

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HPJ

Support person present: No

1. My name is HPJ. My date of birth is 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Falkirk and my parents were and . Both were working and my mother was a cleaner. I have three brothers and one sister. is the oldest and is about six years older than me. There is about a year between each of the brothers and in age order it is , me and is the youngest.
3. I can't remember much about life before I went to Carmuir's primary school in Camelon. When I was about eight or nine years old I started to run away from school a lot to sniff glue. This started because I was unhappy living with my dad as he was a tyrant. He was a very physical man. If I got into trouble he was violent to me. I was in a lot of trouble for sniffing glue, breaking into places and running away from home because I didn't want to be there. I wasn't happy at home and I never was when I was there.
4. I think if it hadn't been for being at my father's I might not have ended up in a List D school. I wasn't happy. I hated my father, he beat me all the time. I wasn't an angel but I didn't deserve to get the beatings I got but that was what he did. That was what I got. My father beat me black and blue with a belt whilst my mother sat and watched. I changed that with my weans and I never ever hit them.

5. I wasn't getting any help or support from anybody. I had a social worker but he was just as bad as the rest of them. I think social services got involved when I was about nine or ten. When I was younger I wouldn't talk to anybody. If I didn't want to talk to them I wouldn't, I would just be defiant.
6. The social worker was called IEA [REDACTED] and I wouldn't talk to him as I didn't take to him at all. He used to slap me about and everything. He was the first one that put me away. I probably deserved to get put away with the things I did and I had no qualms about that because I wasn't an angel but I wasn't happy. I was never happy in life when I was younger.
7. I went to the Falkirk social work department office just behind Brockville Football Stadium to see him. He would be talking to me and I would ignore him so he would fling things at me, slap me on the face, the back of the head and everything. I had no time for him and with him beating me up I just didn't talk to him so he put me away. He recommended to the Children's Panel that they put me away and they did for a year.
8. If you don't want to talk to somebody you shouldn't get beat up by a social worker, they should get somebody different to speak to you.
9. The police were often at my mother's house about me. The police just did what my father did and gave you a kick up the arse or a slap on the head. People sit in their ivory tower and think the police are great but they're not. If you get involved with the police you are all tarred with the same brush. They'll take you into the cell and beat you up as that's what happened back then. They were all the same, your father, the police, your social worker and then your approved schools or list D schools as we called them then. That was the norm back then.
10. In about 1976, when I was about twelve, I went to my first Children's Panel and got sent to Balgowan. I remember sitting on one side of the table with four people on the other side. The social worker was on one side of me and my mother on the other side. They were making a decision on my life and it was all down to the social worker. He was the main person that put the report in. The people on the other side of the table

didn't come from my walk of life or background and they didn't know what my life was about or what was going on in it. They just looked at me and thought he gets into bother so send him away. It turned out that I got sent away for a year to Balgowan List D School.

11. I don't think anybody asked me what I thought. My social worker never asked me what I wanted or thought, he just told me I would be getting sent away. When you are a young laddie at twelve years old, you don't think much about it until you do get sent away and then it is a big wake up call. You've got to grow up, you've got to be a man and you shouldn't have to be.

Balgowan List D School, Dundee

12. When the panel sent me away I was devastated. I have no idea why it was Balgowan that I was sent to. I can't remember how I got through to Balgowan but going through there I was petrified.
13. When you looked at Balgowan from the outside I can remember it and can still see it just now. It was a great big building. There were parks at the front of it and round the back I'm sure the classroom was on the left, outside the main building. There was a stone room where we went for gym.
14. I'm not sure what the structure for staffing was because most of the dealings I had were with a guy called **HPK**. As far as I'm concerned, he was the main person and the main person that you looked out for or tried to avoid. I can still see his face just now. I remember a member of staff called **HPM** who had a beard but can't really remember the other ones.
15. I don't know how many boys were in the whole building as it was a big place but I reckon there was anywhere between fifty and a hundred of us there. It was all boys from about age twelve to fifteen or sixteen and they were from all over the country. There were a few people there that I knew from Falkirk but none of them were in my

houses or my class. One of the guys I knew had a similar background to me but I don't know about the rest.

16. The building was split into wings and the house I was in was open plan. It had four dorm areas, each with four beds. There was a mixture of age groups but I have no idea how they decided who went where. There was a seating area in front of the four sleeping areas. There were other houses but I'm not sure how many. We would mix with them during the day if you were playing football or something but not at night when you were in your own houses.

