

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HEW

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is HEW my date of birth is 1960. I am 56 years old. My contact details are known to the inquiry.
2. At various times I was in care at the following institutions: 1. St Catherine Mary Children's Home, Dunoon. 2. Red House Children's Home, Musselburgh, East Lothian. 3. Larchgrove Assessment Centre, Springboig, Glasgow. 4. Gilshyhill Children's Home, Maryhill, Glasgow and finally 5. Rossie Farm Approved School, Montrose, Angus. Some of the institutions were absolutely fine and I had no problems. I have great difficulty with my memory and I have forgotten a lot of the names of my abusers or the names of the other boys that were in care at the same time.

Background

3. I was born in Glasgow. I had four older Siblings and . My younger siblings were and . I had a sister called who died as a result of a cot death. My father was not around very much when I was growing up.

Life before being put into care

4. My uncles used to come to my mother's house and would be involved in drinking and fighting. I remember someone poured a kettle of boiling water over me. When I was two years old someone flicked a cigarette at me and hit me in the eye No one did

anything. My grandmother called at the house and saw what had happened. I had been screaming in pain for three days. My grandmother got my father out of the pub and forced him to deal with it. [REDACTED]. Had it been dealt with at the time the doctors may well have been able to [REDACTED]. It was pure neglect. I honestly could not remember all the detail and was told about it in later life.

5. There was the constant threat of violence. I was about six years old when one of my uncles made me masturbate him. His name was [REDACTED]. I was also looked after by my Aunty [REDACTED]. It was just as bad at her house and I witnessed extreme violence and rape. Aunty [REDACTED] would make me go shoplifting with her. At one time or another most of my brothers or sisters were in homes or care. I spent a lot of time in police stations. It was alright there as I used to get fish and chips.
6. I remember on one occasion one of my uncles coming to the house and punching me in the face. He told my aunty that he would take me to the eye pavilion. My aunty wouldn't let him take me. I don't know what it was about but my aunty managed to get him out of the house. He was shouting through the letter box that he was going to kill me.
7. I never went to school. [REDACTED] I was very clumsy. Aunty [REDACTED] used to hit her own daughters but she never hit me. I recall on one occasion when she didn't come home at the weekend we had to look after ourselves and went up town to beg for food. I presumed that [REDACTED] had been arrested.
8. When I was about eight years old I was brought before a Children's Hearing. I had not been attending school. It was obvious that I was suffering from neglect. At the Children's Hearing it was decided to send my brother [REDACTED] and me to the St Catherine Mary Children's Home in Dunoon.

Institution

St Catherine Mary Children's Home, Dunoon.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later My mother had a chance here to get us back but she wouldn't play ball with the authorities. She didn't turn up for meetings. We were only there for about four weeks as I think that this home was only a short stay establishment. There must have been another meeting without my mother and it was decided to move [redacted] and me to Red House in Musselburgh.

Red House Children's Home, Musselburgh, East Lothian

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Red House Children's home

39. When we left Red House Children's Home we went back to live with my mother in Cowcaddens. In 1971 or 1972 we moved with my mother to a house in Drumchapel. It was the same old story alcoholics, violence and rape occurring on a regular basis.

40. I started to abuse substances. I would use Lady Esquire shoe polish and Evostick glue. The most effective of them all was DC which was a dry cleaning product. At

this time I tried to hang myself. [REDACTED] I was under the influence of glue. I didn't succeed but I was close.

41. I was dogging school and again I ended up back at the Children's Panel. On this occasion it was decided that I needed to go to Larchgrove Assessment Centre in Springboig Glasgow. I was supposed to go there for about three weeks for assessment but ended up staying there for a good few months.

Institution

Larchgrove Assessment Centre, Springboig, Glasgow

Life at Larchgrove.

42. Larchgrove had about 25 – 30 boys at the centre at any one time. There were a lot of staff but I can't remember their names. The centre had three sections. Bute was for the boys that were not too badly behaved. Jackson was for the other boys who were not well behaved or being assessed. I later learned that the other section called Arran was a psychiatric unit. I was placed into Jackson section. My brother [REDACTED] was no longer with me and I was on my own.

Routine

43. When you got up in the morning you had to make up your bed and it was inspected by the staff. If it wasn't done properly you would get a battering. You would have breakfast and then start cleaning. It felt like you were cleaning all the time. You would then do some schooling for a couple of hours. I would then go to my job at the greenhouse.
44. There were leisure facilities with a playground, a television room and a pool room which you could use.

