

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HYM

Support person present: No

1. My name is HYM. I also go by the name of HYM. Those were my names throughout my time in care. My date of birth is 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My father's name was . He passed away in 1987. He worked most of his life in the shipyards. In between various jobs in the shipyards he drove heavy machinery and worked in haulage. My mother's name was . She passed away in 2018. She worked until I was about nine years old as a bus conductress and a cleaner in a hotel. I think she was just shy of her eightieth birthday when she passed away. I have two older sisters and a younger brother. is about three years older than me, is two or three years older than me and was about a year younger than me. Sadly has now passed away. Back then, in the area we lived, we were considered a small family. I remember families with fourteen or fifteen children all sharing the same house in our street. I'd say the average in our close was about ten kids per flat.
3. I was born in Greenock but I grew up in Port Glasgow. As a family we lived in a tenement flat on . My earliest memory is from when I was about seven or eight years old. There were power cuts and I remember people sharing electricity when they could. I remember the strikes and the blackouts. As a family we lived just above the poverty line. My father would get sacked but he would get another

job the following day because there were that many jobs about. I think that was how a lot of men worked in those days. Although we lived just above the poverty line there was always enough food and our health and hygiene were looked after. Everything in that sense was ok.

4. Where [REDACTED] was located meant it was a little bit isolated from the rest of Port Glasgow. Some people would say that it was a 'no go zone' but to us it was a brilliant wee community that we lived in. It was a safe place for children and I had a lot of pals of about the same age from the street. I remember a lot of the adults would sit out on the street. That meant that, if there was ever any child in harm or injured themselves, there would always be a responsible adult there. There was never any badness or anything like that.
5. There was a drinking culture amongst men in the workforce and my father was part of that. He was quite a bad drinker. My mother was a drinker too but she wasn't an alcoholic. I think she partly drank because of her nerves. My father was very violent when he was drunk. He had a terrible temper towards everybody in the family. He was physically violent towards my mum, myself and all my siblings. It was strange because the next day after he did these things he was a totally different man. Sometimes he could be a good drunk but when he was bad he was really bad. I think what we experienced at that time was what was going on with every family in our street. A lot of my friends experienced the same with their fathers. There was a lot of that going on. The police wouldn't get involved with any of that.
6. I went to Clune Park Primary School and Port Glasgow High School in Port Glasgow before I ended up in care. Everybody in our street went to those schools. I remember everybody wore 'pass me downs' across the families. If there wasn't someone to pass the item of uniform down to in one family it would be given to another one where it could. There was a community spirit in that way with everybody else helping out each other. I was quite good at school, however, I think my problem was that I was hyperactive.

7. There was a series of things happened that led up to me being placed in the homes. The first time I got in trouble with the police was a time when we were playing on the railway tracks right next to where we lived. A little time later children started getting involved in glue sniffing and that led to further problems. If one group of kids started doing something then another group would start copying them. Sometimes older kids would encourage the younger ones to get involved. That would have been in around about 1979 or 1980. The first time I sniffed glue was when I was in primary seven. I would have been about ten or eleven years old. Everybody was doing it at that time in Port Glasgow. The glue sniffing led to shop lifting amongst the children. That then led to breaking into houses and any buildings where there was something to take. By that time I was being left to my own devices. My father and mother would be drinking and the babysitters they brought in were wee girls from the street. They would just say that I could do what I wanted and really didn't worry about us.
  
8. Every time I was arrested it was always because of things I was doing as a result of peer pressure from older children. I was basically being used and abused by older children to do things that they thought was funny. They were using me to get into places to steal things. Because I was small I got used a lot to get through gaps and things like that. The older children would steal things themselves but I think they thought that if they could get someone else to do it for them then that was better. I would skip school to go along with them during the day. It wasn't like I was being bullied or anything like that. Looking back, at the time I thought my involvement with the older children was me being accepted. In reality I was just being used and I couldn't escape it.
  
9. My father would really batter me either when the police got involved or he found out what I had been up to. He would also hit my younger brother [REDACTED] too because he would inevitably be involved too. It could be quite bad with our father. The police could be quite bad too when it came to the children on our street. I remember a police officer called Ian Cotton always saying "I'll get you when you are sixteen." He lived up to his word because he nearly did get everyone in the street when they turned sixteen.

10. Because of what was happening social services became involved. That started in about 1980. My social worker's name was Hilda Murray. She later became the family's social worker. She was pretty much the social worker for the whole street. She worked out of Port Glasgow social work office. She remained my social worker right up until I was about fifteen. Hilda Murray was a brilliant social worker. She was dead laid back and down to earth. She worked with another social worker called Andrew Finniemore. I remember the both of them taking us out on trips to Oban and Fort William. Going to those places felt like we were going to the ends of the world. We'd never been anywhere where there were hills and mountains before.
11. Hilda Murray was the one who would go with me to all the children's hearings I ended up attending. They would be held in an office in Greenock. When I attended the children's hearings there would be a panel of about three people. My mother, and father would be there. I became kind of used to being at the hearings and being in that environment. There probably was discussion during those hearings of the possibility of being placed into homes but I don't remember that specifically.
12. I was always good in school and a good learner. I think I was a pest in class when I finished my work but nothing other than that. I think I was more out of control in what I was doing when I was outside of school. My offending over a period of time came together and resulted in me being placed into care. I was probably out of control by that stage. One day Hilda Murray came round to the family home and asked me whether I wanted to go for a run in her new car. That would have been at tea time at something like 6:15 pm. I remember her new car was a Vauxhall Chevette. I didn't think anything about it and got in her car. I had nothing with me other than what I was dressed in. She then drove me straight to Newfield. She didn't tell me anything at all about what was really happening. She gave no indications whatsoever and I had no idea I was being placed into a home.
13. There wasn't anything like an emergency children's hearing or anything like that that I had attended. If there was then I wasn't in attendance and didn't know about it. I have no recollection of attending any panel hearing to say that I would be getting placed in care. I know that it was usually the case that children would be told at the hearings

that they would be going to into care because I heard that from other people who went. I was aware that there was a room at some of the places where they kept those who were being sent before they were collected. There was none of that happened before I was placed into care. Somebody must have authorised it somewhere but I have no idea who.

14. My mother and father were there when Hilda Murray came to collect me. I only later found out that my parents were aware of what was happening. However, they never told me what was happening at that time. I never got the opportunity to ask them fully about what they knew because by the time I got out of the homes my father had cancer. Sadly, he passed away not long after that. I never pressed my mother because of my father and because she was in quite a bad place herself. Looking back, I think the way I was placed into Newfield, and the reasons behind me going into care, were just that I was out of control. However, I think everybody involved should have been a wee bit more professional and adult about the way it was done.

#### **Newfield Assessment Centre, Johnstone, Renfrewshire**

15. Newfield was an assessment centre. I think it was run by Strathclyde Regional Council. I was there in 1982 for a period of between six and eight weeks between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] 1982. I would have been about twelve years old. It wasn't a high secure place. There weren't locked doors or anything like that. You could come and go as long as you were with a member of staff. Looking back, I think I was placed in Newfield because I was meant to go straight to Kerelaw and they didn't have the space for me. That's what I have always held in my head. Newfield was a place where they were just holding me.