Routine at Balgowan

First day

17. We probably got a tour because I think my mother and the social worker were there. That first night there I got beaten up by the other residents as a welcome to Balgowan. I got other beatings later but when I got them at List D school it was no different as I got beatings from my dad at home.
18. I can't remember anything else about my first day other than being petrified.

Mornings and bedtime

19. We all went to bed at the same time. There must have been somebody supervising during the night but I can't remember that. There was nobody there when you were getting beaten up.

Bed Wetting

20. I got put into Balgowan as a twelve year old and it was the most terrifying experience of my life so I can understand people bed wetting. I never wet the bed but it was

probably an issue for some others there as it is frightening going into these places. I've no idea what happened to anyone who wet the bed.

Mealtimes and food

21. Everyone went to one big hall for breakfast, dinner and tea. I can't really remember what the food was like but I think the meals were alright because if they were rotten I would have remembered.
22. You had to eat your meals and if you didn't it was the same as in my father's house, you got slapped. If you're not hungry and you don't want to eat something, you shouldn't be forced to eat it. I didn't like brussel sprouts but I was forced to eat them by the staff. They would be watching you eat and if you didn't eat them you knew what you were getting. That was the same as at home, so nothing was different, if you didn't eat your food you got beat up.

Washing / bathing

23. There were shower rooms and there were specific times for having a shower but I can't remember when it was. You couldn't just have one when you wanted, just like you couldn't do anything else when you wanted. You had to go by their rules as there was set times for everything. I cannot remember if the showers were supervised or not.

Clothing / uniform

24. We would have had a uniform but I can't remember what it was. You never got to wear your own clothes other than when you went home for weekend leave.

School

25. All I can remember is being in that classroom out the back with the same teacher all day. I think I was in a class with boys of the same age group but I can't remember for definite.
26. I was top of the class at spelling and I couldn't spell so what does that tell you? It didn't say much for the rest of the class. I think we got run of the mill English and maths but we never got other subjects like, history, geography or woodwork like you got at other schools, it was just the basics. I can't remember much about any of the education and that tells me I didn't get an education. When I came out and went back to Falkirk High I was nowhere near the level they were at.

Leisure time

27. In any free time there I played football, table tennis and I liked running so I did a lot of that. I can't remember any organised activities but I did play for the football team against other teams that came in to Balgowan. We went to a tournament once in Dundee with a lot of other teams. I don't know if they were other list D schools or it was for just the schools in Dundee.

Healthcare

28. I remember being locked in a room for a week by the guy HPM who worked there. I was only allowed out for the toilet and I got my food brought to me. I don't know if it was because I was ill or there was something wrong with me or not. It was a part of a building that I had never been in before. I didn't know why I was there and still don't. I was never aware of this happening to anybody else.
29. I can't remember being poorly apart from being beaten up. The injuries were bruising and nobody bothered, even if you went home with them.

30. A member of staff took me to a dentist who brutalised my teeth with the drills. Every time I went there I would come out with my mouth covered in blood. I don't even know if I had issues with my teeth when they took me.

Trips / holidays

31. We went up to Montrose Baths and when we were going in I met my cousin coming out. He was in care at Oakbank in Aberdeen. We have never spoken to each other about what happened to each other in care. It's not the kind of thing you spoke about. It's nothing to be embarrassed about because we hadn't done anything wrong it's just you don't talk about it.

Religious instruction

32. Religion wasn't big in Balgowan but if you weren't home for the weekend you did have to go to church on a Sunday. It didn't bother me as it got you out for an hour. We got taken by a member of staff in the minibus to a church in Dundee.

Birthdays and Christmas

33. Birthdays weren't acknowledged at Balgowan. I probably stayed there over Christmas but I can't remember getting a present or any celebrations.

Family Contact

34. Nobody got visits. We got home leave if you had behaved yourself but sometimes I didn't want to go home because I was all bruised and sometimes didn't want to go back to my father's because I was caught between a rock and a hard place.

Visits / inspections / welfare

35. I don't remember any visits from a social worker when I was there but if there was it was only once in a blue moon. I can't remember for definite whether it was while I was

at Balgowan or after I came out that I got a different social worker, Bill Drisco. He was totally different to IEA and I could talk to him no problem as he was a really nice guy.

36. I never had any children's panel hearings whilst I was there. You got sent away for a year, did your year and that was you until you got out. At the time I never knew how long I was going away for, that was something I learned later on.
37. I don't remember anybody from the outside authorities coming to inspect Balgowan or speak to us. I never had a key worker or anybody asking how I was. Nobody from outside or inside the home ever asked how you were feeling, how you were doing or told you what was happening with you. They didn't care about you're state of mind. You were there to be punished and toe the line. If you didn't you got put in your place. You were there to be punished but not in the way they punished you. You were in to do your time but should never have got treated the way we got bloody treated. I was in there at twelve years old on my own, taken away from my friends and was petrified.

