

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GRY [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GRY [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1953.  
My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Aberdeen and have stayed there all my life. My parent's names were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My mother died in 1973 or 1974. I was twenty-one or twenty-two years old at the time and can remember being flown home at the time of her death. She committed suicide because of my father. He was messing around with other woman. He was a long distance lorry driver involved in the glass industry. He died in 2002.
3. I had three brothers and two sisters. Both my sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and my youngest brother [REDACTED], are now deceased. [REDACTED] was the oldest, then [REDACTED] who is two or three years older than me. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were twins and were born a few years after me. [REDACTED] was physically disabled and was in a wheel chair all her life. She died a few years ago. Then there was [REDACTED] who was the youngest. He died recently.
4. When I was a young boy in the fifties and early sixties, I used to get a lot of hidings from my mother and father. They didn't muck about when they hit you. That's just how life was at that time. You wouldn't get away with treating people like that now.

5. I used to retaliate a lot. They said I was the bad one in the family. I just didn't accept it. That's why I went to an approved school later in life. My mum and dad didn't have much to do with me.
6. My brothers and sisters had a different nature to me. They did what they did and I was the bad egg in the family according to them. They don't think that now. After I went to Rossie Farm, my life changed all together.
7. I don't remember the first house we lived in because I was only one or two year's old at the time. The second house was a three-bedroom house in Mastrick, Aberdeen.
8. My mum and dad worked all their life. My dad was a glazier and my mother worked with fish most of her life.
9. We were fed at home. If I didn't get enough I went out and stole it. It was a different life back then.
10. The first school I remember being at was Kingswood in Aberdeen. I then went to a Catholic School, the Holy Family. I didn't like that school and I was expelled. They were religious and we all went to church and to Sunday school. They were always preaching at us and I wasn't into that.
11. I don't know why I was a Catholic. My father and the three oldest kids in the family were Catholic and my mother and the three youngest were Protestant. I don't know why that happened. My father put me in the Holy Family, I had no option but to go there.
12. I always got on with my brothers and sisters back then, I had no problem with them.

### **Nazareth House, Claremont Street, Aberdeen**

13. I was two and a half years old when I was sent to Nazareth House. I don't know why I was sent there. I never asked my parents. My brother and I have tried to figure it out and we think it was because my mother was having bairns. At that time, it was easy for parents to put their children into care if they couldn't look after them.
14. I was in Nazareth House at the same time as my older brother [REDACTED]. My sister [REDACTED] was also in there but not for long, just a few days. I was in Nazareth House just the once and stayed for around three months.
15. The only thing I can remember about Nazareth House is that they had a tennis court out the back. I don't know why that keeps coming back to me. My brother said the upstairs bathroom looked onto the tennis court. Maybe that's the reason I remember it. We took our baths in there.
16. It was on Great Western Road. The building is still there but it's flats now. I couldn't tell you the lay out of the building or how big it was.
17. I don't remember any of the staff. Just that there were a lot of nuns in there.
18. I didn't like Nazareth House or any of the nuns. I didn't like the Holy Family School either. That was the nearest school to my house. Maybe that was something to do with Nazareth House and the reason I got expelled from the school.
19. My family were probably staying in Mastrick when I was at Nazareth House.

### **Routine at Nazareth House, Aberdeen**

20. I don't remember anything about the routine at Nazareth House. My brother [REDACTED] has already given a statement to our solicitor in Edinburgh and he may remember more

than me. I've also told the solicitor what I can remember. I didn't make anything up, I've just told him what I remember.

21. My brother was never in any other homes. He was the good one of the family, he worked hard and became a ship's captain later in life. He moved out of Aberdeen when he was nineteen. He's a millionaire and stays in the [REDACTED]. I stayed with him there for around a year. I was fishing at the time, working on a trawler.

### **Abuse at Nazareth House, Aberdeen**

22. I remember getting smacked across the backs of my legs with a wet towel. That was when I didn't do what I was told. I've spoken to my brother about that and he tells me they all used to get that. It was second nature to the nuns. I can remember I didn't like it.
23. I'm sure they used to put me in a bath with cold water in it. That's basically all I can remember from my time in that place.
24. All different nuns hit me. I suppose it depended on who was on duty at the time. I couldn't describe any of them or give you their names. I was too young.
25. My brother told me they would regularly make us stand outside on the landing with no clothes on. I can't remember that.
26. The other stuff I know about has come from my brother. He was a few years older than me so he can remember better. He used to get into a lot of trouble in there. He told me that when I was being abused he would stick up for me. Then he would get it for sticking up for me.
27. My brother told me that they hit me just for the sake of doing it sometimes. If I started crying that would be enough for them to hit me. I presume that's just the way it was back then.