### *Layout of Newfield Assessment Centre*

16. Newfield was an 'L shaped' two storied building. The main part of the building had a reception area, staff offices, a dining room, classrooms and a woodwork room on the ground floor. There were three units in Newfield. I remember units called Glennifer and the short stay unit. I was in a third that I don't remember the name of. I was in that unit the whole time I was there. The short stay unit was located above the staff offices and the reception area. The other two units were based upstairs in the adjacent part of the building. They were identical and contained three dorms, three single rooms, a wee sitting area and a staff desk area. I can't remember what was below those units on the ground floor. I don't think there was anything.

### *Staff*

17. There was a headmaster and a deputy head but I don't remember their names. Below them were the other members of staff. I think there were between six and eight members of staff across all the units. I think there were three members of staff on shift at any one time in the unit I was in. It might have been two members of staff on shift in the morning then two on in the afternoon and night. I'd definitely say there were enough staff members to manage the kids that were there.
18. The only staff member I remember was a member of staff called Tucker. I don't know whether that was his nickname or whether that was his surname. I think his first name could have been John. He was in his forties or fifties when I was Newfield. He was a member of the residential staff but he was also the woodwork teacher. I remember hearing that he lived in Port Glasgow. I saw him about Port Glasgow in later life but I never spoke to him. He was a good guy.

### *The children at Newfield Assessment Centre*

19. It was boys and girls. I think there were about four or five girls there when I was there. There were only about five or six children in my unit when I was there. I would say that was the average across the units so there would have been between fifteen and

twenty children in there at any one time. We were all between the ages of about eleven and fifteen years old. I think Newfield had both children who stayed there and children who attended as day pupils. The day pupils would attend the school during the day then go back to wherever they were staying. That wasn't anything that happened with me because I stayed there permanently over the two months I was there.

20. [REDACTED] was a boy who was there who I knew from Port Glasgow. He used to sniff glue with me before he was placed into the homes. I knew he had been placed in a home when he was taken away. Other boys there were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was one of the girls who was there at the same time as me.

#### **Routine at Newfield Assessment Centre**

21. The first I knew I was even in a home was when I saw another boy called [REDACTED]. When I saw him he asked me what I was doing in Newfield. I said to him that my social worker had been taking me on a run about in her car. He then said that I had probably been brought up to Newfield to stay. When I looked back into the carpark I realised that Hilda Murray's car was away.
22. A staff member called Tucker and another staff member who I can't remember the name of then came to take me from the reception area to the unit I was in. [REDACTED] asked Tucker what unit I was going in. That was when I fully realised I was in Newfield to stay. I wasn't crying when I realised what was happening. I just kind of accepted it. Little did I know that that was the start of things to come. Nobody sat me down to explain what was happening on the first day I was at Newfield. I never got told how long I would be staying at Newfield on that first day or any time later.
23. I couldn't say what the sleeping arrangements were in the short stay unit but there were three dorms of four children and three single rooms in my unit and in Glennifer. All meals were had with everybody together in the dining room. I don't know whether it was my mother or my father but one of them brought up some of my own clothes for

me to wear. However, the staff would take you out and buy you clothes and trainers. If you needed something they provided that for you.

24. There were various lessons taught at Newfield. I remember that they taught Woodwork, Arts and Craft, English, Maths, Geography and other lessons. Teachers would come in to teach those subjects. A lot of the teachers weren't there because it was the [REDACTED]. I think that was why there wasn't a lot of education being done. I remember being taught Woodwork and Arts and Craft. I remember in one woodwork class we were given a template and we had to cut a shark out of a piece of wood.
25. Most days were spent walking into Johnstone or Brickfield with the staff. Sometimes we were taken swimming or horse riding. They would take us to places that I had never been to, places like Loch Lomond and so on. During my time at Newfield they held a disco. Kerelaw, Geilsland, the Kibble and Beith sent up boys to attend that disco. You could tell all of the homes the boys were coming from by the transit vans they all arrived in. The names of the homes were written on their sides. I remember that all the Kerelaw boys were big and a lot of them were dressed like punks. They had Mohicans and things like that and they were quite intimidating.
26. I never got any visits from my family during my time at Newfield. I never saw Hilda Murray during my time there. I don't think I ever saw her again after first going to Newfield. I don't remember there being any inspections whilst I was there. There were never any visitors like that came into Newfield.
27. I never went to a children's hearing during my time at Newfield. I had no idea where I was going next or how long I was going to be at Newfield throughout my whole time there. I had a key worker but I don't remember her name. I can't remember there being anything like a one to one with anyone. I think the teachers just dealt with everything by having a talk with you as you went along. It was an assessment centre but I am not aware of what they were doing in terms of assessing me whilst I was there. They had a big book that members of staff would write into about everything that happened over the course of each day. It was like an incident report book but I

don't think that was used to assess you. Me not being assessed could be because I was only being kept at Newfield whilst they were waiting for a space to open up at Kerelaw rather than using that time to make further decisions about my care.

### **Discipline and abuse at Newfield Assessment Centre**

28. Where I came from was dark and everybody was just surviving. Newfield was a place which was colourful, you were looked after and everybody was well nourished. It was like another world to me and, at that age, it felt like an adventure to me. There was no abuse in Newfield. I look back on my time there as being brilliant. They had it all right there in terms of the way they ran things.
29. All the staff were good and caring in Newfield. They were good professionals. I remember them all taking their time to talk to us. They made an effort to teach you what was right and what was wrong. It was all done by talking. That was a good experience because before then, whenever I did anything wrong, I would get hammered off of my father. There was nothing like that there at all.
30. I don't remember there being any issues with my behaviour during my time there but some of the boys could be quite big and have quite a temper. Sometimes some of the girls would scream and shout in members of staff's faces. However, at no time at all did I see any staff members being violent. There was nobody being restrained or anything like that. The worst that could happen by way of discipline was that you would be made to sit in your dorm for an hour. I remember being told not to go into various dorms where certain boys were sent so that they could cool down.
31. If the staff didn't send children who were misbehaving to their rooms they would basically mollycoddle the child who was misbehaving in an effort to calm them down. They would take them to the shop or something like that. It was like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde with the child concerned. The person misbehaving would leave in a temper then come back a completely different person. I remember that in particular happening with

a girl called [REDACTED]. She would come back 'happy as Larry' having been furious only moments earlier.

### **Leaving Newfield Assessment Centre**

32. I never attended a children's panel before I went to Kerelaw. I was told by the staff either two days or the day before I left that was where I was going. It might have been that I was told I would be going that week. I was told that a space had become available for me and that I needed to get my stuff ready to go. Obviously things had been going on in the background that I was unaware of. I don't know who was involved in that decision making. When I got told that I was going to Kerelaw I was worried because I remembered the six boys who had attended the disco. I remembered how intimidating they all looked. I don't remember whether it was staff from Newfield or whether it was staff from Kerelaw who picked me up and took me to Kerelaw. I took with me all the clothes and shoes I had been bought in Newfield.

