

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GKV

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GKV. My date of birth is 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in [REDACTED] in Edinburgh. I lived with my mum, my brother, [REDACTED], and my sister, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is four years older than me and [REDACTED] is two years older than me. My mum's name was [REDACTED]. She had a wee cleaning job but she was mainly looking after her children. When I was three or four years old we moved to the Wester Hailes area of the city. My nephew, [REDACTED], lived with us as well. He was my step brother's son and he was a year younger than me. I had a lot of older step siblings but they didn't live with us.
3. Life was alright at home. My oldest brother would rob my mum's electricity meter. Because of that, we had no electricity most of the time. The only thing we had for heating was a gas cooker in the kitchen. We had problems with the house getting flooded in the winter. We had to move house and go into temporary accommodation when I was younger. That was hard, but we always had enough to eat. Our mum made sure we had food on our plates, even if she didn't have it.
4. I attended Hailesland Primary School. I did okay at school up until about primary 5 or 6. I then started to skip school. I didn't like it and I couldn't concentrate much. I think that's why I started to miss it. When I skipped school, I would go to the adventure

playground with my nephew, [REDACTED]. We would help the workers there to do repairs. The school didn't really take action when I missed primary school. I don't think my mum was called into the school but maybe that happened once. I wouldn't get out of my bed in the morning. Sometimes, my aunty used to come over and drag me out of bed for school. I was probably attending school about three or four days a week at that point. I recently learned from my records that social work became involved when I was in primary 7, but I don't remember that.

5. When I started secondary school I went to Wester Hailes Education Centre. I didn't like it. I was hardly there at all. I think I went to school about twice a week. That was when I remember the social work department becoming involved. My social worker was Mr Adams. He was alright. He was involved with my step sister, [REDACTED], and her kids at the time as well. I think she was having problems with her husband or something.
6. When I was around the age of twelve, I started attending Children's Panels for skipping school. I didn't get into any trouble with the police, but I kept missing school. I remember there would be three or four people asking questions about why I wasn't going to school. I didn't have anybody there to represent me, just my mum and Mr Adams. Nobody met with me before the Panels to speak to me about what would happen. I didn't really care about the Panels. I was just a wee toe-rag at the time. I went to about three Panels but nothing came of them until I started to miss them.
7. I didn't go to a Children's Panel for about thirteen months. I kept on running away whenever I knew I had a Panel. I thought that I might be taken into care if I did attend. That was at the back of my head. I think the Panel members might have told me that if I kept missing school, I'd be taken into care. My nephew, [REDACTED], was in and out of care from the age of about eleven. He was in Doctor Guthrie's and another home near Holyrood. He would run away from the homes and come back to my mum's. He didn't say much about being in care, but I knew it wasn't something that I wanted to happen to me. I was still going home at night, but I would hide when I knew they'd be looking for me. The police got involved. They were trying to find me to take me to the Panel.

My brother's pal was a policeman in Wester Hailes at the time. On his day off, he got me into his car and took me and my mum up to the Panel.

8. When I was taken to the Panel they said that I'd have to go into care because I wasn't attending school. They said that my mum couldn't cope. My mum didn't say much. There wasn't really anything she could do. I felt upset about leaving her. After that, Mr Adams took me to the assessment centre in his car. He didn't tell me anything about it or how long I would be there for. I never went back to another Children's Panel after that.

Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Howdenhall Road, Edinburgh

9. I was about thirteen and a half when I went into Howdenhall. There were about 25 boys there, aged between about 12 and 15. Boys tended to come and go quite a lot so there was quite a fast turnover. It was like a jail. That was the way that they treated us. It was secure and all the doors were locked behind us. There were bars on the windows. We couldn't come and go. Staff had to open the door for you to go up to your room. It was built on two levels with the bedrooms upstairs. Downstairs there was a TV room and kitchen. There was a square outside enclosed by a big wall. That was where we went for fresh air. We would get out for about two hours a day.
10. I'm not sure who was **SNR** at Howdenhall. It might have been Mr **PAU**. He was the first person I was introduced to when I went in. We didn't see much of him because he was always in his office. I think he was my key worker, but I didn't have much contact with him after my first day. I didn't really have anybody I could go and talk to at Howdenhall. All of the staff were male. There was a member of staff called **GQB** and another called Mr **GPX**. They would tell us when it was lunchtime or when we were supposed to go to the gym. There were other staff who did the cooking and cleaning but we didn't really know them.