28. I've read about Nazareth House and the nuns make the excuse that they didn't want the children in the first place. There was no need for them to be nasty about it.

**Reporting of abuse at Nazareth House**

29. I don't think I would have told my parents about what was happening at Nazareth House. They wouldn't have been interested.

**Leaving Nazareth House, Aberdeen**

30. I don't remember leaving Nazareth House.

**Children's Shelter, Hardgate, Aberdeen**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Westburn Road Children's Home, Aberdeen**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Kaimhill Remand Home, Aberdeen**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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106. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Balgowan Approved School, Strathmartine Road, Dundee**

122. I was in Balgowan for almost two years. I could have been out after eleven months but I ran away three or four times so had time added on, three months every time I ran away.

123. I thought it was great there. There were around ninety kids in the school. Every one stayed in their own corner. Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Edinburgh, the boys all had their own corner so when I went there, I sat with the Aberdeen folk.

124. The age range was twelve to fifteen. It had to be because it was a school. We had to attend classes between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm.

125. It was a massive place, a big square and everything was off the square. We had a gym, woodwork area, classes for everything. In the middle of everything was the playground.
126. At one side under the dormitories was the food hall and at the other side under the dormitories were the classrooms.
127. Mr <sup>LIF</sup> was <sup>SNR</sup> and <sup>SNR</sup> was Mr McGuire. Everyone was called Mr, there were no teachers called by their first name. I remember a teacher called Mr Skinner and a teacher called Mr <sup>GRZ</sup> who worked in the shoe shop.
128. A few of the teachers in there were gay. I don't want to go into any detail about that. I had no interest in that. Some people did it their own way and that was it. I just kept away from that and so did most of my pals.
129. There were one or two gay pupils in there as well. <sup>SNR</sup> knew about that but keeping the place running smoothly was all they worried about.

### **Routine at Balgowan Approved School, Strathmartine Road, Dundee**

#### *First day*

130. I remember my first day. My probation officer took me from the court. The probation officer and another guy from the court took me. I wasn't handcuffed or anything like that.
131. They drove me down to Dundee. The school was just off the Kingsway in Downfield. There was a hospital behind this school as well, Strathmartine hospital. It's still there.
132. I remember the year I was in there. It was 1966 because I remember watching England in the world cup. We watched it in the TV room. There was a good few of us watched it. I think it was a Saturday. I would have been thirteen.

133. I met <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED] and <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED]. They told me what was happening. I was then taken through to a room where I got changed into the regular school uniform we wore at the approved school. I was allocated a number and shown where to go.

134. There were four dormitories, two at each end of the school.

*Mornings and bedtime*

135. The dormitories were all named after the glens, Glenisla, Glencoe. We all had a number and my number was [REDACTED]. We had to get up at the same time in the morning, get washed and make our beds. Then we had to stand at the end of our bed while they checked they were made properly.

136. Before breakfast, we all had to stand in rows in the playground. We stood in rows in our number order. They would know if anyone was missing from the line because we were in number order. Once everyone was there, we would be allowed in for our breakfast.

137. At bedtime, we would all have to stand by our beds again. They would tell us to get undressed. We put our underwear in a basket at the foot of our beds and someone would come round and take the baskets away. We then turned our covers down and got into bed.

138. Lights out would be about half an hour after that. I would hear noises after lights out and there would be fighting. A lot of trouble started when the lights went out but there were always teachers on. I think there were two or three at each end of the building and they were on all night. They would stop the fighting.

139. As time went on, I started behaving myself. I got to work in the kitchen, which meant I got to sleep in a smaller dormitory. That was because we got up at different times from the others. There were only six beds in that dormitory and it was good. It was guys I knew and who I worked with in the kitchen.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

140. After they checked our beds, we went downstairs to the playground and lined up for breakfast. That was just after 8:00 am. We ate our breakfast and then went back out to the playground where we were allocated to our classes.
141. After school at 4:00 pm, we went back out into the playground, lined up again and were allowed in for our dinner.
142. The food hall was in a large hall underneath the dormitories.
143. We would line up for our food, which was placed on trays. We would help ourselves, take whatever we wanted. The food was okay, I have no complaints about the food.
144. Once we finished our meal there were guys who would clean the tables. The tables had covers on them and they would turn the covers over at lunchtime for the evening meal. The covers were washed at night for the next day. They were made of a plastic type material, not cloth.
145. Later when I was working in the kitchen, I could take what I wanted, when no one was looking.

