

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**Dee Buchanan**

Support person present: No

1. My name is Dee Buchanan. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1964. I am 54 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Life before going into care**

2. I was born in Aberdeen. My parents' names were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I also had an older brother called [REDACTED]. He was seven years older than me. I stayed in Aberdeen till I was twelve years old.
3. My mother suffered very badly from post natal depression after she gave birth to me. She was in and out of Cornhill Mental Hospital and she was not coping with life in general. [REDACTED] worked away from home and was based in Glasgow working as a manager for [REDACTED] Tyres. [REDACTED] originated from Glasgow. All his family were from Glasgow but I didn't know them. I didn't know my mother's family and it was some years later when I was about thirteen I was told by a social worker that my mother was adopted as a child.
4. I was looked after by neighbours and on the odd occasion I can remember being placed in temporary foster care when I was eight or nine years of age. I can't remember much about foster care as I nearly always ran away. I was never any place for more than a night. I had built a den in the woods and that is where I would go. I would also sleep wherever I could, including empty caravans and tents.

5. I ran away because the home and the foster placements were not nice places to be. My parents always reported me missing and the police usually brought me back home. [REDACTED] would come back on a Saturday from playing golf and would often be drunk. [REDACTED] would hit my brother and me but [REDACTED] never hit my mother. [REDACTED] was always rowing with my mother. I don't remember any social work involvement when I lived in Aberdeen.
6. I had just turned thirteen when [REDACTED] decided that the family would need to move from Aberdeen to Fairley in Ayrshire. I was assigned a social worker called Sue Robinson. We made the move to be nearer to my father's work and also to see if it would change my behaviour and stop me from running away.
7. Sue Robinson, my social worker, was based at West Kilbride. She did not like me and we didn't get on. She arranged for me to see a psychologist called [REDACTED] GMX [REDACTED].
8. When I moved to Fairlie I attended at Largs Academy but I was expelled after a short period of time. My mother could not cope with me and all the things that were happening to me. I came from a nice house and Sue Robinson couldn't understand my behaviour.
9. I was summoned before a Children's Panel and because of the fact that I was running away all the time it was decided that I would be placed in a children's home. I started off attending several different children's homes which were small units in Ayrshire often in the middle of housing estates. I can only remember being at a children's home in Irving. I didn't last very long at any of the homes before I would run away. I wasn't attending any of the schools I was enrolled in.
10. I can remember cleaning and cooking at some of these homes and I also recall looking after much younger children who were resident. I was never there long enough. The police usually phoned Sue Robinson to come and collect me. Sue Robinson told me that if I did run away I was to keep in touch with her and let her know I was okay. I stopped doing this when she would passed information to the

police and they tracked me to the phone box I was calling from. I couldn't trust her after that.

11. I had stopped speaking to Sue Robinson but I was speaking to [GMX] my psychologist. The Children's Panel finally decided that I would go to Beechwood Assessment Centre in Glasgow until such time that they could decide what to do with me. Beechwood Assessment Centre was much more secure. I do recall [GMX] [GMX] sitting down with my parents and telling them what was going to happen me and the reasons that I was always running away. My parents didn't seem to understand this.

### **Beechwood Assessment Centre, Tollcross, Glasgow 1977**

12. I was about thirteen when I went to Beechwood Assessment Centre. I remember that it was a large imposing building that was at one time a private house. It was run by an Italian man called Rogerio but administered by Social Work. I recall that everyone there had a social worker. The establishment was locked and so it was not easy to get out of it. I was supposed to be there for a 21 day period of assessment but ended up staying for four months.
13. There was a living area on one side. A dining room. There were shared bedrooms with between two or three girls to each one. There was a glass panel in the door that the staff could look through. A lot of the girls were on medication like tranquilisers to keep them calm and the staff were able to check on them by looking through the glass.
14. I do remember that if you did not behave the staff would threaten to give you medication to calm you down. On a number of occasions I saw some of the girls being held down by the staff and being given an injection. It was always because they were "kicking off" and causing disruption.