Staff

45. I have great difficulty remembering the names of all the staff or the other boys that were at the Larchgrove.

Schooling

46. We had two hours of school every day. The lessons consisted of normal school work including maths and English. Most of my time was spent cleaning.

Visits

47. I was visited once by a psychiatrist. All I can remember about that was her asking me what I would take if I went to a desert island. I told her that all I wanted to take was my family, all the money and all the gold and some other stuff. I think that she needed to assess me before my next move. I was also visited by the C.I.D. who wanted to speak to me about a stabbing that happened before I went into Larchgrove.

Abuse at Larchgrove

48. The centre was unofficially run by a group called the "bully boys". They consisted of a group of inmates who were organised by the staff to hand out discipline. They would go and hit other inmates on the instructions of the staff. I recall sitting in the television room when one of the "bully boys" came up behind me and hit me twice in the face with a slipper. There was no reason for him to do it he was just doing what the staff asked him to do.
49. There was another occasion I got a 'doing' in the gym. The gym teacher was lying on the ground and I accidentally stood on his privates. He immediately stood up and punched me twice in the head.

50. The worst bullying happened to a black guy who was an inmate at the centre. It was very unusual at this time for a black guy to be there. He used to take abuse from everyone who called him racist names. He was also being hit all the time. I liked the guy because he used to try and laugh it off but he was subjected to terrible treatment.
51. It was a brutal regime at Larchgrove. I remember on one occasion being offered the punishment option of a weekend's leave or a boot in the arse. I of course opted for the boot in the arse and one of the staff made me spread my cheeks and bend over. I was wearing pyjamas at the time. He took a run and kick at me.
52. If you talked back they would take you to the bathroom and make you clean it using a toothbrush. You would have to go in between the tiles and if it was not cleaned to their satisfaction you would get a hit on the head.
53. There was a big lad at the school called "██████" who came from the Caizie" a gang in Glasgow. He was one of the bully boys and he once gave me a doing in the showers on the instructions of the staff.
54. There was a night watchman who used to come round at night. He was always stinking of drink. He had a torch and used to shine it in your eyes. He used to try it on with some of the boys. He tried it on with me but I was older and wiser now so I told him to get to fuck and he didn't bother me again. I was learning violence and how to look after myself. I think that he was trying it on with other boys because I could hear the moans.
55. I recall seeing one of the staff hitting one of the other boys with a pool cue. It was just brutal and I hated the place. They were really cruel. I was no longer bedwetting so life was easier in that respect. I remember seeing one of the staff pushing one of the boy's heads through a window protected by a wire grill. They had to call an ambulance on that occasion as the boy was bleeding badly. That would be in 1973.

56. There was a playground in the school where there was a lot of fighting. The centre also adjoined the neighbouring catholic St John Apostles School next door. I used to talk to the boys from there and they told me horrific tales of the abuse they suffered at the school. From the sound of it they had it worse than me.
57. I had a job working in the greenhouse at the centre. The staff member that ran the greenhouse was a very nice person. We would grow a lot of tomatoes. It was a really great place to work and got you away from the bullying.
58. I remember being taken to the swimming baths. I think we went on a bus to the swimming baths in Kirkcaldy. The staff would watch while the bully boys would be trying to duck you under the water and try to drown you.
59. There was a small cell at Larchgrove where they would put you if you weren't behaving. It had a very small bench. You were usually locked up for a couple of hours. They threw in a couple of books for you to read.
60. There was a supervisor at Larchgrove who was the man for slapping everyone. I would describe him as being in his 40's and smartly dressed in a double breasted jacket. He was in charge of Jackson House. I remember when he used to swear at you he called you a "frigging basket" instead of a "fucking bastard".

Reporting abuse at Larchgrove

61. There was no way you could make a complaint to about your treatment at Larchgrove. There was no one to tell and you would be too worried that it got back to the staff or the bully boys.

Leaving Larchgrove Assessment Centre

62. After my period of assessment at Larchgrove I was sent to Gilshochill Army Barracks in Maryhill, Glasgow. I was now fourteen years old. It was a fantastic place and I was

with friends of mine from Drumchapel. I had no issues at all with Gilshochill Barracks.