### *Washing/bathing*

146. We showered a few times a week at night-time before we went to bed. I can't remember any issues at shower time. There were around forty guys in the dormitories at each end of the school and the showers were at each ends.

### *Clothing/uniform*

147. We had a uniform at Balgowan. It was jeans and a jumper, that's all it was. We only changed that once a week when they washed the clothes. I think it was Friday night

they did that. We had to put our clothes into a laundry basket and they gave us fresh clothes for the weekend.

#### *Leisure time*

148. We used to play football with folk from the hospital sometimes. A lot of them were disabled but they played with us from the school. I was a full back and had managed to get into the school team. We weren't bad. We also played other schools around Dundee every Saturday morning and I looked forward to that.
149. In the evenings, we had recreation. We had games and some people made things with cardboard. You could do whatever you wanted to do. We had recreation until just after 8:00 pm. Then we had to go up to the dormitories.
150. On a Saturday afternoon, we were allowed to go out. I think we were allowed out between 12:00 pm and 5:00 pm. We were given a shilling, which was a lot of money back then. I would go and watch the football in Dundee. We were given free tickets to watch either Dundee at Dens Park or Dundee United at Tannadice. We could spend our money on whatever we wanted.

#### *Trips and holidays*

151. They took us on holiday up the mountains to a place called Glenhead, a retreat in the Cairngorms. They also took us to Arbroath once a year. That was to another school for a three-week holiday.

#### *Schooling*

152. We were at school between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday. We had different classes. Things like woodwork, maths and such like. We did a bit of everything.

153. We didn't spend all our time sitting at desks though. We had shoe shops and forestry classes where we learned to cut down bushes. It was all different things, practical things. It was the same in Rossie Farm.
154. We had maths and English to do too and I got on okay at that. It didn't bother me.
155. The staff that were teaching us in school were the same staff putting us to bed at night. We just called them teachers.

*Healthcare / medication*

156. There were nurses in the school. They had their own rooms and surgeries. We needed the nurses because the playground was made of concrete. There were a lot of people who fell playing football and injured themselves. If there was a serious injury, they would take us to hospital.
157. The dentist was just down the hill from the school. Ten or twelve of us who would go down at any one time for a check-up.

*Religious instruction*

158. The whole school went to church every Sunday. That was down passed Downfield and Strathmartine Road, down towards the Kingsway. There was a church there and I remember us all walking down to it. Everyone knew we were from the approved school. We did that was every Sunday at 11:00 am.
159. Not everyone was forced to go to the church. We just went so we could get out of the school. I was a Catholic but there was no choice of where to go. We were just asked if we wanted to go to church and that was it. Most of us went just to get out and get some exercise.

### *Work*

160. I worked in the kitchen. They had cooks but my job was to take things like the cooked potatoes and put them onto long trays. When the guys came in for their tea they would just help themselves. It was good working in the kitchen.

### *Personal possessions*

161. I didn't take any possessions in there. They would have been stolen.

### *Bed Wetting*

162. I had stopped bedwetting long before I went there. There were some that still did though and they got a lot of stick. At the end of the day, there was a reason for it and once that was explained to us it wasn't too bad. We used to have a laugh about it and that was it.
163. The boys wetting their bed had to take off their own rubber sheets, wash them and put fresh ones on. The staff didn't do anything like that.

### *Culture*

164. I got into a lot of fights in Balgowan. I was always having trouble with someone. Everyone would hang around in their own groups and that depended on where you were from. The Glasgow boys stayed together, the Dundee boys did the same and so did the Aberdeen boys.
165. There was no smoking allowed in Balgowan but lots of us did.

### *Visitors*

166. I never had any visits from my probation officer once I was in Balgowan. I never saw any other visitors in there, no inspectors or anything like that. Once you went into Balgowan, they were in charge of you and that was the end of it.
167. Some of the teachers would look out for you. If they thought something was wrong they would take you aside and ask you what the matter was. They weren't all ruffians, some were sympathetic towards you.
168. If you went to see Mr [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED], he would get one of the teachers to sit with you in a room. A lot of the teachers in there were from Dundee.

### *Family Contact*

169. My mum and dad visited me once when I was in Arbroath with the school. We went there for three weeks every summer. I can remember my mother and father coming to down to see me. It just happened to be the day I did something wrong. I was standing with another ten guys and away from the rest of the group down at the beach. My dad came up and said a few nasty words to me. He had found out from a teacher what I had done. I can't remember what it was I had done.

