at home. The doctors I worked with were good and kept an eye on me to make sure I kept appointments but I have since been signed off by them. The last time I saw anybody in a psychiatric situation was back about February 2020. I still spend a lot of time in the flat on my own. My sister recently recommended I get myself a dog which I did and I hope will help me get out and about.

Lessons to be Learned

66. There has to be more and stricter investigation into the background of staff in such places, a more in depth investigation. There wouldn't have been CCTV in those days but such things should be used to catch perpetrators and members of staff who abuse their position and children in their care. Things shouldn't be swept under the carpet.

Hopes for the Inquiry

67. Hopefully people found guilty of abusing children will be brought to account and, regardless of their age and how long ago it happened, be prosecuted. If it can improve things for children staying in such establishments it can only be for the good.

68. 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.

GDP [Redacted]

Signed GDP [Redacted]

Dated. GDP [Redacted] 16/10/00