**Routine at Beechwood Assessment Centre, Tollcross, Glasgow.***First day*

15. Sue Robinson took me and left me with the staff. I remember on my first day I was strip searched by the staff. I recall that the names of the staff were Miss Jacks and Miss <sup>KIF</sup> [REDACTED]. They told me to strip and that I was to leave my dignity at the door. I then had a bath. They then took my clothes away and made me wear odd clothes that belonged to Beechwood. They were a mixed set of clothes.
16. There were other occasions when you were strip searched if the staff felt like it. I had no possessions when I arrived at Beechwood apart from the clothes I was wearing. I was there for a number of days before I was allowed to help in the kitchen.

*Mornings and bedtime*

17. You would get up when the staff woke you. I would wash and dress and then go down for breakfast. I wasn't allowed to attend school although I remember being taken by the social worker and shown several schools one of which was run by the nuns. I didn't want to go to that school because they wouldn't let you smoke. It was called St. Euphrasia's
18. Once you were woken you washed and brushed your teeth and then went for breakfast. I was only supposed to be there for 21 days but they couldn't find a placement. I didn't attend any school when I was here as the ones I was taken to see were deemed to be unsuitable.
19. I can't remember much about the night time times at Beechwood. But before bed we would play games or watch TV. There was also a tray of medication which some girls needed although it didn't apply to me. There were also some girls who had ulcers dressed.

*Mealtimes / Food*

20. The food was very good. I do recall that there were a number of malnourished girls came into Beechwood and they were helped to better health through good eating. The choices were excellent and varied.

*Washing / bathing*

21. I had a bath every day and this was always supervised by a member of staff. There was no room for modesty. The staff did not try to wash you or anything like that.

*Clothing / uniform*

22. You wore clothes which were provided by Beechwood. They would not allow you to use your own clothes. The clothes they provided were a mix match and I am sure they gave them to me to de-humanise and stop me from running away.

*School*

23. There was a general teacher who taught maths and English that came into Beechwood but I wasn't attending any school. I spent a lot of the time doing jigsaws. You were also taken by the staff for a daily walk.

*Trips / Holidays*

24. I don't remember any trips anywhere when I was at Beechwood but the staff would take you for a walk in the park which was next door to us nearly every day.

*Visits*

25. I was seeing my psychologist [GMX] and it was the first time that someone was standing up for me. He would have meetings with my parents to let them know what was happening and he would listen to everything I told him.

*Healthcare*

26. I think that the staff were trained to deal with most small medical needs. If necessary they would call in a doctor. I don't recall any medical care that I needed apart from an antibiotic for the treatment of tonsillitis.

*Running away*

27. I ran away on several occasions but the police would usually bring me back. I remember I used to hitch lifts from lorry drivers who would take me back to Ayrshire where I would sleep wherever I could. I think that the longer you were missing meant that the risk level raised and the police would take it more seriously.

*Punishment*

28. I don't recall any formal punishment at Beechwood. If you misbehaved they would threaten you with being tranquilised. I was quite well behaved so there were not too many punishments handed out.

**Abuse at Beechwood Assessment Centre, Glasgow**

29. On one occasion I went back to see my parents with [GMX]. He was the only person on my side. The meeting didn't last long and I stood up and ran off. [GMX] [GMX] followed me into some woods at the back of my house and that was the first occasion that he sexually assaulted me.

30. He was kissing me and grabbing at my boobs and the rest of my body. He was lying on top of me. He put his hand down the front of my pants. I didn't have intercourse with him at this time. I was shocked by what he did.
31. This sexual assault continued through my teenage years from thirteen to sixteen. Most of the assaults took place within his office [REDACTED] in Glasgow. When I left Beechwood and went to Balgay Children's Home in Dundee he would get me to travel to see him most Fridays. I was the last appointment of the day. He often used to take me out for dinner in the evening which I am sure he charged as expenses. Some of the sexual assaults happened in his car.
32. I didn't have sexual intercourse with him but I would have to masturbate him and perform oral sex. I managed somehow to stop him having full intercourse with me. He also chewed gum and slurped coffee and to this day I have a phobia of these things.