Work / chores

38. I can't remember doing chores but there is a lot of stuff I can't remember about Balgowan but whether that is because I don't want to remember it, I don't know.

Personal possessions

39. You never had any of your own personal stuff. That's maybe why I don't have photos, I just don't keep them and never have at any time in my life. You never got pocket money there. You never got anything there. There was no tuck shop.

Discipline

40. You had to call the staff sir and if you didn't you got slapped. They had no qualms about hitting you. Other than being slapped or hit, the other form of discipline would be to stop you going home for the weekend.

Abuse at Balgowan

41. I got beaten up the first night by other laddies who were staying there. I was in my bed, the covers got put up over my head and then I got knee'd and punched in the head, belly and back. That was a 'welcome to Balgowan' and I was petrified. I had no idea what was going on.
42. That happened once more but that was down to the people that ran the place because I had run away. I got caught in Perth and taken back where I got slapped about once I was in my bed. The boys put the covers up and I got the same again. That was the hierarchy that did that. The staff had their own wee squad of older boys who did what they said and they done me in on the say so of the staff.
43. When I first went in there it was very scary. You've got to remember I was only twelve years old and there were boys fourteen and fifteen in there.
44. The place was a regime and it was really strict. If you didn't do as you were told you got slapped. You would get slapped on the face, the head, the back or just wherever. You would get a slap for doing anything wrong, if you talked back or were out of line and that was hard when you were twelve years old. All the staff would give you a slap but certain members of staff would go a bit further.
45. I'm a person that isn't going to just stand there if somebody is hitting me and say 'aye on you go'. I'm going to give them abuse back or whatever and I will squeal and I'll greet.
46. I got called squeak by a member of staff, HPK [REDACTED], because when he hit me I squealed like a pig. He had [REDACTED] IEA [REDACTED] and that will never go out my head.
47. HPK [REDACTED] was an ex screw from Peterhead prison and when I got older, I looked back and thought he must have been abused there by the prisoners. He has then done

that to us. He couldn't handle what they did to him so he has come to a List D school and he has bullied us.

48. He would go way over the line. He would take his belt off and hit us with it but this didn't bother me as I had got that from my father. I was used to that and just thought that was the norm back then. He would take his belt off and hit me if I was telling him to fuck off or something like that or yak back. I wouldn't just sit back if he was hitting me. If someone is doing something to me that I don't like I'm going to chat back. He would do this in front of others and he wouldn't try to hide it.
49. I'm sure we had a golf or putting area there. Him and I were playing against another member of staff and another boy. He would have to hit a shot and then I had to put it in the hole and if I didn't put it in he gave me a look and I knew I was getting beaten up.
50. I got slapped on a daily basis. Every now and again **HPK** would take you up to the dorm on your own and tan your arse with his belt. He would hit me five, six or seven times and I think he lost count. I never saw him do it to other boys because he took you to the dorm on your own to do it.
51. **HPK** was tall with black hair and had a pointed nose. He was old to me then but he was maybe in his thirties or forties at that time. He was residential staff and he worked on my dorm with another guy with a beard called **HPM**. **HPM** would slap you but he wasn't as bad as **HPK**.
52. The other staff gave you a slap but none of them to the extent he did.
53. There was the gym teacher we called **LAQ** who was bad as well. I don't know his actual name and most of his classes he locked me in a cupboard. He never ever liked me and I'm not sure why he did that but maybe he'd asked me to do something and I'd told him no. He had grey hair, was red in the face and he was a nasty old bastard. He used to lock me in the cupboard at the gym hall for an hour, sometimes more and then come in and set about me with a cane.