Routine at Howdenhall

First day

11. Mr Adams took me to Howdenhall. I didn't have any belongings with me when I arrived. I think Howdenhall provided me with clothes, but I can't be sure. I was a bit scared because it was the first time I'd been in an institution. I went into Mr PAU's office. He was quite pleasant and alright to me. After we had talked, my social worker went away. Mr PAU took me in to meet the rest of the people. He told the other boys that I had a black belt in karate so they needed to be careful.
12. I think Mr PAU said that as a joke, but it made things worse for me. Because of what he said, some of the other boys started bullying me for the first couple of days. They wanted to fight me all of the time. I would try to keep away from them and sit at the back when we were watching TV and things like that. It was a wee bit frightening. It calmed down after a few days and after I got talking to people. I had to tell them that I wasn't actually a black belt in karate. Some of them knew my nephew, [REDACTED], so that helped too. He had been in Howdenhall as well, but not at the same time as me. I didn't witness any more bullying by boys at Howdenhall. Everybody sort of got along with each other.

Mornings/bedtime

13. We had a shower in the morning before we went down for breakfast. After breakfast we had to do cleaning. At night time, we had to stand to attention at about 8:30, 9:00 pm. We had to march in a line. The staff would open the door for us and we would go up to our bedrooms. We would stand outside our rooms. I had my own room, but I didn't have any belongings in my room. There was just a bed in the room. There were separate nightshift workers but I can't remember any of their names. I think they came in at about 10:00 pm and we were already in our beds. There was nobody around if you had a problem during the night, but that never happened to me. We weren't locked into our bedrooms at night. If we needed the toilet, we could open the door and go to

the bathroom. I don't know whether any boys wet the bed. I wouldn't have been aware of that because the door was shut behind me when I went to bed.

Mealtimes/food

14. The food was actually nice at Howdenhall. We all ate together in the dining room at tables. We could sit wherever we wanted. We got cornflakes or Weetabix with toast for breakfast. Lunch was a set meal, but it was okay. There was nothing I didn't like at Howdenhall, but there was no choice if you didn't like something. I think it was just a case of there being nothing until the next meal. We used to get a cup of tea and a biscuit at set times, but we couldn't go into the kitchen and help ourselves to anything.

Washing and bathing

15. The showers were communal. A member of staff would stand outside the door. I think there was soap and things in the showers but I can't really remember.

Schooling/daily routine

16. We would go and get our breakfast in the morning. We would then go into the TV room. It had rooms off it for education but we didn't get any education at all. I don't remember any teachers coming in. We were just left to our own devices. After breakfast there was a pool table in the kitchen so we could play pool. We didn't really do anything. It was really boring. There were no organised activities. We hardly saw the staff during the day. They didn't really make an effort to talk to us.

Work/chores

17. We had to do cleaning after breakfast. We mopped the floor and cleaned the foyer. One of the staff would pick boys to do different tasks. We didn't get any pocket money for doing the chores.