#### **Leaving Beechwood Assessment Centre, Glasgow**

33. Within two weeks of the first sexual assault on me by [REDACTED] GMX I was moved to Balgay Girls School in Dundee. My assessment period at Beechwood was over and it was decided that this was the best place for me to go to. My parents had washed their hands of me and I had none or very little contact with them or my brother.

#### **Balgay School for Girls, Dundee**

34. I was thirteen years old when I first arrived at Balgay and was to stay there for about three years when I left at age sixteen. There were about sixty girls at the school and we lived in small dormitories. It was a girls only school and as far as I remember we were quite close in age. There was a communal dining room. The school was not locked and you could come and go as you pleased. I remember that all the bedrooms were upstairs in the building. I was still having to see [REDACTED] GMX every Friday afternoon and the sexual abuse continued.

35. There was also a house attached to the school which was further down the road. It was called Duncan House and it was for girls who were more disturbed. I do remember the emergency services being called there on almost a daily basis. I think that there were also riots at Duncan House.

*First day at Balgay*

36. I remember arriving at Balgay and being introduced to SNR [REDACTED] and my houseparent's. I met two members of staff called GIS [REDACTED] and HGZ [REDACTED]. I was also introduced to some of the other girls.

*Staff*

37. The staff were all very kind particularly Miss zMSM [REDACTED] who was the cook. There was a Headmaster a Deputy, house parents and office staff. They had a staff rota so there would be different people on duty every day. There was consistency amongst the staff which helped me to settle in.

*Routine at Balgay*

38. I think that a member of staff would waken you in the morning by knocking on the door. I remember that it was amazing to get through the night without the fire alarm going off. It happened so often I learned to sleep through the alarm. You could have a bath in the morning and then brush your teeth. There was a lack of privacy and staff supervision at an age I was very self-conscious. The other girls would hang over the partition and torment you while you were using the toilet or taking a bath.
39. You went down for breakfast. I enjoyed cleaning so I used to help out by tidying up. I took pleasure in doing that. It wasn't compulsory. You could then attend an art, woodwork, English or maths class. There were also classes in French and German. I spent most of my time in the kitchen. SNR [REDACTED] GIS [REDACTED] taught me to do italic script writing.

40. There were four different houses each with about fifteen girls. You tended to keep the company of the girls in your own house. There was a lot of office staff. On the ground floor there were offices, a meeting room and a laundry I remember that you were given a £50 allowance to buy your own clothes. In my first week there I was taken into the town to buy my own outfits.
41. You had your own bed space with a place to keep your personal effects. There was also a small partition between the beds to give you some privacy. The bed was a wooden plank with an inch a horsehair mattress.

#### *Schooling at Balgay*

42. I didn't attend a local school in Dundee when I was at Balgay. All the schooling was provided by teachers who came into the home. Attendance at these classes was not compulsory and so I didn't go to them.

#### *Washing and bathing*

43. There were good wash rooms and the staff did not have to supervise you and they didn't watch while you had a bath. There were partitions in the wash room to give some privacy but the biggest problems were from your peers who would always be about and I remember that there were two girls in particular who used to torment you when you were washing.

#### *Food*

44. I would help out the cook Miss [REDACTED] in the kitchen. I had a very good relationship with her. She would have to operate things on a strict budget and did well to produce the food that she did. I used to stay in the school at the weekends when the other children had gone home so Miss [REDACTED] always prepared something special for me like a Sunday roast. I remember being told that the school had a budget of 72p per day for each child to buy food.

*Running away*

45. I ran away twice when I was at Balgay. The last occasion it was so cold that I took refuge in Ninewells Hospital in Dundee. I phoned Balgay and told them where I was and they picked me up. It was early in the morning and when I got back to Balgay, Miss zMSM the cook was waiting for me. She took me into an office and sat me in a chair. She gave me a reality check and told me that the next stage of my life would be to move into Duncan House and then probably on to Corton Vale ladies prison if I didn't change my ways. That was the end of me running away. I had such a good relationship with Miss zMSM.