54. He hit me all over my legs, my arse and my back. I was putting my hands up to try and defend myself, I wouldn't give into him and I used to get up and tell him to fuck himself all the time when he did this. No danger was I giving into him. He could batter me and batter me but I wouldn't give into him. I was just a wean of twelve years old and there was nothing I could do.
55. I've no idea if he ever put anybody else in the cupboard or beat anybody else. I was only concerned about myself and trying to survive. I didn't take their shite, I just told them to fuck off. I was mouthy but that was me but it doesn't justify them doing that to me. They wouldn't have done that to me if I was eighteen. He was brutal, he was a tyrant. If you did anything at all, even the simplest of things he was down on you like a ton of bricks. He gave us verbal abuse all the time, calling you stupid and an idiot. That wasn't good for building your confidence.
56. The other staff gave you a kick and a slap but nothing compared to the two main protagonists LAQ and HPK. I can't remember the other staff's names but the names I remember are the ones that were nasty to me. I will never forget these names.
57. They were just bullies. It was the same with the boys in there that beat me up. They were older and bigger than me and I was quite wee for my age. It was physical and verbal bullying from them as well.
58. You had to stand up to them or you would get picked on all the time. You had to make sure they didn't come back to you again. The staff never did anything about the bullying, they organised the bullying as they had their own wee clique of older boys who would just set about you.
59. Six of us ran away and I was with a boy called [REDACTED] who was my pal. We got to Perth but the police got us and took us back. HPL, who was one of the head guys, took us into the office one by one and gave us a couple of slaps. He slapped me on the face and that was it in there but that night when I was in bed the boys came and set about me because they told them to.

60. He never asked why I ran away, he didn't care he just wanted you to toe the line.

Reporting of abuse at Balgowan

61. I knew back then that nothing would have been done if I had tried to report the abuse and the staff also knew that as well. They would have just laughed and I probably would've got a slap.
62. That was the done thing back then and at that time you accepted it because it was the done thing. You knew that but when you look back that was all wrong and it should never have happened.
63. My family seen it had happened to me but it didn't matter to them. When I went home with bruising, my parents would ask what had happened and if I said I got beaten up at Balgowan they didn't bother. That was because that's what happened to me at home as well. How could I explain that to anybody that this was just what they done? If my father did to me now what he did back then, he would be in the jail for a very long time as well as the scum at Balgowan.
64. I wouldn't report it to ^{IEA} [REDACTED] the social worker as he was a pain in the arse and I had no time for him whatsoever.

Leaving Balgowan

65. *I can't remember leaving Balgowan. When I left there was no support in place for me. Nowadays people have a duty of care to people but as far as I'm concerned, back then nobody had a duty of care to anybody.*
66. My next memory is being back home and we had moved from Camelon up to Tamfourhill in Falkirk. All my pals were in Camelon so I had to make new pals and go to a different school. I had been at Camelon High for about three months before I went

to Balgowan and when I came out the catchment area had changed and I had to go to Falkirk High.

67. At the time Falkirk High was meant to be the top school but that school was a joke. At the end of the day they viewed me as a troublemaker because I had been in care in a List D school and they had no time for me. They weren't interested in me. My education at Balgowan was nothing so I was playing catch up in every subject and nobody was bothered their backside.
68. I was lucky if I was there six months and I got suspended for something they accused me of when I wasn't even at school that day. The teacher Mr Sutherland accused me of flinging something at a window and I wasn't even there. They didn't want me there at all. Nobody wanted to give me a chance or make me a better person and as far as I was concerned they had no interest in me.
69. Bill Driscoll, my new social worker was a nice guy and I talked to him but by then I didn't know if it was too late for me. He would talk to you like a human being, get to know you and about your life, what you wanted to do and he was a totally different guy to IEA [REDACTED]. I never talked to him about my family situation because back then it didn't matter what you said, nothing would've changed. I didn't want to be with my father and he wanted me out but I didn't want to be in Balgowan either.
70. I didn't have to be the person I was back then but nobody listened and nobody cared. I hated being in the house and I remember one day storming out it, feeling sick and bursting into tears. That was my life and I couldn't handle it. I didn't like it and I wasn't happy.
71. I don't remember there being any hearings or children's panels for me until the one that I got sentenced to Thornly Park. There would've been police involvement for things but I don't think I was still sniffing glue as I had moved away from Camelon and the pals I had been with. I couldn't handle being at Falkirk High School because they had no interest in me.

72. I wasn't as bad as I had been before I went to Balgowan but I think I broke into the Barr's Factory and I think that was all I had done. The police were involved and I got charged. I think that's maybe what led to the children's hearing when I got put away again about a year after I'd got out Balgowan.
73. The hearing this time wasn't as bad as the one when I got put to Balgowan because I had kind of accepted I was going away again. I had no qualms that this was what was happening. Nobody asked me or was interested in what I thought or wanted. It was all about what they were interested in doing to me. I was just a bad egg so the easiest option for them was just to get rid of me and that included my mother and father.
74. I've no clue why they picked Thornly Park just as I have no idea why they put me to Dundee before.
75. I went straight from the hearing to Thornly Park but I can't remember anything about the journey.