### **Kerelaw Secure Unit, Stevenston, North Ayrshire**

33. Kerelaw was a secure unit but a lot of the doors in the unit where I stayed, including our dorms, didn't have a lock and key on them. You could come and go into the grounds. I was in Kerelaw between [REDACTED] 1982 and [REDACTED] 1984 between the ages of about twelve and fourteen. During the two years I was there I ran away, was caught, prosecuted for an offence I had committed whilst on the run, and placed in Larchgrove for a period of about two months. That was between about [REDACTED] 1983 and [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] 1983. After that time period I was returned back to Kerelaw.

#### *Layout of Kerelaw Secure Unit*

34. If you looked down on Kerelaw from the sky it would probably look like two Hs amongst other buildings. The Hs were where the units were located. There was a big ash

football part that the boys could use and a wee area where there were swings. Behind one of the units there was a burn. Beyond that was a housing estate.

35. There was a separate building that contained the offices and reception area and a big hall. Within that building was a gym that the staff called 'the sports bar.' There was a big indoor area marked out for 5-aside and basketball, a boxing room upstairs, showers and a room for the PTI instructor. The staff used that room as a changing room when they used the facilities. Within the room were lockers where they could lock their things away. Attached to that building were the classrooms on either side.
36. There was a separate secure building located to the back of the grounds. That was being renovated and built throughout my time at Kerelaw and wasn't completed by the time I left Kerelaw. I don't remember any boys being placed there.
37. The H shaped buildings were made up of four individual units with about twenty boys in each unit. The units were called Webster, Baird, Fleming and Millerston. I was initially placed in Fleming. Fleming and Millerston were units which were joined to one another. There was a long corridor with attached rooms that was about fifty metres long. That was what separated the two units. That area was shared and contained the dining hall, offices and the laundrette. Webster and Baird were connected too but they were in a separate building about fifty yards away. They had the same set up with the units being joined and a dining hall in-between. Fleming unit contained four dorms which slept four boys and three single bedrooms. That meant there was a total of nineteen spaces at any one time. Also within Fleming was a pool room that contained plastic chairs and a Formica bench that ran the length of the room, an office for the staff and a bathroom which contained communal showers and toilets.
38. Baird is a unit I don't know much about because I would avoid going up there. It was the unit that was considered the worst unit to be in. That was where they placed the very worst boys. All the boys in that unit were feral or had mental issues. That was where all the boys I had seen at the disco at Newfield came from. It was all punks and skinheads. I think that placing all those boys together was done deliberately. I can't see that as being a coincidence.

### *Staff structure and description*

39. There was a headmaster and a deputy headmaster of the whole place. Below them were the heads of each of the units and the care workers who worked in each unit. At Kerelaw it was mostly one staff member to between four and six boys. There were three members of staff on shift on each unit at any one time during the day. The back shift was much the same in terms of numbers of staff.
40. Teachers came in to Kerelaw. Some of them were full time and others weren't. Some of them taught more than one subject. I remember that some of the teachers were given other duties. If Kerelaw were a member of staff short the teachers were used to plug a hole. They covered things like mealtimes during the course of the day. They would sit down and have their meal with the boys. They would do that on top of their duties as teachers in the classrooms.
41. The staff at Kerelaw were nothing like they were at Newfield. I always thought that the members of staff were trained social workers but I now know that they weren't. I think in those days everyone thought that the staff working in the homes were social workers. There were staff members who were trainee social workers in amongst the staff but they weren't qualified. I think that was something to do with their university courses. They had to work in homes for a year, or something like that, in order to become qualified social workers. Out of all of the staff the women were particularly good. I don't know whether that was because they had a mother's instinct or something else. They would treat you as if you were their own.

### *Staff*

42. Mr Forrest was the headmaster. He stayed in Adrossan. Mr Cruickshanks was the deputy headmaster. He was in his fifties. KBK was something like an English or History teacher. He was in his fifties. He never helped out in my unit but might have helped out in the other units.

43. Bill Nelson was the head of Fleming. He was in his sixties. He was a good old Christian man. Mrs <sup>KAM</sup> [REDACTED] was the head of Webster. <sup>KBA</sup> [REDACTED] was in charge of Millerston. <sup>LEF</sup> [REDACTED] was <sup>SNR</sup> [REDACTED] the secure unit.
44. Mrs McFarlane was a member of staff who worked in Fleming. <sup>EUM</sup> [REDACTED] was a member of staff who worked in the Fleming. He was my key worker. He was from Irvine. <sup>KBJ</sup> [REDACTED] was a member of staff who worked in Fleming. He lived in Saltcoats. Pat Houston was the night watchman who worked in Fleming. He was from Stevenston and was a nice man. Adele was a student social worker who worked in Fleming. She was a brilliant member of staff. Karen Taylor was another student social worker who worked in Fleming. I can't remember her married name. She was brilliant. The last I heard she was working as a drug worker in Barlinnie.
45. Mr McNeil was the PTI instructor. Matt George was the Arts and Craft teacher at Kerelaw. He was a full time teacher. He would help out at other times outside of classes at mealtimes. He lived [REDACTED] in Largs in Ayrshire. He would have been in his early to mid-forties when I was at Kerelaw. His trademark was his big bushy walrus moustache. He was about five foot eight inches tall. He dressed as if he was Don Johnson out of Miami Vice. He would wear big pink or yellow trousers. He wore his jumper over his shoulders and had a swagger on him. He drove a fancy bright orange Capris and was into his golf and martial arts. At the time I thought that he was a bit of a ladies man and there were times when you thought he was cool. He was pals with all the staff who were about the same age as him.

*The children at Kerelaw Secure Unit*

46. It was an all-boys' school. The age range of the boys at Kerelaw was the same as Newfield, it was between about twelve and sixteen year olds. I'd say that on average there were eighteen boys in each unit. There would've been between seventy and eighty boys across the units during the time I was there. At a minimum there might have been sixty. Every boy who had been sent there had either been sent there by a court or a children's panel. It wasn't a place where they placed boys for care and protection. If you were there you had committed a crime. I'd say ninety percent of the

boys there were also substance abusers. A lot of the boys were tough boys from Glasgow.

47. [REDACTED] was a big boy who had facial hair. He was massive. He was fifteen or sixteen when I was there. His nickname was [REDACTED]. That was how he was referred to by the staff and all the other boys behind his back. He would cower away when the staff or older boys called him that but would react if it was a younger or smaller boy who referred to him as that. Other boys I remember being at Kerelaw include [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

### **Routine at Kerelaw Secure Unit**

#### *First day*

48. I realised as soon as I arrived at Kerelaw that it was nothing like Newfield. When we came round the corner, and I saw the place, I couldn't believe the size of it. I'd previously thought that everywhere would be like Newfield but Kerelaw was completely different. It was nothing like I had visualised. I remember being taken into the offices in the reception area. I was a novelty to everybody because I was that small. I would have only been about four feet tall. I was tiny for my age and everybody seemed so big to me. It felt like I was this new toy and everybody was coming up to see me. That's when I really noticed the difference in the setup, the noise levels, the staff and the people that were staying there. Everything was totally alien to me.
49. A staff member took me aside and told me how everything worked. They went through the routine and so on. I was told that if I wanted to know anything then I could ask some of the other boys. They basically were saying "don't pester us, ask them." There was no discussion about discipline or what would happen if you misbehaved. However, I was told that I would be evaluated on how I was doing every week at school and that if I did well, and kept my head down, I could be out quicker. That was a sort of carrot that was dangled in front of my head. I wasn't told how long I was going to be there. I had previously thought I was going home after being at Newfield but

obviously that wasn't the case. I didn't realise that Newfield was just the first phase and I would be in Kerelaw for quite some time.