*Healthcare*

46. I remember going to a dentists in Dundee. I suffered from chronic tonsillitis so I was in regular contact with a doctor for anti biotics. There was medical help available whenever you needed it.

*Holidays, trips and leisure time*

47. I do remember going on a holiday to Edzell with the other girls from Balgay. I also recall trips to the swimming baths in Dundee. When I was fourteen I went with some on the other girls to the park where we would sniff glue.
48. At the weekend most of the girls went home to their parents. I know that the parents would get money to support their children over the weekend. A lot of the girls had parents with addiction problems and they would be glad of the money. I never went home during a weekend.

*Visits and social work contact*

49. I was in regular touch with my social worker and could make a phone call by arrangement to her at any time I requested it. I never told her about [GMX]. I was visited on one occasion by [GMX] at Balgay but the rest of the time I would have to take the train or bus most Fridays to keep my appointments with him. I had a cursory visit from my parents on one occasion during my stay at Balgay.

### **Abuse at Balgay School**

50. The regular Friday meeting and the sexual abuse by [GMX] continued throughout my time at Balgay. He told me that I would have to keep my mouth shut about what was happening as he was a respected psychologist and I was just a young delusional, delinquent child in care. No one would believe me and not believe him.
51. I would get the bus or train to [redacted] Glasgow every Friday. I was always the last appointment of the day. He would take me back to the station in Glasgow so that I could get back to Balgay. I was aware that [GMX] did not like menstrual blood so I used to pretend that I had my periods to protect me from his advances.
52. On one occasion he took me to his own house in Biggar. It was to let me see what normal family life was like. I felt terrible as it was obvious to me what was going on between him and me and I am sure that his family must have picked up on this. I remember that his daughter [redacted] I know that [GMX]'s wife has since divorced him.
53. [GMX] spoke about his "special girls" that he was seeing and I am very sure that these girls were also victims of his grooming and subsequent sexual abuse.

### **Leaving Balgay School for Girls, Dundee**

54. [GMX] discovered that I had a high IQ and was keen for me to complete my education. He wanted me to leave Balgay and move back to Ayrshire where I could attend Ardrossan Academy and complete my schooling. [GMX] was pushing to get me into a flat on my own as I would not have to go back to my parents.
55. The social work department paid for a school uniform and the flat that I was staying in. I was also working in local hotels and so I was very well fed with all the leftovers. My life was much better and I was coping with the change. I had no contact with my parents or my brother. I think that my social worker visited on one occasion.

### **Life after being in care**

56. I was basically told that I would be leaving Balgay and attending school nearer to my home. I was sent to Ardrossan Academy and if I did what I was told I would be free of my social worker Sue Robinson and my psychologist [GMX]. I managed to pass six o'levels at school before I left when I was still sixteen.
57. In 1993 I was contacted by [GMX] who had seen an article in a magazine that was about me. I was married at this time. He told me that he often came to Aberdeen on business and wanted to meet up with me. I told him I was married and couldn't meet with him. My husband at the time who was present when I took the call tried to encourage me to contact the police but I just couldn't do it.
58. I was attending the Harvest Clinic in Glasgow for counselling and therapy. I was seeing a therapist called Angela Trainer who took me through the process. She was also a psychologist and she encouraged me to report the matter to the police. I thought back to when I was fourteen and [GMX] was abusing me. I was thinking that it will not always be like this and when I am older I will turn the tables on him.
59. The abuse stopped when I was sixteen and I no longer had to see him. I was still under the care of the social work department and he did try to keep up the visits but I was finding more excuses to stop him coming to me or for me to visit him in

Glasgow. I think that he only visited me twice at my flat as it meant he had to travel too far to see me.

60. I had seen an advert in the Glasgow Herald for trainee pub managers. I was accepted and travelled to London and got a job running public houses. I did a lot of training and attended many courses. I became friendly with a lady who was a hypnotist and psychotherapist and I became really interested in her subject. I continued to work at the pub but I also enrolled at the University of London for a course to study hypnosis and psychotherapy.
61. I was in the pub at five in the morning when it was broken into by armed, masked men and that was enough for me to stop working there. I was busy doing my diplomas at university. When I finished the course I came back to Aberdeen. I was now 24.
62. I practised as a hypnotherapist and psychotherapist building up a client base. I also did some bar trade work. I had some good press and so I was very busy with clients. In 1990 I married my husband [REDACTED] who was a farmer.