### *Running away*

170. I ran away from Balgowan quite a few times although I was always caught and brought back. The school wasn't secure, you could just walk out of Balgowan. I got to Aberdeen a few times. I remember walking to Montrose one time and stealing a bike. I didn't walk all the way to Aberdeen.
171. When I got to Aberdeen, I would go out with my mates. I would stay at my mum and dads and a couple of days later the police would pick me up. They knew I was there.

172. Each time you ran away, you had three months added to your time at Balgowan. That's why I was in there for so long.

### *Discipline*

173. We weren't allowed to smoke in Balgowan. Lots of guys did though. I did. I started smoking when I was about twelve. I used to steal them from my mother. If a local shopkeeper knew your mum, they would sell fags to you too. You just had to say they were for your mum.

174. When I was brought back after running away, I was put in what they called a secure unit. It was just a cell with a bed in it. You were locked in there for a couple of days. They would bring your food to you. You had to press a button if you wanted to go to the toilet.

175. They would take away your benefits too. Reduce your recreation time. You would be made to stand in a line with those being punished and would be last in at lunchtime or dinnertime.

176. If you were being punished for something, you wouldn't get out on a Saturday afternoon. You had to be good to get out and get your money.

177. That was it, I got no real physical punishment. I would have hit them back.

178. In the dining room, there was a board which had everyone's number on it. Mine was [REDACTED]. Your number would move along the board until you had been there for eleven months. Then it would be time for you to go home. If you ran away, your number would stay still on the board for three months. If you were moving along the board, you had a star next to your number. If not, there was a cross next to your number.

179. There were some boys in there who didn't want to go home and would run away just to stay another three months. Some had no home they wanted to go back to really.

180. There were a few teachers that thought they were better than everyone. There was a teacher called Mr Skinner. The teacher who worked in the shoe shop was Mr <sup>GRZ</sup> [REDACTED]. He was a hardy guy.
181. There were a few teachers who grabbed folk by the scruff of the neck. They would take them round a corner and belt them. We weren't supposed to see it but we did. There was no cameras at that time so they could get away with it. There was also a few kids who hit back.
182. The teacher that did that in there were known. Everyone knew who they were. Even <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED] knew who was doing it. As long as everything ran smoothly, they didn't worry about it. Mr <sup>GRZ</sup> [REDACTED] was one of the teachers doing it.
183. When I say the teachers belted them I mean punched them. They never left a mark. They made sure they punched them where they didn't leave a mark. That was the way it was. We knew the teachers who did it. If you didn't want trouble from them, you kept away from them.
184. I was never abused. I would get clipped round the ear but I would just take that. The teachers pushed you a lot too. They were just telling you to keep on their right side.
185. I had my arguments and fights in there. I was no different from anybody else. The kids in there from Glasgow weren't frightened of anyone. I even fought with some Aberdeen guys in there. You fought with who you needed to fight with, that was all there was to it.
186. I threw a chair at a teacher once. I was put in the cell for that. We had our ups and downs in that school.

### **Leaving Balgowan Approved School, Strathmartine Road, Dundee**

187. I was feeling good about leaving Balgowan. I was going to a new school called Northfield, the same school as my brothers. I was going home to my mum and dad who were forgiving. I would have been fourteen when I left Balgowan. They didn't prepare me for going.
188. Things were fine at home and I enjoyed being back. I had been to an approved school and had learned my lesson.
189. I was back home for around one year. Things were okay. I was at Northfield School and I was doing alright. I never missed school because my dad would have found out. Neither did my brothers.
190. After a time though, I got back in with my old pals and I went back to square one. I'm not blaming them for what I did, I was responsible for my own actions. I actually broke into the school I was at and stole some money. I was caught for doing that.

### **Kaimhill Remand Home, Aberdeen**

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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194. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Craiginches Prison, Aberdeen**

196. I was so excited about going into Craiginches. I was only fifteen years old. I remember being surprised to see some of my neighbours in there. I hadn't see them around for a wee while. I was standing on the landing, two of my neighbours turned away from me. As if to say, what's he doing here? He's only a bairn.
197. I was excited about telling my mates I had been in Craiginches Prison.
198. I remember arriving and I was treated just like any other prisoner. I was stripped down, showered and had to wear prison clothes just like the other prisoners arriving from the main court.
199. I do remember feeling a bit sad about it though. I thought I would be able to keep the clothes I had on and not have to wear a prison uniform. I also thought I would be out the same day but I wasn't, I was in there over the weekend. I was a bit scared of the other prisoners.
200. I did what I was told though, got fresh clothes and was taken to a cell.
201. I was in B Hall for five nights, cell ten, which was at the end of the corridor. I was as far away from the other prisoners as they could get me.