50. After I was processed I got put into Fleming. That was the first time I properly saw all of the boys I would be staying with. I could see that I was a goldfish that had been placed into a tank with sharks. I could see the height of the boys was different to me but I could also see that their attitude was different too. Most of them were from Glasgow and its reputation left me thinking that they were all tough. Although the other boys were probably fourteen or fifteen, to me they looked like they were eighteen or nineteen. I was terrified. I wanted to cry but I knew that I couldn't do that otherwise I would get bullied.

#### *Daily routine*

51. We would get up at about 8:00 am, make our beds and get dressed. We would then go down the stairs where the staff would do a count and make sure that everybody was there. We would then get our breakfast in the dining hall before going back to the unit to start our day. Everyone was given a timetable for what classes they had during the day. School would start at about 9:00 am. There would be two or three classes in the morning before dinner time in the dining hall and a break. That lasted about an hour. You went back to school in the afternoon until about 3:30 pm or 4:00 pm. After school we got changed then went for tea. After tea you either spent that time in your unit, in the grounds or you were taken out to things like swimming. Everybody would have to be back at Kerelaw by 8:30 pm or 9:00 pm.
52. At weekends you were allowed to stay up a little later and watch television until 10:00 pm.

#### *Sleeping arrangements*

53. I initially shared a dorm with three other boys. Towards the end of my time in Kerelaw I was placed in a single room at the top of the stairs. The single rooms were like a

perk if you did well. Sometimes boys would bully boys in their dorms so they would be pulled out of the dorm and placed into the single rooms.

54. The night staff would come on at about 10:00 pm. I remember the night staff would tie a string to all our doors with tins hung from it. If anyone tried to open their door then the staff would hear it because of that. It didn't really work because boys would drop out of their dorm windows if they wanted to get away instead. It was a ten to fifteen foot drop but if anyone wanted to run away they could.

#### *Washing / bathing*

55. The shower room attached to Fleming was communal. It was located six feet away from the door to the staff room. If a female member of staff, like Adele Cameron, was on duty the staff door would remain shut so they couldn't see in. A lot of the time the door was open because female staff members weren't on shift. They left the door open because boys would use the toilets in the shower room as a place to settle fights. I remember staff members would sit at the desk in the staff room so they had a clear line of sight into the shower area.

#### *Mealtimes / food*

56. Although the dining area was shared between two units, and there was one kitchen servery, there were partitions to separate the boys from each unit. A wall, walkway and doorway separated the two. The food was good. I never had any issues with it.

#### *Chores*

57. We might have to mop up the showers after using them if there was too much water. Sometimes we washed the sinks. Other than that the only thing we had to do was keep our rooms tidy and fold our clothes. I never saw boys doing things like hoovering and so on. I don't remember there being cleaners but it could be they came in whilst we were at school. The women who worked in the laundry might have been the ones who did that.

### *Clothing / uniform*

58. There was clothing available to boys whose families couldn't afford to provide that for them. It was all t-shirts, jeans and trainers. I had the clothes I brought with me. I'd receive hand me downs from my family when I was away on leave. Sometimes other boys left and passed their clothes on to those boys who were staying. I remember that I was bought a school uniform for Port Glasgow High School by Kerelaw when I left there.

### *Pocket money*

59. You were given pocket money. There was a shop on the main street of Stevenston where we would spend our pocket money. A list would be compiled for all the boys and a boy who was trusted enough would go down to the shop to get what everybody wanted. I sometimes got to do that. It would all be sweets and bottles of juice. I remember that sometimes the list was that big that they would take the van down.

### *School*

60. They tried to run the school as if it was a normal school. Classes were between forty five minutes and an hour long. I don't know how they divided it up but there were boys from across the units in each class. All the classes were held in the classrooms at Kerelaw itself. There were lessons in English, Maths, Geography, Art, Woodwork and Metalwork. Staff would encourage you to do things. I remember making a table in a Woodwork class. I remember that in Metalwork you could be taught to strip car engines but that wasn't something I got involved with. A lot of the boys there were illiterate so the standard of teaching was at a primary school level. There were still a lot of boys there who couldn't read or write. I found it all very basic and easy because I was already at a high school level.

### *Leisure time*

61. Outside of classes we were allowed to play in the grounds. There was a wee swing and they gave us a ball to play with. You'd either go and kick a ball about or go to the

television room. There was a pool table and table tennis table. They wouldn't put the pool balls, pool cues and table tennis paddles out during the day. If it was raining, and you didn't want to watch television or play pool, you could sit on a couple of benches in the foyer where the staff were. The benches were just outside the main door to the two units I was in.

*Smoking / substance abuse / tattoos*

62. A lot of boys would smoke in Kerelaw. Some staff tolerated the smoking but others didn't. A lot of the boys were substance abusers. Staff would find glue hidden away in bags when boys came back from running away. They would find it in their dorms and so on. Some of the boys found ingenious places to hide their glue. It was basically out of control. The boys could hide the glue but they couldn't hide the smell of it so a lot of them got caught.
63. My arms are covered in tattoos. Every one of them got done when I was in Kerelaw. The older boys would take the ink from the Art classes and use that to do them. It was sort of tolerated in the place. Some boys got tattoos connected with various gangs and so on. Getting those stupid tattoos is one of the biggest regrets I have in my life. Looking back, those older boys were using me as a drawing board.

*Religious instruction*

64. There was no religion as such in Kerelaw. I don't remember anyone going to church or there being any religious education.

*Trips / holidays*

65. If you kept your head down and behaved the staff did go out of their way to keep you occupied. I remember going to the beach at Saltcoats, out for an ice cream or going swimming and ice skating at Magnum Leisure Centre in Irvine. Two members of staff would take ten boys out in a minibus. I remember being taken out camping with the staff. We walked the West Highland Way. We'd start on one day and finish it a few

days later. Two staff would be with us. There would only be five or six boys who would go out on those trips. Those trips were good.

*Staying with staff / leave home*

66. Pat Houston, the night watchman in Fleming, took me home one night to stay at his house because I was the only one left in the unit. He logged it and made sure everybody knew where he was taking me. He made sure he did that so if anything happened they would know where to find me. There were no problems the night he took me out.
67. You got weekend leave if you did well at school. The teachers would assess you and that was used to decide whether you could go. If you were allowed weekend leave you would go home at 3:00 pm on a Friday and be picked up by a minibus at 7:00 pm outside Glasgow Central station the subsequent Sunday. That's often when you found out someone was on the run because they wouldn't turn up.
68. During the summer holidays boys could get sent home for four weeks and not have any contact with the home. Before boys went on that holiday they were given pocket money and money for the fare to wherever they stayed. You would have to be back by a certain time.

*Birthdays / Christmas*

69. I went home for Christmas. I think you got given £2 or £2:50 on top of your pocket money if it was your birthday.

*Visits / Inspections / Review of Detention*

70. I wasn't really visited because I was getting weekend leave. That was particularly so towards the end of my time there. My father only came to see me once during my time in Kerelaw. He was driving by on a job and decided to come up.