### **Impact**

63. I no longer have a problem with my throat. I think that the tonsillitis was a stress symptom of the care system. I also suffered from a sore back which is stress related. I have some phobias surrounding eating meals with people because [REDACTED] used to take me out for meals. I cannot stand people chewing gum or slurping coffee because these were also traits associated with [REDACTED]. If I come into contact with these things I have to leave and compose myself. I am able to treat myself by meditation and avoiding the situation.
64. I occasionally have flashbacks to my times with [REDACTED] and have had a lot of therapy to help me deal with them. I have to say to taxi drivers not to be chewing gum or having their lunch when they pick me up. I have to try and avoid all these everyday triggers.

65. I think that my experiences in care have affected my relationships with other people. I would like to have a relationship but I just can't bring myself to commit. My husband is still my friend and now lives in New Zealand. I have a stable life on my own living in the countryside.
66. When I was in my teens and early 20's I was very conscious of my breasts. It was for this reason that I had a breast reduction operation. I was paranoid about the unnatural interest that men especially [GMX] had in my breasts.
67. In 2005 when I first made a report to the police about [GMX] I was not coping well with the memories. I started drinking to excess and immersed myself in my work. A direct result of this was one day in May 2016 when I had been drinking the night before I was breathalysed by the police the following afternoon and was subsequently convicted of drunk driving. I lived in the countryside and to lose my licence was a major problem. It was also a lesson in life for me and I purchased a bike and stopped drinking.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

68. In 2005, I reported to the police that [GMX] had abused me and there was an investigation. The police pre warned [GMX] about the allegations and so when he arrived for interview with his solicitor he already had all the answers. He flatly denied everything. The result was that he was never prosecuted. I was the only witness. I think that at some stage I spoke to an Avril McKay from the Child Protection Unit of the police and I do recall they came to my house to interview me. I was very nervous and remember throwing up in the toilet. It has always been my hope that some of the "special girls" [GMX] referred to will come forward.
69. In 2014 I again reported [GMX] to the police. I think that it is now being looked at by a Detective Inspector Lambley. I am convinced that I am not the only child that

he has abused. He as good as told me about the other "special girls" that were seeing him and I think that they could be traced.

70. In 2018, I was updated in the past month by the police that they will be renewing their enquiries. I had a client that was a police officer and he managed to speak to DI Lambley and get the enquiry into [GMX] looked at again.
71. I have been in touch with the Health and Care Professionals regarding [GMX] because he is still a practising psychologist. They have also contacted me and have told me that they will be in touch with the police and also myself when I have completed the private session with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. They are managing the potential risk that [GMX] presents.
72. I have paid for all the counselling I have received over the years privately. I have never had the assistance of the National Health Service. There didn't seem to be anything available through the NHS and there were big waiting lists.

### **Records**

73. I contacted Ayrshire Council about my records. I only managed to get them in the last few months. They also told me that they had released my social work records to the police and that they were now missing.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

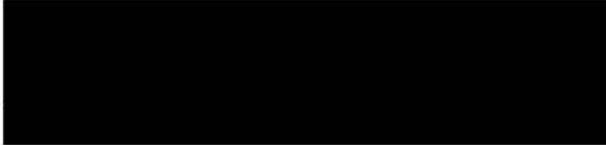
74. When you are a child you need to have a decent social worker. Kids behave badly because there is something wrong. They need to up the standards of children's homes. They need to soften the blow for children placed in care. [GMX] was just a law unto himself and was not accountable to anyone and that needs to change.

75. I hope that someone else who was abused by **GMX** comes forward and I will be believed by the authorities. I hope that the children's homes standards are raised.

**Other information**

76. At one time I was working with Future Pathways as a therapist but I am longer involved with them for a number of reasons.

77. 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... 31/7/18 .....