Leisure time

18. The only organised activities were murder football, which involved GQB and GPX battering us, and boxing. Mr GPX took us for boxing about once a week. He would put the smallest person in with the biggest person. I had to do that twice. The big guy would obviously win and Mr GPX would stand there and laugh. There was one boy in there called [REDACTED] and he was about 6 foot 6. He would be standing there punching the smaller boys. Mr GPX said that it was to toughen us up. He would wait until you fell to the ground before he stopped it. I remember having a sore face after being punched in the face with boxing gloves.
19. There wasn't a lot of kindness shown by the staff at Howdenhall, but I do remember two members of staff who were good. Later on in my time there, one of the members of staff took me up to the shops to get some sweets one day. There was another member of staff who had known [REDACTED] from the fishing boats. I think his name was Mr Laird. He took us out one night to a bowling club. Those are the only activities that I can remember being enjoyable at Howdenhall. They were the only two occasions that I got out while I was there.

Healthcare

20. I didn't receive any healthcare at Howdenhall. I wasn't unwell while I was there and I can't remember any other boys being unwell.

Christmas and birthdays

21. I can't remember any birthdays being celebrated at Howdenhall. I wasn't there at Christmas time.

Visits/inspections

22. I had no contact with my siblings when I was in Howdenhall. I didn't get to speak to them at all. My mum and my nephew came to visit me once. I had been in Howdenhall

for about three months by then. I hadn't had any contact with my mum up until that point. My mum had to come and sign a form that gave me permission to smoke. I saw them in a room next to the reception area. They were only there for about half an hour. By that time, I was used to life in there. Nobody else came to visit me at Howdenhall. I read my records recently that my two sisters came to visit me, but I have no recollection of that. I was really just taken there and left. My social worker didn't visit me. I never saw him again after he took me into Howdenhall.

Running away

23. I think a couple of boys ran away when I was in Howdenhall. They were mopping the foyer and they managed to unlock the front door and get away. I think they were away for a couple of days and then the police brought them back.

Discipline

24. If you did something wrong, there was a padded cell that the staff would put boys in. That didn't happen to me, but it happened to other boys while I was there. They would be left there for a couple of days if they had been cheeky to the staff or violent. My nephew, [REDACTED], told me that he was in the padded cell for a couple of days at a time. I think he was put there because he ran away. I don't remember any boys being restrained at Howdenhall. Everybody knew what they were doing. If you were out of order, you knew what would happen to you. I've never been in a prison, but I think it was a bit like being in one at Howdenhall.

Abuse at Howdenhall

25. When I first went into Howdenhall I was crying in my bedroom. GQB [REDACTED] came in and punched me in the head. He told me to stop crying. He said that I was in care now and I needed to be a man. That happened about three or four times at night when I first went into the home. He punched me on the side of the head because I was crying. It was really painful. I just put the covers over my head and cried under the covers. I

don't know if that happened to other boys because I wasn't aware of what was going on in other bedrooms.

26. We used to play football in the gym once a week. It was called murder football. GQB and GPX would announce it was time for football, take us into the gym hall and lock the door. They would take about ten of us in and we couldn't get back out. It would be GQB and GPX against the boys. We would play football and they would kick and punch me and the other boys. They would kick the shit out of us for an hour. They would batter us. They would punch us in the head and in the stomach. People were injured during murder football. I can remember having sore ribs and a red face. They thought it was funny. Mr GPX was in his late forties, early fifties. He had a black beard and his hair was a bit receded at the top. GQB was a bit younger than Mr GPX. He was balding with gingery hair.

Leaving Howdenhall

27. There were no care planning meetings when I was at Howdenhall. I wasn't involved in the decision to move me. I wanted to go home. I think there were meetings between my social worker and my mum, but I didn't know anything about that at the time. I was at Howdenhall for about six or seven months before being transferred to Doctor Guthrie's. I was just told by Mr PAU that I was being moved. I wasn't given any reason. I think I was given about two days' notice. I didn't know anything about Doctor Guthrie's or how long I was going there for. Mr PAU wife was my keyworker at Doctor Guthrie's. She picked me up at Howdenhall and took me to Doctor Guthrie's in her car.