71. I never saw any senior social workers or senior people from the council coming in. I don't remember seeing any inspections or inspectors coming in. There was nothing like that happened. In later life I experienced preparing for inspections at prisons. None of that sort of thing happened during my time at Kerelaw.
72. I never learnt when I was going to be released throughout my time at Kerelaw. I did learn, however, following a time running away and ending up in Larchgrove how long I was sentenced for. I was told that by staff at Larchgrove.

#### *Healthcare*

73. Not long after I started at Kerelaw I was taken to see a doctor. He gave me a check over and I was registered with the surgery. I think the paperwork was passed on to my family GP in Port Glasgow.
74. There was a matron attached to Kerelaw. She was also in charge of the laundry. She would only work shifts during the day and would go home at about 4:00 pm. I don't remember going to see her. I never had any medical issues. The only injuries I got were following being assaulted by Matt George but I didn't get medical help. I think I got chicken pox whilst I was at Kerelaw. I think that coincided with a time that I was away on weekend leave so I stayed at home and saw a family doctor instead of returning to the home.
75. They would take you to a dentist on the main street in Stevenston for appointments. He was a good wee dentist but there was one occasion when he gave me a filling without anaesthetic. I remember him saying that I had a high pain tolerance after he gave me that. I've no idea whether parents were involved to provide permission for us to get either medical treatments or dental treatment.

#### *Running away*

76. Boys ran away quite a lot. I remember one boy who was on the run so much that I only saw him once throughout my whole time at Kerelaw. They ended up giving his

bed to someone else because he was away that long. When he reappeared most of the boys, including myself, thought he was a new boy. If boys wanted to run away they would go behind the Millerston unit, cross the burn then run into the housing estate beyond. Either that or they would run away on a trip or when they were away on weekend leave.

77. I heard a story about a young boy called [REDACTED] who was from Kilmarnock. He was placed in the secure unit before I arrived at Kerelaw. I think by that time there were only two or three boys staying in the unit. He loved pigeons and the staff allowed him to build a pigeon hut within the grounds of the secure unit. They did that just to keep him happy. Each day he made the pigeon hut higher and higher until one day it was tall enough for him to use to climb on the roof. He used that hut to get on the roof then he went right over the wall and ran away. I remember that during my time at Kerelaw I was taken up to the secure unit because I was the smallest in the home. That was done just before it was opened again. The staff used me to see whether I could escape from the unit out of the windows. I managed to get out of one of them and fell out of another.
78. I absconded between five and seven times. Most of the times I was running away into the local area and it was all spur of the moment. The police were always notified when you ran away. Nine times out of ten boys who ran away were caught in the arcades down at Saltcoats. The times I ran away were mostly because of peer pressure and because it was spur of the moment. However, the last couple of times was because of one particular staff member, Matt George, and the way he was treating me. He was making my life intolerable and I needed to get away.
79. The time I was away the longest was when myself and two other boys ran away about a year into me being there. That would have been around about [REDACTED] 1983. I think one of the boys was a serial absconder so he knew what train stations to go to and so on. We ended up breaking in and staying in a school in Glasgow overnight. The school was called Holyrood Secondary School and it was located near Crosshill. It was closed because it was the [REDACTED]. There had been children breaking in and out of it for days on end. After about two or three weeks I was arrested in the

school. That was the only occasion I ever got into bother during the times I ran away. After I was arrested I never saw the two boys I ran away with ever again.

80. I appeared at the old Glasgow Sheriff Court on Ingram Street the following Monday. At that hearing I was remanded to Larchgrove. Two months later I was back in court again and was ultimately sentenced to twenty four months. I never once saw a lawyer throughout that period. However, my father was present in the court. After the hearing I was returned to Larchgrove where a member of staff informed me how long I had been sentenced and how many months I would need to serve before I would get released. I was told that I would have to apply for parole. That was the first time since entering the care system that I had any idea about when I would be getting out. It meant that I had a date to work towards.

81. In the end I think it was a couple of weeks before I was returned back to Kerelaw. LEF [REDACTED] who was SNR [REDACTED] the secure unit at Kerelaw, came to pick me up at Larchgrove. I assumed he was taking me straight back to Kerelaw but instead he took me to an emergency panel hearing in Anniesland Cross in Glasgow. I don't know what that building was but I was taken upstairs. I was confused because prior to that I had only attended hearings in Greenock. I have no idea why I went to the panel. I don't know why that hearing was needed but afterwards I was taken to Kerelaw. When I got back I was placed straight back into Fleming.

#### *Bed-wetting*

82. Bed-wetting was an issue for some of the boys. There was a wee boy who would get bullied because he wet the bed. I can't remember his name but he had bad acne and was from Stevenston. He was one of the boys who was quiet and looked terrified. The other boys laughed at him and called him names. I think the staff were fine about it when they dealt with the boy wetting his bed.

## **Discipline**

83. If you got into trouble they would discipline but they wouldn't use force or hit you. You'd be told off and maybe have your weekend leave stopped but it didn't go beyond that. Having your weekend leave cancelled was really the worst punishment you could get. I remember reports from the classes being compiled during the week to do that. You had to get so many points, or whatever it was, from each week to get your leave. I remember that when it came to the reports and Matt George you would always have your heart in your mouth because he was so random. He could write down that you had caused a lot of trouble when you hadn't. He'd write things like you'd been "a destructive element in the class" or something like that. I remember a time when he wrote down things about boy who hadn't even been in the class the day he was noting down. He just said that he got mixed up and it must've been the week before and so on. I think that boy did end up getting his weekend leave in the end.
84. If you were a misbehaving a lot you would be called a 'wee nyaff.' I used to be called that a lot by staff. It was a polite way of saying you were a wee scoundrel. I think it got to the stage that I decided to keep my head down and work. That really happened after the hearing after I ran away and it had been explained to me what parole was and how everything worked. I realised that if I continued misbehaving I would be in Kerelaw for a long time. I was also aware, because staff told me, that I could end up in the secure unit if I carried on misbehaving. Everybody thought that that was a place that was like a 'big bad jail' almost like Barlinnie. That was how the staff made it out. It was never completed when I was there but I knew if I stayed in Kerelaw any longer then that might have been a possibility for me.

## **Abuse at Kerelaw Secure Unit**

85. There weren't any problems with staff or pupils at any of the other places I was in. I don't have a bad word to say about any of them. The only place that I had problems was Kerelaw and that was really down to one staff member. Only one staff member stands out to me over my entire time in care.