Thornly Park, Paisley

76. Thornly Park was really small compared to Balgowan. There was only one building and it had everything in it. You had a TV room, a big swimming pool and then the units next to it. There were four in each room and I think there were about six rooms or units so about twenty to twenty four boys all between the ages of about twelve to fifteen in the whole place. I'm not sure what all the boys were in for but [REDACTED] who was my mate was from Ayr and he was in for more or less the same as me, not going to school and breaking into places. I think the rest were probably in for the same kind of thing.
77. [GNG] [REDACTED] was the guy that was [SNR] [REDACTED] of Thornly Park. He was [REDACTED] and had been on [REDACTED]. He was bald on top with a beard and quite a wee guy. I would imagine back then he was about in his late forties. I was young so all of them were old to me then. He was alright in snatches but if you got on the wrong side of him he wasn't. [REDACTED]

78. Another member of staff there I can remember was a guy called IDB but I can't remember his second name. He was a tall man with long hair and he stayed in Paisley. He used to pick on me until my mate stood up for me. He thought he was the bees knees and God's gift to women as well.
79. A lot of the staff there were nice. Steph was the teacher and he took the football as well. Jill was like a social worker kind of thing. Nan stayed there in the houses down the bottom and she was the auxiliary type of person. There was Peter and there was a German guy and I think the German guy was on conscription as they still did that in Germany then. They were all really nice.
80. I don't know what his name was but the guy that was the 'night watchie' I couldn't say was nice because I think he was a bit of a pervert. He was always wanting to wake you up through the night and you always had to watch him. I wasn't aware of him ever doing anything but there were rumours going about.
81. Thornly Park was totally different and was like night and day to Balgowan. The regime there was nothing like it had been at Balgowan.
82. The only issue I had with Thornly Park was actually being there. GNG was like a hippy and the place reminded me of like how a hippy commune was run. It was good that it wasn't as strict as Balgowan and didn't have the mentality. It wasn't good being there at that age but you are in there to be punished so you just got on with it as nobody was going to help you. Nobody was going to come and ask if you were okay.
83. It was totally different from Balgowan in that I suppose it was like an open prison. It wasn't secure and you could walk out of there. We used to go out the back field and meet two lassies out there.
84. That's where I started smoking. We were allowed to smoke and allowed to swear. You more or less got to do what you wanted. I think they tried to make it like they tried to be different from Balgowan and see how they could measure if it was working that way. It definitely wasn't authoritarian.

85. I was sniffing glue at Thornly Park and that was the reason I had been put away before, so that was crazy. I'd been on the glue since I was eight years old and everyone talks about drugs but it was the best buzz I have ever had. The staff were aware of this and caught us. I got beaten up by GNG for it.

First Day

86. I remember my first day there as my father was actually there and there was a member of staff there called Jonny Glen who had been in the Navy with him. He was a bit older and was a nice fella. We were given a tour of the place and then my dad left.

Washing / bathing

87. You could go for a shower anytime you wanted at Thornly Park. There were cubicles for the showers and nobody supervised you. Nan, one of the auxiliaries who was really nice, did sometimes wash my hair for me though.

Clothing / uniform

88. We definitely never had our own clothes on so I think we must have had a uniform. I only changed into my own clothes when I was going home.

Mealtimes / food

89. Everybody went for their meals in the same place at the same time. I can't really remember much about it but I think the food was okay. I couldn't complain about it and there were no issues or punishments if you never ate your meal. Again that was totally different from Balgowan.

School

90. Thornly Park was the same as Balgowan where you had two rooms. Steph was the teacher but we never got any real education. There was no variety of subjects just

basics. John Benn was a teacher as well and he taught us how to make things with clay. I made an ashtray and I've still got it in the house.

Leisure time

91. There was a big hall there and in our free time I played table tennis and was in the football team.

Holidays / trips

92. The only times I was happy there were when I went away on holidays.
93. A guy called Malcolm who had been a screw in Barlinnie Special Unit and had looked after Jimmy Boyle came to Thornly Park. He took a shine to me and that was the best time I had at a List D school when he was there. I got on great with him and we would sit and speak for hours. He took an interest in me and treated me like a human being. He spoke to me and knew exactly what I was all about. He took me on holiday up to the Cairngorms with his family including his own son.
94. My mate [REDACTED] was meant to go with us as well. I think we were meant to be going away on the Tuesday and we were both on weekend leave just before it. When [REDACTED] had phoned the home to see if I was there I wasn't back yet, so he must have thought I wasn't coming back so he never came back and missed out on the holiday.
95. We were away for four days. One night on the Cairngorms it was bad weather and we couldn't get into the Bothy as they had shut it. We pitched the tents up outside and he woke me up during the night as the tents were getting blown about and he said we were going home. I refused to go back as I knew I would get nothing but abuse from the others as I hadn't completed it. He used to do that every year with his son and he couldn't believe that I was refusing to go back so we did complete it.
96. When I was at Thornly Park there was a German school that came over to us on a trip and then we went over there to Cologne for about four nights. I think there were about

ten boys and we went over on a minibus but the minibus broke down. The AA had to come and take us over on the ferry down to Belgium and then drove us down to Germany. We stayed in a community centre and then with a girl called [REDACTED]'s family. They were happier times. It was on that trip that I started drinking. I was sitting in bars over there drinking beer at fourteen years old and after one pint I was steaming.