Doctor Guthrie's School, Lasswade Road, Edinburgh

28. I was about fourteen years old when I went to Doctor Guthrie's. It was a residential school. I got a bit of a shock when I arrived because of the size of it. It was an old building. There was a big open yard and it had units all round it. That was where we

had our classes. In the main building, there were offices and the kitchen downstairs. The bedrooms were upstairs. There were two massive dormitories on one side of the building and another two massive dormitories on the other side. I think there were about twenty boys in each dormitory and eighty boys altogether. The age range was about twelve to fifteen, sixteen.

29. There was a girls' part of Doctor Guthrie's in the Gilmerton area. The girls would come to use the swimming pool one night every week, but we didn't have any contact with them. Doctor Guthrie's was more open than Howdenhall had been. We had to go from class to class so we weren't locked in. We had more freedom. There were grounds around the school. There was a football pitch and an assault course for motor bikes.
30. We used to call SNR [REDACTED] of Doctor Guthrie's GFC [REDACTED]. I can't remember his name. He retired when I was there and SNR [REDACTED]. I think SNR [REDACTED] was Mr HSB [REDACTED]. He was quite old and he was alright. There were care workers and separate teachers at the school. I can remember keyworkers called GQC [REDACTED] and Mr GBD [REDACTED]. Mrs [REDACTED] was my keyworker and she was really nice. She wasn't involved with me very much. I saw her when she took me to Doctor Guthrie's and then I think I only saw her once or twice after that. She gave me a present of a pool cue when she retired. I think I'd been at Doctor Guthrie's for about a year when she left. I didn't get another keyworker after Mrs [REDACTED] left.

Routine at Doctor Guthrie's

First day

31. I didn't bring any belongings with me when I went to Doctor Guthrie's. I didn't have anything of my own when I was there. When I arrived at Doctor Guthrie's, I was shown around a little bit. I was shown which bedroom I would be in and where my bed was. Nobody explained the rules to me or helped me to settle in. There were two brothers that I knew from Wester Hailes, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My bed was near their beds so that was okay.

Mornings/bedtime

32. There were about twenty beds in each dormitory. There were three beds and units in a corner. We could keep our clothes in the units. There were nightshift workers on duty overnight. We were able to get out to use the bathroom if we needed the toilet. It was mad at night because there were so many boys in each room. Boys would be fighting with each other and things like that. The staff would go daft at you if you were making a noise at night.
33. The staff would come in and turn the lights on in the morning. There was a boy in a bed next to mine who used to wet the bed. The staff would change his sheets for him in the morning. They didn't make an issue of him wetting the bed. I only knew about it because I was next to him. We would get ready for breakfast and go down for breakfast in the dining room. After breakfast, we had to polish our shoes but we didn't do any other chores at Doctor Guthrie's. Mr GBD would then take us for a fag in the smoking room, which was next to the room where we polished our shoes. We were allowed four cigarettes a day. The staff bought them for us and we always smoked them in that room. When we had finished our cigarette after breakfast we would go to classes.

Mealtimes/food

34. All of the boys ate in the same area. It was a big dining hall. It was busy during the day because more boys came in as day pupils. We got cereal, a cup of tea or juice and a piece of fruit for breakfast. There were kitchen staff there. We would go over with our plates and then take them back to our tables. We didn't get any choice when it came to meals. It was like a set menu. The food at Doctor Guthrie's was alright, apart from at the weekend. If you were kept in at the weekend there were no cooks on duty. The staff would cook instead and we would help them. One Saturday, we were making mince. I could smell that it was off but the staff were saying that it was fine. I didn't eat it and everybody else got sick.

Washing and bathing

35. We had a shower before we went to bed. There was a shower room. The showers were communal but they had cubicles without curtains or doors. There was a keyworker called **KLQ** and another male keyworker who were present while we had showers. **KLQ** would come and give you shampoo. She and the other keyworker would stand there laughing and giggling at us while we were showering. They did that every night. It made me feel really uncomfortable. When we came out of the shower, they put toothpaste onto our fingers. We had to brush our teeth with our fingers. We didn't have toothbrushes.