202. I remember being taken in front of the governor because I wrote in one of the books in my cell. It was a Bible and I wrote in it. A prison guard must have come into my cell when I was out and noticed it. He reported it to the governor.
203. I was sorry I had done that, I just didn't think anything about it.

### **Routine at Craiginches Prison, Aberdeen**

204. I was in my cell twenty-three hours per day. For an hour a day, I was allowed out to walk. A prison guard would take me round the side, away from all the other prisoners and I could walk back and forward there.
205. The guards were always asking me if I wanted books to read. Some of the prisoners would shout over saying if I wanted anything just to let them know.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

206. We had meals three times a day. All my meals were brought to me. I didn't get to mix with the other prisoners. We had supper around 11:00 pm, a cup of tea or something like that.

### *Washing/bathing*

207. I was showered when I arrived there but that was the only shower I had.

### *Clothing/uniform*

208. I had to wear the same clothes as all the other prisoners, prison uniform.

### *Leisure time*

209. I was taken to an area round the side of the prison and was allowed to walk back and forward for an hour. I could see the prisoners walking round in a circle in another area but they were quite a distance away from me.

### *Visitors*

210. I had no probation officer or any visits while I was in there. I didn't see anyone until I went back to juvenile court. The probation officer there told me that I shouldn't have been in prison. I told the staff at Rossie Farm I had been in prison. They couldn't believe it.

### *Family Contact*

211. No one visited me while I was in there

### *Discipline*

212. I was locked in a cell for twenty-three hours a day. My food was brought to me and I only had books to read in the cell.

### **Abuse at Craiginches Prison, Aberdeen**

213. I didn't suffer any abuse at Craiginches Prison.

### **Leaving Craiginches Prison, Aberdeen**

214. I had to go to a special juvenile court to get released from Craiginches. I was taken to Bon-Accord Square. I was taken there in handcuffs.

215. It was decided I would go to Rossie Farm School in Montrose. I was to be sent back to Kaimhill Remand Centre for a few days until it was all sorted out. My mother wasn't at the court. The probation officer was there and he said he was going to tell my mother. Again it wasn't really explained to me what was happening. I was just told I was going to Rossie Farm.

216. I don't know the probation officer's name. We had different probation officers all the time.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

### **Rossie Farm Approved School, Montrose**

218. I think the age group at Rossie Farm was fifteen up to eighteen. Rossie Farm was just a big school, exactly the same as Balgowan. It's still there. I've taken my kids passed it a few times over the years. It's just the same.

219. There must have been around one hundred boys in there. Maybe more.

220. We lined up the same as Balgowan. There were ten rows and I was in the third row. I was number [REDACTED].

221. I'm sure there were four or five dormitories. The dormitories were at each side of the building and all the showers were in the middle. All the boys from the dorms used the showers in the middle. The dormitories were all upstairs and you could see them all from the front of the building. There was also a swimming pool at Rossie Farm.

222. I got on okay with the other boys in the dorm. We were all a bit older so it was alright. There were kids there from all over Scotland, just like in Balgowan.

223. I'm not sure who was in charge at Rossie, possibly a Mr McPhail. I think there was [REDACTED] Mr Hill and a Mr Smith, I think he was the assistant head. Mr Pettigrew was the art teacher and there was a Mr Trainer.
224. When you entered Rossie Farm from the front there were offices on the right and left and stairs up the middle which took you up to the dormitories. We had our meals in the food hall under the dormitories. There was a recreation area and a wing called the McDonald Wing. That was a secure unit and there was an alleyway between the main building and the wing.
225. When I was there, there were two murderers staying in there. One of the boys had killed a child. That really was top security with bars on the windows. There was a ten-foot fence at the back with barbed wire on top. The two boys were out the back some of the time.