Religious instruction

97. We never had to go to church and I can't remember there being anything to do with religion when I was at Thornly Park.

Birthdays and Christmas

98. They never celebrated my birthday when I was there and I can't remember anything about Christmas time.

Healthcare / welfare

99. I can't remember ever being ill there or going to the dentist and I can't remember there ever being any medical staff on site.
100. I never got any support to help me stop sniffing glue after I had been caught . I think Thornly Park was too lenient so we got away with things and they never acted on it.

Visitors / inspections

101. I can't remember my social worker coming or anybody else coming to inspect the place. I never had any hearings or children's panels whilst I was there. I was just told I was there for a year and that was it until you left.

Family contact

102. We never got any visits from family but you were guaranteed home leave every weekend. They never took it off you. I went back at weekends but there was no connection with my family when I went home.

Work / chores

103. I can't remember doing any chores or tasks. We probably had to but it's not something in my mind.

Personal Possessions

104. I can't remember if I had any of my own possessions or if we got pocket money. I think they must have given you something. We were allowed cigarettes in there so the money must have come from somewhere. We must have got them in there because I was only fourteen so couldn't go out to a shop and buy them.

Running away

105. I never ran away when I was there and I don't know whether anybody else did or didn't.

Discipline

106. The only thing that would happen if you did anything wrong would be that you would be sent up to see **GNG** at his house. The severity wasn't anywhere near what it was at Balgowan. None of the staff would punch or kick you like they had at Balgowan.

Abuse at Thornley Park

107. You still got the beatings from the staff there but nothing on the level of Balgowan.

108. Three or four of us got caught sniffing glue. I don't know how we got a hold of the glue but we did and somebody must've brought it in. The staff were aware of this and I got taken, alone, up to GNG [REDACTED] house.
109. GNG [REDACTED] belted me quite a few times with a belt over my clothes on my legs, my bum and my back.
110. This happened to me twice and it was for a punishment or discipline but it wasn't proportionate. Nothing was proportionate back then. The second time I got it was for hitting another boy over the head with a brush.
111. The boy who was a year older than me and who I can only remember as [REDACTED] was always trying to touch me up. He was in a different dorm from me but he had come over to me in the minibus and tried to touch me so I shoved him away. This went on for two or three months and the staff all saw it clear as day. They thought it was funny but I didn't think it was funny. I reported it to Steph and all the other staff but they never did anything about it and never stopped him. The staff just brushed it off as if it wasn't a big deal.
112. It was a big deal to me because he wouldn't leave me alone. One day when he tried touching me I just lost it, hit him over the head with a brush and burst his head open. I got leathered that day by GNG [REDACTED] with his belt.
113. Back then I thought I deserved it because of what I had done to the boy and shouldn't have done what I done but at the same time if I hadn't done it he wouldn't have left me alone. If I hadn't done it I don't know what would've happened, he might have sexually abused me, I don't know. I'm not aware of him doing it to any other boys.
114. I never got any hassle or beatings from any of the other boys or staff at Thornly Park. The only person that beat me up was GNG [REDACTED]. He was probably the same with the other boys but you would never see it because you got taken up to the house on your own. You didn't actually see him that much at all.

115. The member of staff called IDB that picked on me was never physical with me. It was all verbal stuff, calling me an arsehole and things like that and he had me in tears quite a lot. He was like that with two or three of the other boys as well. My pal was bigger than me and could handle himself. He stood up for me one day and the pair of them went for it and had to be split up. IDB never picked on me again, he completely changed and couldn't have been any nicer to me after that.

Reporting Abuse at Thornly Park

116. There was no point in reporting anything as nothing would've happened. You were the outcast, you were the problem, not anybody else. If you went to police or elsewhere, you got the blame not them. They blamed me and I had years of them blaming me.

Leaving Thornly Park

117. There was no preparation for me about going back out and there was no care put in place for me after I was out. A couple of days before I left I was told by GNG that that was my time up and I left. There was no social work input about this. There was no duty of care towards me like there is nowadays for everything. If you were unruly it was always a case of 'just get rid of them, send them away as nobody cares and as far as I'm concerned that is what happened to me.