Clothing

36. I didn't bring any clothes with me to Doctor Guthrie's. They gave me clothes to wear, but they weren't new clothes. I was given plain jeans and a brown jumper. I think that was the Doctor Guthrie's uniform. The jumper was a bit tight on me. The only time you got new clothes was when you were taken down to the room and given a new jumper and jeans. We were given black shoes to wear. We didn't get football boots or a strip for football, but we had gym shoes.

Schooling

37. We went to classes during the day. We had practical subjects like woodwork and mechanics. We also did academic subjects like music, history and English. The English teacher was called **GWV**. Mrs Horsburgh was the history teacher. She was pleasant. She used to talk to us nicely and treated us well. **HIH** was the music teacher and the PE teacher was called **KEP**. **KEP** was always grumpy. I liked maths at school, but the teaching at Doctor Guthrie's wasn't that great. I can't even remember us doing maths there. We didn't get any homework.
38. I enjoyed sport at school. I played football for the school team for the first six weeks that I spent at Doctor Guthrie's. I was a right back. We got to play against other schools. We played Craigroyston School, which was where my nephew went. I got to

see him when we played against them. The team actually won a trophy in a tournament against other homes, but I had been dropped from the team as a punishment from the PE teacher, **KEP**. I had refused to play volleyball in PE because I didn't feel well. **KEP** assaulted me and also dropped me from the football team. I was devastated. The team were presented with their medals at church but I didn't get one. I didn't get to play for the school team again.

Leisure time

39. At break time, we used sit about in the yard. At night time, the staff would sometimes hold a pool competition. Each dormitory had a different name so the dormitories would compete against each other. The school had a swimming pool and we went swimming once a week. I'm not sure whether we had a TV or not. There was a woodwork teacher called Mr Mullen. He was nice. He had motorbikes which we used to fix up. We would get a shot on the motorbikes and could take them out on the assault course and football pitch. I enjoyed that.
40. I would just sit about at weekends because I couldn't really do anything. There would be about three members of staff and that was about it. We weren't allowed to go out and the staff didn't take us on any trips. Other than one weekend at home and when I ran away, the only time I left was to go to church.

Healthcare

41. I wasn't feeling well when I refused to take part in volleyball at PE, but I didn't get any medical attention. I felt like I had the flu or a cold. I think I might have been examined by a nurse once, but I can't remember much about that. I was taken to the dentist on Dalkeith Road for a check-up. The dentist said that I needed a filling. It was the first time in my life I'd ever had a filling. It was really sore and I had trouble eating afterwards.

Religious instruction

42. We had to go to the church around the corner on Sundays. We weren't given a choice. I didn't go to church before I went into care so it was new to me. It was boring. Religion didn't play any other part in school life.

Christmas and birthdays

43. I was in Doctor Guthrie's for my birthday. I didn't get a card or a cake. It wasn't celebrated. Nobody's birthday was celebrated. I think I was there for Christmas, but I have no memories of anything special happening. I can't remember any decorations or a Christmas dinner. Most of the boys went home for Christmas.

Visits/family contact

44. The last time that I saw a social worker was when I was put into the assessment centre. I didn't get any social work visits at all at Doctor Guthrie's. Nobody told me how long I'd be there for. I was just left there. I can't remember any visitors coming into Doctor Guthrie's at all. There was very little contact with the outside world.
45. I didn't have any contact with my family at all, apart from one weekend. We couldn't make phone calls and I didn't get any visits. I was only allowed out of Doctor Guthrie's once the whole time that I was there. My sister and my nephew came up and I was given new clothes to wear because I was going out. I got to go and stay at my brother's for the weekend. I started running away after that and I was usually kept in at weekends as a punishment. There would be about fifteen boys kept at Doctor Guthrie's over the weekend. It was hard.