### **Routine at Rossie Farm Approved School, Montrose**

#### *First day*

226. I can't really remember my first day there but it would have been standard. The guy would take your name and give you your number. They didn't mess about. One of the teachers would take you to where you were going to be sleeping.
227. There were lots of guys in there I knew from Balgowan. Lots of the Dundee guys were in there. That did make things easier for me. They told me what was going on in the place. Where things were and who to stay clear of.
228. There was a staff member who was in charge of you. He maybe had numbers one to thirty and he would tell you how long you had left before you could leave. I think he was like a probation officer but he was based in there. If you wanted to know something or a release date, he would be able to tell you.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

229. The guy who taught me to paint and decorate was the guy who put me to bed. I spent all day with him and he would come up and make sure I was in my bed. I got on alright with him.
230. Once in bed, we were allowed to keep our bed light on and read books until 10:00 pm. There was a main switch outside the dormitory where they switched them all off.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

231. Food was okay there. The staff did the cooking and most stayed in the houses round about the school. There were about fifty houses there. They were positioned in a circle down from the school. Some of the staff stayed down in Montrose but the majority were staying there on the campus.
232. They also served food to the guys in the McDonald Wing. There would be a trolley taken over and left outside the door and a guard would come out and collect it. I took the trolley over a few times.

### *Clothing/uniform*

233. I was given jeans, a shirt and a jersey when I arrived. You changed your clothes in your dormitory. There were cubicles in the showers and that's where your clean clothes were. You would change into your pyjamas and take your clean clothes through to your dormitory.

### *Leisure time*

234. At 6:00 pm you could go to the gym or go and play snooker or table tennis. There was plenty to do at night. There were classes too and you could go there and do puzzles and such like.

235. We were all split up at night, very seldom were we all together. The only time everyone was together was at parade time.

236. On a Sunday, they would take us for a walk. We would walk down to what is now a dual carriageway then turn and walk back up to the school. That was a three miles walk and everybody did it every Sunday. I remember we used to stop for ten minutes in a layby. Some folk would stop in their cars and speak to their sons. Boys over sixteen were allowed to have a smoke.

#### *Trips and holidays*

237. I don't think we were taken away on any trips at Rossie. We were too old for that sort of thing. Some of the guys were away at Blairgowrie and Perth picking raspberries, strawberries and daffodils. They were given money for doing that. I went daffodil picking one day and they put money in my bank for doing it. I'm not sure if we were taken away on any trips though. Maybe they took us to Glenhead the same at Balgowan, I'm not too sure. I think maybe you could go if you wanted to but you didn't have to. I don't think I ever went.

#### *Schooling*

238. There was no school and no schoolwork. We were fifteen so they didn't have class teachers. We had to pick a trade and that's what we did during the day.

#### *Healthcare / medication*

239. There were nurses based at Rossie Farm. If anything serious happened, they would take you to the hospital. There were matrons there and we weren't far from Montrose. I did see a few ambulances coming in. A lot of the guys were working with tools, cutting trees down and there was a few of them got injured.

240. There was a guy in there who would check your teeth. I don't think he extracted teeth though. If you had anything wrong, they would take you down to the dentist in Montrose. There was a minibus at Rossie Farm and they would take you down in that.
241. There were also teachers there you could go and speak to if you were feeling down. The people who couldn't handle themselves and were picked on would go to these classes. Some of the teachers were skilled in that sort of thing

*Religious instruction*

242. There was nothing religious in Rossie Farm. We didn't go to church or anything like that.

*Work*

243. Rossie Farm was a bit different. The classes we had were there for us to learn a trade. There was a place you could do joinery work, a tailor, a shoemaker, plumbers, painting and decorating. We could pick any of the trades. I picked painting and decorating.
244. If you were in Rossie Farm for over one year and you did painting and decorating you could go out and work for a firm for three months and that time would come off the total time you were at Rossie Farm.
245. We painted the teacher's houses. It got you out of the school. We were out all day and they gave us sweets and things to eat. It was just a job to us. We didn't get paid for it but the staff did guarantee they would find us a job at the end of our time there.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

246. They didn't celebrate birthdays and we went home for Christmas.



### *Personal possessions*

247. I didn't take anything personal into Rossie Farm. It would just have been stolen.

### *Culture*

248. I would say the Glasgow boys ran the place. There was so many of them and they weren't frightened of anyone. They all stuck together. If you kept out their way, you were alright.

### *Visitors*

249. I couldn't tell you if there were ever any inspectors came into the place. I was working all the time so wouldn't have seen anyone. The social work never came to visit me. Once you were in these places that was it. None of the probation officers came to see you.

### *Family Contact*

250. I didn't get any visitors. I was in Aberdeen most weekends and saw my brothers and sisters so they didn't have to come down to see me. There was no phone we could use in Rossie Farm.

251. I did write to my mum once a week. The staff would always check what we had written in the letter before it was sent. I'm not sure why they did that.

252. We had to go to a class when it was our turn to write our letters. I would just let my mum know what I was doing during the week. When we were finished the letter we had to put it in an envelope and leave it unsealed on the teacher's desk. As far as I know, they read the letters before sealing the envelopes.