Leaving Gilshochill Barracks

63. I had a friend that was seventeen. I was much younger. I was with him when he had an argument with his girlfriend. I had nothing to do with the argument. The police were called and I got lifted with him. My friend told me to plead guilty and all I would get was a fine. We both pled guilty and my mate got a fifteen pound fine while I was sentenced to a year's residential training in Rossie Farm Approved School near Montrose. I was involved in a lot of things at the time. I thrived on violence.

Life at Rossie farm Approved School, Montrose, Angus

64. Rossie farm was like a borstal. All the boys were under sixteen years of age. This was the toughest place you could be sent to. You had to call all the staff "sir". There were boys came from everywhere in Scotland. The Glasgow boys ran the school. The other boys didn't argue with us as we had open razors and the likes. There was no bullying done by the boys when I was at this institution. The only bullies were the staff. I was only there for three months in 1975.

Routine

65. You would be woken up at six in the morning. You would have to tidy your bed and then do chores. You spent a lot of time cleaning. You also had to go for a six mile run every day. You would then get breakfast. I went to work in the greenhouse. You would then have lunch and back to work. You had dinner in the evening and then got to go to the games room or watch television. Bed was at nine pm. You always got hot chocolate before you went to bed.

66. I never got on with the man running the greenhouse as he used to make us tread down the fields walking in them for hours.
67. You were allowed to smoke and you would get food parcels from home. There was no shop to buy cigarettes.

Food

68. I can't remember much about the food but it must have been okay as I don't think I could complain about it.

Schooling

69. You had about two hours education a day at Rossie farm but I didn't really get much involved with that.
70. I recall that I was part of a work party that was taken to Glencoe. We were given work clothes and pack lunches. We had to renovate a house in Glencoe. I remember that it was a large white house. In later life I learned that this was the house bought twenty years later by Jimmy Saville. They just used us inmates as cheap labour to clear out all the rubbish.

Abuse at Rossie farm

71. You would be lined up for inspection in the morning. If you hadn't cleaned your boots properly or you hadn't tidied your bed you would get a whack from the member of staff. He was a sergeant major type with a small moustache. He was brutal.
72. I had a picture on the wall above my bed. At one of the inspections the staff ran their finger along the top of the picture. There was a drop of dust on the picture and he went mad at me and punched me in the face breaking my nose. It was non-stop violence along with the constant "buffing up" and cleaning.

73. You were being constantly hit by members of staff. It was just part of the cruel regime that was in place.

Reporting abuse at Rossie farm

74. I didn't report any of the abuse at Rossie farm as there was no one to report it to. I absconded from Rossie Farm following a weekend leave. As a consequence of this I would have been caught if I went to the authorities.

Leaving Rossie farm Approved School

75. I was in the institution for about three months when I qualified for weekend leave. At the time I was sent there I had adopted my mother's boyfriend's surname. I had been put into school by him under his surname [REDACTED]. I was enrolled at Larchgrove, Gilshochill and Rossie farm as [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] did not exist. I was [REDACTED]. So when I never returned to Rossie farm they were looking for a [REDACTED]. I was living as [REDACTED]. I was now sixteen years of age. I lived as [REDACTED] between the ages of thirteen and sixteen.

Life after the institutions

76. After I absconded from Rossie farm the authorities would come and look for me at the house. I used to hide in a place I had made under my bath. On one occasion I had to jump out of a window to avoid them. I had "signed on" as [REDACTED] so when the Police came to the "broo office" I would tell them I was [REDACTED]. Everyone in Drumchapel new me as [REDACTED] even though my name was [REDACTED].
77. I became a gang member in Drumchapel and was involved in violence with the neighbouring gangs. It was part of the local culture. I used to carry weapons including swords. I was a nutcase and involved in extreme violence. I have been stabbed and seriously injured in gang fights. I had no fear.