Running away

46. Doctor Guthrie's was open so you could run away easily enough if you wanted to. I started running away because I felt so uncomfortable in the showers and swimming pool. I would run away with another boy, [REDACTED] Before the showers, we

would run out the fire escape door, down the stairs and across the fields. The first time I ran away was after being at Doctor Guthrie's for about five months.

47. We used to run away to the Oxcgangs area of Edinburgh, where [REDACTED] dad lived. I think we also went to Wester Hailes once. I think I ran away five or six times. The first time we ran away, the police caught us at [REDACTED] dad's house. We jumped out of the window and ran away, but they chased us and caught us. They took us to Oxcgangs Police Station and gave us a couple of slaps and a clip around the head. I was put into a cell for about half an hour. I think [REDACTED] had been in trouble with the police before so they put us into the police car to take us back to the home. When we were in the car, they told us to put our hands on top of the seats. If we moved our hands they would hit them with their truncheons.
48. The police caught us each time we ran away. They didn't normally take us to the police station. It was too late at night for anybody from the home to pick us up so the police would take us back to Doctor Guthrie's. They never asked us why we had ran away. When we got back to Doctor Guthrie's, the person doing the night shift would shout and bawl at us. I remember Mr ^{HSB} [REDACTED] shouting at me for running away, but he was alright. We wouldn't be allowed out at the weekend because we ran away.

Discipline

49. There wasn't really a code of discipline at Doctor Guthrie's. If you were cheeky to a member of staff, the way it was dealt with depended on the member of staff. Some of them were really nice. Maybe they had kids of their own. Other members of staff would clip you round the back of the head if you were cheeky to them. Mr ^{GQC} [REDACTED] would hit you with a slipper if you misbehaved at night time. I also saw a couple of boys being restrained. [REDACTED] was the head boy at the school when it came to fighting. I remember him being restrained by staff and taken off another boy he was fighting. I thought it was reasonable because the boys were battering each other. They didn't restrain boys unless it was necessary.

Abuse at Doctor Guthrie's

50. There were older boys than me at Doctor Guthrie's and bullying did go on. I tried to keep away from that sort of thing. I experienced a bit of it when I first went there, but my nephew sorted it out for me. I was being bullied by someone in my dorm and my nephew put a stop to it.
51. SNR [REDACTED] at Doctor Guthrie's was called GFC [REDACTED]. If he caught you having a chip butty at lunchtime, he would slap you right across the head. He didn't approve of that. He had big massive hands and he would strike you quite hard. I think it would have left a mark, but it would have been under your hair. When he walked in the door the room would go quiet.
52. If you were making a noise at night, GQC [REDACTED] would take you into a room and take your jammies down. He was a big fat man, probably in his early fifties. He would grab you and put you over his knee. He would leave the door open so other boys could see what he was doing. He would hit you on your bare bum with a slipper. He struck you about three times. He was a big man. He was a day worker but I don't think the nightshift came on until later. GQC [REDACTED] did that to me a few times and I know that he did it to my nephew, [REDACTED], as well. [REDACTED] had stayed at Doctor Guthrie's before I arrived there. By the time I got there he was still attending Doctor Guthrie's for school but he lived in another residential home. I was left with a red bum after Mr GQC [REDACTED] did that to me. He did it to other boys as well.
53. Mr GBD [REDACTED] would take us for a cigarette after breakfast. He used to carry a big bunch of keys and he wore wooden clogs. He liked getting his back scratched with a key. He asked a lot of boys to do that for him. If you refused to scratch his back he would throw his keys or his clogs at you. He would try and hit you on the head. Mr GBD [REDACTED] asked me to scratch his back on two occasions but I wouldn't do it. He chucked his keys at me one time and another time he chucked his clog. He missed on both occasions. I did see him hit other boys with his keys and clog. It was a big bunch of keys so they got a shock.