253. I never received any letter back from my mum. But she knew what I was doing and my brothers and sisters would tell her what I was up to when I saw them at the weekends.
254. We got to go home in the summertime for a week. I also went out at weekends. Some weekends I would get out about 10:00 am and if I had enough money, I would get a train to Aberdeen. I would spend the day in Aberdeen with my mates. They knew I was just up for the day. I would make sure I was back at Rossie before 8:00 pm. We had to be back at night. We weren't allowed to stay out overnight.
255. If you missed the train back to Montrose you would lose your recreation and your time in Rossie Farm would be extended. We always made sure we were on that train back. I wouldn't always go to Aberdeen, sometimes I would go into Montrose.
256. They must have given us over a pound. When I went to Aberdeen, I'd often see my brothers and sisters and they would give me some money too. I always had enough money to get back to Aberdeen.

#### *Running away*

257. I ran away a few times, back to Aberdeen. I got caught a few times too. I was put into a cell they had at Rossie and lost my privileges. They would also add three months onto my time there. I think in total I did around nineteen months. One of the main reasons I stopped running away was that they told me they would get me a job at the end of my time at Rossie Farm. It was seldom folk didn't run away at least once.

#### *Discipline*

258. Discipline wasn't such an issue in there. We were working all the time and were treated like workers. We were all learning a trade. There was always one or two teachers who thought they were better than everyone else but we were painting their houses so they didn't say anything to us.

259. After running away, I would be put in the cell for a night by the headmaster and I was in there quite a few times. No different from anyone else. It was always the headmaster that put me in there. That was the only time I saw him really.

#### **Abuse at Rossie Farm, Approved School, Montrose**

260. I wouldn't say I was abused in Rossie Farm. I could handle myself in there. They wouldn't clip me round the ear because I would have clipped them back. I was a bit older and a bit wiser. No one really bothered me.

261. Some of the weaker boys were picked on by staff. The boys who couldn't really defend themselves. Some of it was physical some psychological. Boys from Glasgow, Edinburgh and that tended to stick together but the guys from the country, wee villages were picked on at times. I just stuck to my painting and that was it.

#### **Leaving Rossie Farm, Approved School, Montrose**

262. I had an idea when I was leaving Rossie Farm. They had told me they would get me a job at the end of my time there. That certainly stopped me running away. They were true to their word. They got me a job working in one of the biggest firms in Aberdeen. It was called [REDACTED] at the time. [REDACTED] owns part of the company now. That's where I served my time. I appreciated what they did for me.

263. There were plumbers and joiners and they were all offered jobs. Some people were selected to work as shoes makers. I'm not sure if there was any work for them after their time at Rossie.

264. We used to think they trained us just so we would work on their houses. The staff staying there never wanted for anything. But it was more than that. We were taught a trade and they gave us a good start by finding us work.

265. When the time came, we just left. There was no meeting the headmaster or anything like that. I spoke to the boy who trained me a few days before I left and he said that he hoped he wouldn't see me back at Rossie Farm. We were told the time our train left Montrose and the boy who drove the minibus gave us a lift down and put us on the train to Aberdeen. That was it.

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

266. I went back and lived with my mum and dad. I lived with them until I was around twenty-two. I got on okay with them. As long as I was putting board money on the mantelpiece every Friday, that was all they were worried about. I didn't have any trouble after that.

267. I finished my apprenticeship with [REDACTED]. I actually went on a six-month training course when I came out of Rossie. I had learned the painting side of things but I had to learn how to decorate.

268. I got married when I was twenty-two and moved out of my mum and dad's house at that time.

269. I also served my apprenticeship at sea. That was six months to a year. After that, I went back to painting and decorating again. I used to float back and forward between painting and fishing.

270. I moved to Spain for three and a half years. I had a house out there, a caravan in Scotland and a house to keep. It all became too expensive for me.

271. Around then my wife left me and I had to bring up my four kids alone. They were around two, three, seven and eight at the time. I carried on painting and decorating for a while but I had to stop. There wasn't enough time in the day to do that and bring my kids up.

272. The council gave us a house across from the school and we did okay. Once they were a bit older, I went back to painting. I was self-employed and did okay for a while.
273. I was involved in a car crash about six years ago, someone ran into me in my van and I wasn't able to go up the ladder after that. I had to stop painting then.
274. Since then I have been driving folk around. I am a member of [REDACTED] in Aberdeen and I help out by driving the pensioners back and forward to the club. I like doing that and it keeps me busy.
275. I've also got fourteen grandchildren. I see one of my daughters every day and our family have a few caravans up in Banff. So we see each other quite a lot.