78. I didn't go back to school or become involved in any form of education. All my mother's brothers also moved to Drumchapel. They spent their time bullying us. They were animals. They are all dead now. When my Auntie [REDACTED] got tossed out of her house in Lillyburn they found over three hundred and fifty empty wine bottles. [REDACTED].
79. My aunty [REDACTED] used to supply me with [REDACTED] and I remember accidentally taking an overdose [REDACTED]. I was out of it for a whole day. I had no fear. I also started the fighting between rival gangs and used to arrange fights on certain days. It was violence against violence and it was a good way to settle differences. I should only have been in jail for violence. I was not a crook.
80. I remember one night when our house was attacked by someone who threw milk bottles full of sand through our windows. It was because of my mother's boyfriend [REDACTED]. He was a criminal and fell out with a lot of people. He also tried to rape my sister. At a party I once saw him pull my mother's hair. I remember I battered him for that. [REDACTED] used to bring all sorts of characters back to the house. He died about fifteen years ago. I suppose that we were the neighbours from hell.
81. [REDACTED] gave me my first cigarette and my first drink when I was about ten years old. It was lager and cider to drink and Capstan cigarettes to smoke. He wanted me to go shoplifting with him and to steal cars. He was a very bad influence and when he died I celebrated that night.
82. I was an alcoholic for forty years. I have also abused drugs. I have not had a drink for the past five years. I was in the Kershaw Alcohol Dependency Unit at Gartnavel Hospital on at least twelve occasions.
83. I got married in 1979. My wife died of cancer at age 36. I later learned that my wife had been sleeping with her father. Her father's name was [REDACTED] and he died in the 1990's. I remember she would get all "dolloed up" when she went to see him

wearing suspenders and the like. I didn't think about it at the time. Just before she died she told me that she was leaving me and I had to leave the house as it was in her name. I didn't know that she had cancer at that time she only survived another two years. She wouldn't let me go and visit her.

84. I now have two children and a grandchild that I have a great relationship with.
85. I was terrified of going to jail. My only experience was spending five hours in jail for non-payment of a fine. My wife managed to raise the money and I was released. I easily could have got involved with serious crime at this stage. I knew all the big players in the drug world. I managed to avoid getting involved because I didn't want to go to jail.
86. My mother, my wife and my sister all died within three years of each other. I went nutty and was fighting and drinking. I was homeless and living on the street. I have never worked but used to do odd jobs for payment in alcohol.

Impact

87. I have attempted suicide whilst under the influence of substances. I drank very heavily for forty years although for the last five years I have not drunk any alcohol. Had I not given up alcohol I would have drunk myself to death.
88. My life has been poor I have never known love. I couldn't tell anyone what had happened in care until the last few years. I told my brother [REDACTED] and he told my brother [REDACTED]. I didn't want [REDACTED] to know but [REDACTED] couldn't help himself as he was cracking up with what I had told him. He is only human.
89. I have also received counselling and support from Jillian at The Sandford Clinic. I have also been prescribed medication to help with alcoholism and depression. I used to hallucinate and would wake up fighting.

90. No one showed me affection, I never got a cuddle and it was something I missed. It was different with my own children and grandchild as I am able to show love towards them.

Reporting abuse in care

91. I told everyone but told no one. I used to tell the doctors I saw at various times but nothing ever happened as a result.
92. There was a woman who stayed across the road from me her name was [REDACTED] I told her everything that happened to me. She told me that I should get help from a psychiatrist. I did see a psychiatrist and all I remember the psychiatrist telling me was to go and read a book.
93. As a result of me speaking to [REDACTED] I got a phone call from a woman from 'In Care Survivors Group'. She was a great wee woman as she was a victim herself. She put me in touch with a counsellor called Sandra. I went to a few of the meetings and was encouraged to contact the police. I didn't want to contact the police as I felt that it was hypocritical.
94. It was only after I read about Jimmy Saville and all the people who looked after children being done for offences that I changed my attitude to reporting what had happened to me.

95. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

96. [REDACTED] I took an overdose [REDACTED]. I remember thinking I was asleep while I was awake. I was talking nonsense saying that the gangsters were coming to get me. I was paranoid.

97. I spoke to a lawyer about the time bar on reporting and I know that there is a case on-going with the Scottish Government to lift that bar. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]. The police said that I was to wait till the time bar case has gone through the courts.
98. My lawyer has told me that the case for the time bar may take a further six months and then I could make my claim. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]. Larchgrove [Secondary Institutions - to be published later] the worst institution I was in.

Records

99. I have handed to you today copies of my records which give you an idea what happened to me. You can see in the records that it confirms the times and dates that I was in care. As you are aware I was at Larchgrove and Rossie Farm under the name [HEW]. I was at Red House under the name [HEW].

Other information

Lessons to be learned

100. I can only say that children will be children and will do things that children do. "When we were weans we were acting like teenagers. When we were teenagers we were acting like men. When we became men we were all done in".
101. At this time I would be happy to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry should I be required.

102. 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..... HEW
[Redacted Signature]

Dated..... 24 / 4 / 17