*Matt George*

86. Matt George was one of the full time teachers who would also help out covering duties in the units. He is the only member of staff in all the places I was at that I consider abusive. He is the one staff member during my time in care who stands out. He just wasn't a very nice man at all. I remember that during the first two weeks of me being at Kerelaw there was something happened with Matt George. That was the downfall that lead to me having problems for the next two years.
87. There was a staff versus boys football tournament. I think that was just before all the boys got sent away for the [REDACTED]. There weren't a lot of staff members in the home so some of the boys were playing for the staff side. I remember that during the match someone passed the ball to me. As soon as I got the ball I saw Matt George coming towards me. I was tiny and had this mad adult running at me at about a hundred miles an hour. Out of instinct I kicked the ball just to get it away. Unfortunately, the ball went right through Matt George's legs. Everybody started cheering when that happened. Matt George then turned to me and said something like "you think that's fucking funny? You'll see what's fucking funny later." At the time I thought he would maybe foul me or trip me up in the match but that never happened.
88. After the football match I went inside Fleming to get showered. The shower room was located right across from the staff office and staff room. There was only about six feet between the door to that room and the shower room and the doors were open. I was showering in cubicle number two in the corner of the room. Matt George came into the area where I was showering carrying a golf club and told me to turn the water off which I did. He still had his football kit on. First of all he grabbed a mop that was leaning against the wall by the sinks to the right hand side and set it aside. He then picked up a mop bucket full of cold water and threw it over me in the shower. When he did that I covered in the shower. I was tiny, pre-puberty and embarrassed.
89. Matt George then used the handle of his golf club to start poking and hitting me. He was poking my back, my bum cheeks, poking my legs and tapping me on my head

with the handle end of the club. It was sore. He was saying things like "do you think you are fucking smart?", "do you think you are a fucking hard man?" and "do you think it's funny making a fool of me in front of everybody?" Matt George then put the handle end of the golf club into my backside. He was forceful with it. He was a grown man and I was only a wee boy. I couldn't say how much of the golf club entered my backside but I remember a bit of faeces came out. There wasn't a drop of blood. Matt George definitely knew what he was doing when that happened but I couldn't say whether he was doing it in a sexual way. I kept on apologising to him and telling him that I didn't mean what I had done but he carried on. When he heard me call him Matt he said something like "don't you call me Matt, I'm fucking Mr George to you." He then pulled away the golf club and told me to get out of the showers, to get dried and to get ready. He then left the room. The whole incident lasted between thirty seconds and a minute.

90. As soon as Matt George left I turned the water back on and finished my shower. I wasn't in pain and I wasn't bleeding or anything like that. I don't know whether the faeces might have come from me being frightened or whether it was a result of what he was doing with the golf club. I was terrified to leave the shower. I was only new to the place and didn't know how everything worked.
91. The staff would have initially got changed in a separate building however they would have come across to the unit afterwards. There were definitely staff sitting in the office when Matt George did what he did. Everybody came in after the football match. I couldn't say which staff specifically were on shift but it would have been one or more of the male members staff out of EUM, Bill Nelson, KBJ and Pat Houston. I assume it was male members of staff because the office door was open throughout the incident. Those staff members would have been able to hear what Matt George had been saying because he was aggressive and loud when he was doing what he was doing. They would have also been able to see what he was doing if they were in the doorway to the staff room. If there were staff on duty one of them would sit at a desk that looked out of the office and would have had a clear line of sight into the bathroom. They would have been able to see right down into the shower room and what Matt George was doing.

92. There were a couple of boys who tried to get into the shower room during the incident because I remember Matt George telling one of them to "fuck off" and the other one to "fuck off and come back in a minute." I don't know who those boys were or what they would have seen, if anything. I couldn't see who they were because I had my back to them.
93. The incident in the shower room was the start of things to come. It got worse from then on. Matt George didn't have any time for me at all. He would do things regularly right throughout my time at Kerelaw. Most of the time he was just verbally aggressive towards me or do things just to aggravate me. I remember times when I was in his Art class painting, he'd walk by and he'd nudge my water over. He'd then say "clean that fucking mess up" afterwards. There would be times when he would criticize what I was drawing during art classes to make me feel bad.
94. Sometimes Matt George would be more physical. I would actively cower away from him when he was around me. It was as if I was walking on egg shells. I would try to avoid him but I always had to go to his Art classes. There were times when he was just always going to be about. I remember that he would grab and poke pressure points around my neck, shoulders and ribs with his fingers. It was really sore. He'd sometimes shout "submit, submit." It was just like what would be shouted by the wrestlers on television. He'd then tell me to say sorry and I would. A lot of the time I hadn't done anything to be sorry for. He must have done that sort of thing to me hundreds of times so I can't really point to specific times.
95. I saw him doing the same thing with pressure points with other boys as well. I remember seeing him doing that to [REDACTED]. You would see him lean over other boys in Art classes and would hear them screaming in pain. You just knew that he was applying pressure to their pressure points as well. Sometimes he would do it and other boys would kid on that it was funny. I don't know whether that was because he got them on their funny bones or something like that. Sometimes other boys would laugh at your expense whilst it was being done. I know that when I was on the end of feeling what he was doing it wasn't funny for me.

96. There were times when I was getting bullied by some of the other boys and it was all at Matt George's word. He was a heavy duty manipulator and would get other boys to bully me. He would in particular get a boy called '██████████' to hit people and do things at his request. For me the bullying involved boys urinating on my bed. I now know Matt George was behind that because one of the boys who did it, ██████████ told me that it was Matt George who had told him to do it. He told me that in adult life when we were in prison together. At the time I was just a wee boy and didn't have a clue who it was.
97. I only found out later on during my stay at Kerelaw that they had a boxing ring. I didn't even know there was a doorway that led you up the stairs in the building. The boxing ring was falling to bits with the four corners almost falling in on themselves. It was all dirty and hadn't been maintained. Matt George took me up to the boxing ring and put a set of boxing gloves on me. They were massive on me and were filled with straw. He put a much bigger boy in against me. It was like putting a flyweight up against a heavyweight. That was Matt George's way of getting another boy to hurt you for him. I remember him pulling us randomly away from other activities so he could make that happen. I remember during fight the boy fighting me was going into me. When he was getting close in he was apologising for what he was doing. I remember him saying that Matt George would "do him in" if he didn't fight me. It wasn't just me that Matt George would set up bigger boys against. I remember times when he would use a boy called '██████████' to do that against other boys too.
98. An incident that sticks out in my mind with Matt George involved myself and another boy from Port Glasgow called ██████████ Matt George had got '██████████' to sniff our breaths to see whether we had been glue sniffing. '██████████' was judge, jury and executioner when he was made to do that and he told Matt George that ██████████ and I had been glue sniffing. Matt George just took him at his word and told us that we were being kept in the following weekend. Because of that we ran away. After we were caught that resulted in us definitely being made to stay in the home over the subsequent weekend.

99. That weekend [REDACTED] and I were sitting in the pool room within our unit. I'm sure it was a Sunday evening. Matt George was playing pool with us and I was sitting down watching from the side. There was no one else in the room. When Matt George missed a pool shot [REDACTED] and I laughed at him. Matt George then turned around asked me what I was laughing at. He then roundhouse kicked me across the right hand side of my head and I fell into the wall beside me. I ended up with a black eye and a cut to my face. I remember that I was instantly bleeding. Matt George then turned and got hold of [REDACTED]. I remember that he was still holding the pool cue. He said to [REDACTED] something like "when they come back say I caught you and wee<sup>HYM</sup> fighting and that was how he got his sore face." Matt George also said to say to the staff and the other boys that he was the one who had stopped the fight. Matt George said those things for the two of us to hear. I remember that [REDACTED] looked terrified.
100. After the incident I never saw a nurse. I got no medical attention at all. I remember that I had to see to my own injuries. I grabbed some of those old blue paper towels you used to get and held them to my face. When [REDACTED] and I were asked what had happened by the staff and boys we did as Matt George had said and said that we had got into a 'dummy fight' and I'd hit my head off the ground. I think we ended up losing a weekend leave because of what we had to tell the staff.
101. I remember times when Matt George would take me and other boys out whilst he was playing golf. He would use us to carry his golf bag and to find his golf balls. He thought he was brilliant at golf but in reality he was terrible. We would take two golf balls with us so that we could throw them on the fairway further down. We did that so we wouldn't have to look for his ball and to make it look as if he had hit the ball further than he had. We just wanted to speed up the game, get away and get back to our comfort zone in Kerelaw. We also knew that if he had a bad round of golf that would affect his mood and that could mean that he was in a bad mood in Kerelaw. I remember another time when he used us as labour at his house in Largs. There were a few of us who went. He made us clean up the grounds around his house. We had to move all these big stones to clear out his garden. I believe he eventually built a new house on the ground that we cleared.