### **Impact**

276. Judging by the rest of my family, me going into these care homes and approved schools was a very poor thing for me. My family all think that too. The effects of having been in care may well have caused me to commit the crime I did in my early life. My brothers certainly didn't go down that route.
277. I think if I had had a better education, I would have had a better life. All the staff in those places were interested in was getting things done and getting you to bed. I don't think the nuns at Nazareth House wanted the kids there in the first place. I was a bit young in there but my brother has told me what went on. He was five year's old at the time he was in there.
278. I'm on tablets for depression. My doctor wonders if my depression is caused by something that happened in my younger years. It could be because I think about my time in care. In the last few months, I have thought a lot more about it. I'm normally one of those guys who doesn't worry about what happened yesterday. When I think back to my time in care, it just wasn't a nice experience.

279. I'm sure there are a lot of things happened to me that I can't remember. I have no doubt the best place I was in was Rossie Farm. It set me on a road with the painting and decorating and I have to thank the guy who taught me for that. They were the only ones who actually cared about me I think.
280. I have taken my kids passed Rossie Farm and Balgowan and often drive passed the children's homes I was in. I have sat outside in my car and thought about what went on in those places. I don't know why I wanted to visit these places.
281. I would say I've had a good life up until now and since I left Rossie Farm. I was never in prison again.
282. I speak to my brother [REDACTED] on the phone about three times a day. Even though he lives [REDACTED] down South. I don't really have anything to say to my other brother who lives around the corner from me. It's always been like that with him.
283. I've not really been in any long term relationships since my wife left. I'm happy enough. All I need now is my dog. Without my dog, I would be lost.
284. Being in care may have had an impact on me and my relationships. That may be the reason I'm happy living alone. I don't trust anyone and that may stem from the people I looked up to when I was in care. I've never really thought about it until recently.
285. I wouldn't steal from anyone and haven't done for a very long time. I would rather give than take. That's the way I am and why I'm happy to drive folk to and from the social club. Those folk wouldn't get to the club without that.
286. I've always had a mistrust in social workers and police. I didn't want to get them involved in my life growing up. I was scared to get them involved because I didn't trust them. I brought up four kids on my own and no social worker was ever at my door. I was surprised at that but I didn't want them involved.

287. I did get some support from the St Margaret's Trust. That's a charity for girls and they used to give me money to help with the girls. They also took the girls on holiday once.
288. My kids have turned out well. They're all in relationships, have their own houses and are doing fine. I see them all and my life revolved round them.
289. I do have a lot of trouble sleeping at night but that's maybe just an age thing. I wake up thinking about things that happened years ago. That maybe because I am thinking about it more.
290. I never spoke to anyone about Nazareth House. I just thought it was a bad place to be so I never told anyone. My brother never said anything about Nazareth House either. Not until recently. He speaks about it a lot now.
291. I've never taken drugs or had any issue with alcohol.
292. I've been to see a solicitor about my time in care. They got in touch with me though. It's not about the money for me, I just want to get the facts out. My brother feels the same.

### **Treatment/support**

293. I have been to the doctor and take medication for depression.
294. When I was at primary school, I did see a psychiatrist a few times at the sick kid's hospital. That was after I hit a teacher with a chair. I found it interesting at the time but don't remember too much about it now.

## Reporting of Abuse

295. I never reported any abuse after leaving care. Maybe I was scared to report anything in case it came back on me. The amount of lies that were told by the police. What was the point and most of the staff will be dead now.

## Records

296. I have records from Nazareth House. It states I left Nazareth House wearing the same clothes that I arrived in. That's all documented. My solicitor in Edinburgh has the records and I have a copy somewhere. I managed to get those records to verify I was in there.
297. I contacted Dundee Council and I have records that say Balgowan existed. They have confirmed I was in Balgowan but they can't find my records.
298. I've been in touch with Future Pathways and I've spoken to them a few times.

## Lessons to be Learned

299. I think the staff should have had more contact with us. There was no affection. To them it was just a job. Maybe nowadays they think more about it than they did back then. They never started it off. They abused the kids because they didn't want them there. It was a different era back then, in the fifties and sixties. Even the police used to give you a clip round the ear.
300. I think the staff should be better trained. They have more funding and the skills so they should make sure the training is there. They need to be more affectionate towards these kids. It shouldn't just be treated as a job.

**Other information**

301. 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. [REDACTED].....

Dated..... 15/11/22 .....

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