Life after being in care

118. The day I left I got the train home, went back to my parents' house and it was just the same as it had been before.
119. I probably saw my social worker at some point but can't remember it.

120. After I came out of Thornly Park I went back to Falkirk High. The deputy rector Mr Melville told me every teacher apart from one voted for me not to come back and wanted to put me out of there. The only one was Mr Cowan, the art teacher and I didn't even get on with him. He was the only reason I got back in, that didn't fill me with confidence and they knew that.
121. I can't remember her name but I think she was a history teacher, who slapped me on the face. There were five of us in the classroom having a carry on, I started laughing and she came up and slapped me. I told her to 'fuck off' so she sent me along to see the headmaster but I just walked out the school and went away. I went back the next again day and it was never mentioned because she was in the wrong for slapping me on the face.
122. I was at Falkirk High for about three months and when I was fifteen and a half, Mr Melville the deputy rector took me into his office. He told me I wasn't sitting exams at the school and that I wasn't to come back so I walked out and didn't go back. There was no point as there was nobody teaching me anything. That was the end of school for me and I have never done any further education.
123. The day I was sixteen I walked out my mother's house and I never went back to stay. I went and stayed in a house round the corner with two guys who I knew and were older than me.
124. I got a job in ██████'s Foundry. It was hard work and I got paid £23.75 a week. I lasted six weeks and got the sack. I went down to York and bummed about for six months before coming back again.
125. The best thing that happened was that I got married when I was twenty one and if I hadn't I don't know where I would've ended up. The lassie I married already had four weans and then she had a daughter of mine. We split up seven years later. She was the love of my life and she died in 2010.

126. After we split up I was a lot more grown up and a lot more savvy in the head. I was a lot more calm and that was because I had been married at twenty one. Once we got divorced I started to sort myself out a bit. I had a drinking problem then but that was maybe to do with the relationship breakdown. I was a binge drinker but I could stay off it for months and go on it for months. It's now thirteen years that I have been off it.
127. I have another daughter who is now twenty one from another relationship that only lasted six years.
128. I've had a few relationships but not had one since 2014. I just stopped because they don't work. I don't know if that is down to me and something in my head or not.
129. I've had every job under the sun but never kept them long because of the drink. I have been in the job I have now for four years and it has been the happiest time of my life. I've saved money for my daughters. I don't drink or smoke now, although I do vape and I don't go out partying. I just go to my work and I go home. I'm happy at my work because I'm in an environment where there are people there all the time so I don't get depressed because I've not got the time to. I'm in the house at night but being at work helps me along because I'm meeting people every day.

Reporting to the police / criminal proceedings

130. I have never reported what happened to me to the police or any other authority. There was no point because as far as I'm concerned as they were all the same and none were interested. The police, the courts, the institutions all just thought you were the bad guy so you had to get punished. That was it, as nobody had time for you and you were just shoved away.
131. I think it's too late to speak to them now, even if these people are still alive as they are going to be in their seventies and eighties. Their life is ending anyway so it's not going to make any difference to what happens to them.

132. I was a twelve year old laddie beaten up by a grown man so it's not acceptable that they can go to the jail because realistically what is going to happen to them there at that age before they die? It's not going to help me.

Impact

133. I've never had a relationship with my family. I don't speak to my sister or brother and my other brother is dead. That is because I was never at home in my childhood because I was in approved schools and was running away from home. I don't know if I love my family. Just because you are born into a family doesn't mean you have got to love that family. As far as I'm concerned love's got to be earned and I never got shown any from family or anybody else. Nobody showed anybody any love back then. I struggle to show my daughters love as none was shown to me. I have always been there for them but I can't cuddle or embrace them as that was never shown to me.
134. I think I would have had a stronger relationship with my brothers and sister if I hadn't gone to approved schools. I just got on with it and they just got on with it but that doesn't make it right.
135. I think my problems with relationships has definitely been affected by what happened in care.
136. I never had an education. I'm not stupid and I can read and write. I can always remember at Balgowan School I was head of the class for spelling and I couldn't spell.
137. My issue with the education back then was that you never got an education with all the different subjects in either Balgowan or Thornly Park so when I went back to school outside of them, I was way behind everybody else. You were just flung in these places and they didn't bother their backside about teaching you.