102. It was strange because Matt George wouldn't always be having a go at me. There were times when he was the best member of staff in the world and he would be good to all of us. It was as if he wasn't the same guy. I remember times when he would take us out skating or buy us ice cream. Even the boys I knew he had terrorised would think he was brilliant. He would be like that then, quick as flash, he would be grabbing a pressure point. There would be no reason why he would suddenly change. You just didn't know where you were with him. I just don't know what was the matter with the guy.

### **Reporting of abuse whilst at Kerelaw Secure Unit**

103. I tried to report Matt George during my time at Kerelaw but it was all dismissed. I didn't go as far as making a formal complaint but I did speak to staff members. I approached Bill Nelson, who was the head of Fleming, and EUM [REDACTED], who was my key worker, to try and report what Matt George was like. I told EUM [REDACTED] that Matt George was grabbing me every time I passed him. I told him that it was sore when he did that. EUM [REDACTED] told me that I needed to calm down a bit. He said that that was just the way Matt George was and I needed to stop annoying him. Nothing further happened after both the occasions I reported him.

### **Larchgrove Remand Home, Edinburgh Road, Glasgow**

104. Larchgrove was an assessment centre on Edinburgh Road in Glasgow. It was right in the middle of a housing estate. It was an assessment centre but it was nothing like Newfield because it was a lot larger. I was placed there after running away from Kerelaw in about [REDACTED] 1983. I was there in total for about two months before I was sentenced by a court for twenty four months. I think I was there a further two weeks after the trial before being sent back to Kerelaw. That means I would have been there until roughly about [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] 1983.

105. I have less of a memory surrounding Larchgrove because I was there for a shorter period of time and it was in amongst my time at Kerelaw. I think I just got my head down and got on with it. Larchgrove was alright. It had three units which boys went to in the mornings and in the evenings. At first it was scary because it was different to Kerelaw. The dorms were right on top of one another and everybody was crammed in together. Everybody was right in everybody else's space. I think I only got out a couple of times to walk within the grounds.
106. Nearly all the boys were from Glasgow. I got on ok with the staff and the boys there. I remember there was another boy with me who had been in Kerelaw. His name was [REDACTED]. He looked out for me and got me in with the other boys through telling them I had also been at Kerelaw. Kerelaw had a bit of a reputation so other boys were interested in me in that way. I think the other boys thought that if I could handle Kerelaw then I must be alright.

**Leaving Kerelaw Secure Unit / life before going to Kenmure St Mary's Boys' School**

107. I think I left Kerelaw because I got parole. Prior to leaving a person came to interview me at Kerelaw from the parole board. I can't remember who else was at that meeting or much more about it at all. By that time I was fully aware that I was being dealt with by the courts rather than children's panels. After that meeting I was released some time later. I think when I was released I had between six and eight months parole left to serve.
108. By the time I left Kerelaw my sister, [REDACTED], had her own house in Port Glasgow so I went to stay with her. I had been spending time with her during my weekend leaves just prior to leaving Kerelaw. I went back to Port Glasgow High School in the summer of 1984 and entered fourth year. Sadly, about one or two months after leaving Kerelaw my father passed away of cancer.

109. There was a social worker appointed to me but I never really saw her. Her name was Rosemary Clary. She stayed on as my social worker until I turned sixteen. I eventually got sent back into the homes because I wasn't going to school. I did ok at school at first but after the first two or three months I started dogging school and staying at a friend's house during the day. I think that was partly because I was so used to being in the homes and partly because I had been away from the school for so long that I didn't know anyone. I was also playing catch up in terms of my education because of the quality of education I had received at Kerelaw. The teachers didn't have time to sit with me so I was basically left to my own devices. It was purely because of my poor school attendance that I was placed back into care. They sent me to St Mary's because Kerelaw didn't have the space for me.

#### **Kenmure St Mary's Boys' School, Bishopbriggs**

110. St Mary's was a List D school. I went there in either [REDACTED] 1984 or [REDACTED] 1985 when I was fifteen years old. I got out of there in [REDACTED] 1985 just after I turned sixteen. St Mary's was a good school. It was all boys and probably contained over a hundred children. A lot of the boys there had been sent there under court orders. It was an old Victorian kind of place. It was surrounded by trees and grass. It contained different units. They also had a secure closed part but I never saw it. That was the exact same design as the one that was at Kerelaw.

111. I remember the staff were all good. A lot of them were kind of 'hippyish.' They all had strange nicknames like 'Oddball' and 'Peas and Barley.' I remember there was a staff member called 'Irish Mick' who was English and another called 'Welsh Paul' who was actually called Mark and from Sunderland in England. It was crazy but all of the staff were funny.

112. There was nothing that happened at St Mary's that I think was abusive. As things worked out my parole happened to roughly coincide with [REDACTED]. I think there was roughly four or five weeks of it left after leaving. They set things up for me to start on a Youth Training Scheme in Port Glasgow prior to me leaving. I had

already started doing that three or four weeks prior to ultimately leaving for good. I would go to that during the day and return back to St Mary's at night.

### **Life after leaving care**

113. After leaving St Mary's I moved back in with my sister, [REDACTED], in Port Glasgow and continued with the Youth Training Scheme. I earned £27:12 a week and did things like welding, cooking, woodwork and upholstery. It was more like a training college than a work placement. I enjoyed the scheme because it gave me a bit of structure. I was doing ok on the Youth Training Scheme until about [REDACTED] 1988. That's when I was sentenced to three months in Polmont for opening a locked fast premises in Dunoon. A group of us broke into an off licence. I just turned nineteen when I went to Polmont. I was in jail again in 1991 for three years for breaking into a house. I got a longer sentence because the guy who I was with was quite a prolific housebreaker. He sort of carried me. By the time I came out of prison the second time I had started taking drugs and was drinking more heavily at the weekends. I later on got a sentence for eight years for an incident I wasn't at fault for.
  
114. The last time I came out of jail was in 2006. By that time I was addicted to heroin. I decided that I needed to make a change and moved to Paisley in about 2008. I have a daughter and two grandchildren. My daughter doesn't talk to me because of the way my relationship broke down with her mother. My daughter is stubborn so I just don't pester her. I have worked in the past for the Ministry of Defence. I was a labourer in the shipyards in Scotland for a while and worked on the two new aircraft carriers that were being built there. I have also worked in Barrow-In-Furness and Portsmouth. I was diagnosed with epilepsy about two years ago. Because of the fits that left me being unable to work. I haven't worked since.

## Impact

115. I believe that if I had been brought up on a different street I wouldn't have gone into care and I would have made a success of something. A lot of people, both boys and girls, who grew up in Port Glasgow say the same thing. There were some who managed to stay out of trouble but not many. Those who did had older siblings to protect them. My time in care has left me with physical and mental scars.
116. I think back to the day when that football was passed to me and wonder whether things would have been different for me if it hadn't been. I try not to think about what happened in Kerelaw but it is difficult to do that with coverage of child abuse on the television and newspapers. That triggers things and brings things back. It pops up in my brain and I empathise with what happened to the victim in the reports. I beat myself up about it all. I try to remind myself that Matt George isn't in my life but he is. It's been worse since the police came in contact. Things have been downhill since then.
117. I have never been diagnosed with hyperactivity or ADHD but I do think that was what was going on when I was younger. I think I still have a bit of that now. I am a bad sleeper and have anxiety. I was diagnosed with epilepsy about a couple of years ago. I need to take a range of medication for all of that. My epilepsy, poor sleeping and anxiety began around about the time the police first contacted me about Matt George. I connect my health with the police contacting me because I had never had a fit or those problems in my life before that point. Nobody had told me that is the case but in my opinion there is a connection. Every time the police visit me I take a seizure or become not well around the same time as them visiting.
118. I think my education suffered because of the quality of the education in Kerelaw. I know you have to deal with the cards that you are dealt with but that could have been better. They could have pulled out those boys they knew had higher intelligence and made sure that they had better classes. Because they didn't do that I couldn't learn at the level I should have been learning at. In the end I had to teach myself in prison so that I could get educated.

119. There was one occasion when I was dummy fighting with one of my nephews. We were play fighting as sometimes happens with kids. During the fight I touched one of the pressure points on my nephew's body that Matt George had done with me. As soon as I did that it threw me right back to Kerelaw. I pulled back as quick as I could. I was so guilty that I did it that I apologised to my nephew for hours on end. After that I never play fought with kids after that. I don't even go near children. I won't even hold a new born baby.
120. I avoided going to Largs because I didn't want to risk seeing Matt George. I don't know what I would do if I ever saw him. I would either freeze or do something horrible. Either way I want to avoid him. I'd be terrified were I ever to see him in court because he has evil eyes. Fortunately, I think I am going to avoid that.

#### **Treatment and support**

121. I have spoken to my doctor about what happened in and around the time I was diagnosed with epilepsy. My doctor did try to refer me for some counselling but the person that I saw wasn't the right person. I ended up speaking to a debt and a benefits advisor. I was ten minutes into disclosing what I wanted to talk about before he told me who he was. I later on made contact with someone from The Anchor. Unfortunately the pandemic started not long after that so I haven't managed to meet anyone for counselling. I think that because I have been with them so long without getting counselling I am no longer on their books.
122. John Crawford from Future Pathways has been supporting me recently through providing evidence in the Matt George case and to the Inquiry. I speak to him quite a lot and he has put my mind at ease. However, I haven't met him in person yet because of the pandemic. I could walk past him in the street and not know who he is.

## **Reporting of abuse after leaving care**

*To the police / ongoing prosecution of Matt George*

123. I know that Matt George has been previously convicted but I was never involved in that initial prosecution. I kind of felt when that conviction was achieved justice had been done for everybody. I had no idea that after he was convicted further people continued to come forward. The police approached me in 2018 about providing a statement. They came to my door out of the blue. I didn't know it at the time but they had contacted me due to investigations as part of an operation called Operation Chalk. They had interviewed somebody and they had mentioned my name. They said that someone had seen an incident involving me.
124. As soon as the police mentioned Matt George I said that I would provide them with a statement. The police then took me to a police station in Ayr. That was where the investigation was being run out of. When I was interviewed I told them everything I have told the Inquiry surrounding Matt George. I couldn't go into the detail of what he did with other boys but I could go into exactly what happened with me.
125. The police later on got me to look at a video line up so that I could identify Matt George. I immediately was able to identify him. He was still the same man though older. He still had his big bushy walrus moustache. Thirty eight years later and I could still recognise him.
126. Providing a statement to the police led to me providing video evidence in the ongoing attempt to prosecute Matt George in April 2022. I think the full trial is to start in October 2022. I understand there are a further nineteen people who have laid charges against him. I provided my evidence in the tribunal building on Broomielaw in Glasgow. Matt George wasn't in the court but Lord Weir, counsel for the prosecution and counsel for the defence were. It was all very informal. The way people were during the hearing eased the tension. Matt George's defence counsel did sail quite close to the wind when he cross-examined me. He would sometimes pose questions that the

prosecution would object to. In reality it would just end up in exactly the same question being re-worded in a different way.

127. I don't know who else has been cited as witnesses in the trial. All I know is that nineteen people have been called. I don't know whether amongst them are former staff members or whether it is just former residents of Kerelaw. I have been told by prosecutors that if the prosecution of Matt George is successful it is likely the sentence will mean he will spend the rest of his life in jail. My impression is that they are going all out for him. I think it is likely that Matt George will be prosecuted. It is a shame that he has family that he won't be able to see if he gets sentenced to prison but we all have families. He never thought of us and our families when he was doing what he was doing.

#### *Civil claim*

128. I am in contact with Thompsons Solicitors surrounding raising a civil claim against Glasgow City Council but things haven't got anywhere. I think they were the ones who contacted me rather than the other way round. I've been told by Thompsons that they intend to raise a group action against the Council concerning what was going on in Kerelaw. Glasgow City Council have essentially been stonewalling me for about five years.

#### **Records**

129. I never thought that you could recover your records. I don't think that's something that I would bother with. It's that long ago that I'm not sure I'm interested in finding out what happened surrounding me being placed in care now.

#### **Lessons to be learned / hopes for the Inquiry**

130. When I was in the homes it was all jobs for the boys and run on nepotism. There were a lot of people who slipped through the net and got jobs in the homes. It would have made a difference for me had the right qualified people been at Kerelaw when I was

there. Freedom of information and PVG has been a godsend for those who are in care now at places like I was at. Now that we're in the electronic age there is a lot more information at people's fingertips that enables them to look into the backgrounds of people. People are screened a lot more before they are employed and I think that is a good thing.

131. Looking back to my time at Kerelaw, there was no one I could really have gone up to and spoken to openly. There was nothing like that. When I reported things to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Kerelaw he should have taken what I was saying seriously and confronted Matt George about his unacceptable behaviour. He should've said that if he heard about any further behaviour like what I reported then he would go straight to the headmaster. If the headmaster wasn't listening then he should've gone straight to the police.
132. Children were in the sort of homes I was in because life had dealt them a bad hand. I always think that if I had remained in Newfield then I probably would have had a better life. That's the way all the homes I was in should have been run. Most of the homes I was in the staff took their time to talk with you. It was just Kerelaw that was different.
133. I think the Inquiry should be more promoted so more people know about it. There are probably a lot of people out there who are still scared to talk. I appreciate from the way I have interacted with the Inquiry the work that is being done. I'm not looking for a thousand people to be prevented from being hurt. If speaking to the Inquiry stops just one person being hurt then that is good enough for me.
134. 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. 17/10/22 .....