138. When I came back out and went to Falkirk High nobody cared. They weren't interested so because of that, I wasn't interested in them and never tried. You couldn't try because the work was too far in front of what I got at the List D schools.
139. I got all my teeth taken out when I was twenty one and I still think about him drilling through my nerves and I wasn't going through that again. The dentists back then were getting paid, didn't bother what state your teeth were in and just drilled them as they got the money. They didn't care about the pain. When I was twenty one, the dentist said he didn't want to take them all out but I insisted as I didn't want to go through that pain again. I can still feel that pain just now.
140. I have suffered with depression for years and I couldn't work for ten years because of it. It brought everything back and I couldn't go out the house for years. I couldn't go out the door without bursting out greeting. I had depression again when my mother died and again that brought everything back. I'm past that now and am happy now. It helps being off the drink because my head is clear and I don't have hangovers.
141. I think I was probably on the drink because of what happened in care or it probably has something to do with it.
142. I think about my time in care a lot and more so lately because I knew I was coming here to speak to the Inquiry about it. At times it doesn't bother me but then something happens in life that triggers things off. I get upset and I get angry but I keep that to myself because nobody else knows. I sit in the house and try to deal with it and get it out my head but it's not easy.
143. I have hardly slept in the last three weeks knowing I was coming here and last night I hardly slept at all. If I nod off it is in my head right away when I wake up.
144. I've not got much time for authority because they have never had any time for me. They have never done anything for me and I was just pushed to the side. I do trust people but my thoughts about authority will not change.

Treatment / support

145. I have never spoken about any of the things that happened to me until I spoke with the Inquiry. The point is still the same as it was back then that nobody has ever been interested. I've not been involved with any support groups and haven't sought any support at all about it.
146. I have been for counselling but not for what happened in care. It was when my mum died. At the end of the day you can go for whatever counselling for an hour or two at a time but at the end of the day you still have to go home, it's still in your head and you've still got to deal with it. I'm a great believer in trying to deal with things myself.

Records

147. I have never obtained my records for Balgowan or Thornly Park. I don't know if I want to obtain them and it has never crossed my mind.

Lessons to be Learned

148. The biggest lesson that can be learned is that they've got to listen to people. They have to listen to people before they put them to these places as they've got to be heard. If you want to teach somebody not to get into bother you need to have somebody that has been there, seen it and done it and knows how to get into their head. If that person can get reached before they go into these places then that is half the battle because once they go into these places there is no going back.
149. The biggest thing of all is that young boys at ten, eleven or twelve years old have to be tutored or mentored by somebody that has been there and done it. Somebody who knows what it is like being in an institution and they can tell the person what it is going to be like if they end up in there.

150. Balgowan never worked for me. They had people working in places that shouldn't have been working there. They didn't understand and had never been through these places. They need to put people in there that have been there, seen it and done it as they know how to deal with it, cope with it and know how to talk to people about it.
151. They have people in these positions and they have never been in trouble in their life. People that have read all the books on everything but haven't been there, seen it and done it have not got a clue. Staff need to get people on their side, get someone's trust, support them as much as they need and be there for them to help them through.
152. If a person in care doesn't want to speak to somebody, get somebody for them to speak to that they can relate to and they do want to speak to. If people like me were in positions where we could help younger people that are going through that because we have been through it ourselves, it would maybe be a better place for these young people. It would definitely have made a difference to my life if there had been somebody like that looking after me back then.
153. I think the only reason I never became institutionalised and ended up in prisons was because I got married but what I will say is, that it cannot be worse than Balgowan.
154. If people do end up in prison they are a lot older and are a lot wiser. When you are a twelve year old you know nothing and you are sucked into a place like that.

Hopes for the Inquiry


155. I hope that me coming forward can help somebody else. I decided to come forward to the Inquiry after speaking to somebody I met that I had been at Balgowan with. I pondered about it for a while and at times I have not wanted to do it because I had never spoken about it and I didn't know how I was going to be. I spoke it over with my manager without telling her what had happened to me. She was amazing and told me I had to do it. I'm doing it for other people and I hope that it can make a difference and if it does it for even just one person then it is worth it.

156. I want to see justice and the ones that abused me and others could still be alive. I want them to know it is me that has come forward. I would like the opportunity to confront them, let them know what affect they have had on my life and how angry I still am about what they did to me. I am that angry that I feel that I want them to come to harm as a punishment for what they did.

157. I hope they are made to answer for what they did to me and others. I think they should be getting locked up and be getting the treatment we got. They would be vulnerable at their age now as I was vulnerable at my age to being beaten by them. They should be living in fear the way I had to live in constant fear of them and what they could do to me whilst in their care.

Other information

158. 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.

Signed... 

Dated... 2/2/23