54. Mr ^{GWV} was the English teacher. When I was quite new at the school, I went to his class and I couldn't remember his name. Someone told me that he liked to be called '^{GWV}', which was his nickname. I called him ^{GWV} and he went mad. He grabbed me by the hair and pulled me out of the class. He started battering me just outside the classroom. He was calling me a wee bastard and things like that. He was punching and slapping me on the head and body for about five minutes. I think he probably struck me about fifteen times. My stomach and head were sore afterwards and I had a red face. I just had to go back into class.
55. Mr ^{GWV} assaulted me a second time. It was the day after I had called him ^{GWV}. I was in his class and he walked past me and punched me in the head. I didn't see him being violent towards other boys, but I heard that he was. My nephew told me that he was assaulted by Mr ^{GWV}.
56. I remember walking over to the music classroom after lunch. I think I'd been at Doctor Guthrie's for about four months. I asked the teacher, ^{HIH}, a question about music. He just went mad. He grabbed me and put me into a kind of recess outside the building. He just started kicking me for no reason at all. He punched me to the stomach and ribs. It went on for five or ten minutes. There were other boys around when that happened. I think he had a short fuse, but he just went totally nuts. He looked a bit like he was French. He had dark hair, receding on top. I saw him get angry at other times but I never saw him being violent again. I was dumbstruck.
57. One day we were playing volleyball at PE. I wasn't feeling well so I didn't want to play. The PE teacher, ^{KEP}, went mad. He was probably in his late forties, thin and bald. He moved to Wellington Farm after Doctor Guthrie's shut down. He told me that if I didn't play, I wouldn't be allowed to play for the football team. I still said that I couldn't play. He grabbed me, took me into the equipment cupboard in the gym hall and shut the door. He battered me. He punched me in the stomach and head for about five minutes. I was left with redness on my face. I also didn't get to play for the football team as a punishment.

58. **KEP** assaulted me a second time as well. It was about a week after the first assault. I refused to play volleyball again so he battered me in the cupboard. There were no other teachers around when he assaulted me. I didn't get to play for the school football team again after that. I saw **KEP** slap another boy over the head when he was mucking about, but I didn't see him take any other boys into the gym cupboard.
59. A lady and a man would take about ten to fifteen of us swimming in the pool at Doctor Guthrie's. I can't remember their names. The woman was small and quite chubby. The man was older and thin. I never saw them at any other time so I don't know what their roles were at the school. They asked if anybody wanted to go swimming. The first time that I went, we went in and they locked the door. I thought that they would give us trunks but we had to swim naked. The man and woman would stand there, staring and laughing at us. I went swimming nearly every week. The same man and woman took us each time and we were always naked. At first, I felt a bit funny about it. I then started to think it must just be a routine thing because everybody else was doing it. Sometimes the man would hit boys on the backside as they got out of the pool. He did that to me once. I asked him what he was doing and he just sort of laughed.

Reporting of abuse whilst at Doctor Guthrie's

60. Mrs **KEP** was my keyworker. I saw her when I first went in but I didn't really see her after that. There was nobody I could talk to. I didn't tell anybody about the things that happened in the showers and the swimming pool. Boys didn't talk about it to each other either. Everybody thought it was just a normal occurrence.

Leaving Doctor Guthrie's

61. I was in Doctor Guthrie's for about a year. It was then being shut down and all the boys were placed elsewhere. I think we knew for about three months that it was going to close. They were starting to get rid of things in the rooms and that kind of thing. I didn't have too long left at school by that time. They came to a decision that I would go back

home again and attend Wellington Farm School near Penicuik. I was just told that was what was going to happen. I wasn't involved in the decision and I didn't attend a Children's Panel. I can't remember the day I left or how I got home.

Life after leaving care

62. It was strange being at home and seeing my friends again. I hadn't seen them for about two years. In that time, my friends had become involved in the drug scene so I was a bit taken aback. I found it hard to settle in at home. It was a different environment. It was hard to fit back into the routine at home when I'd been in such a regimented regime. It was just me and my mum at home. I felt like I had drawn away from her so I found it quite hard. I had been close to my mum before I went into care.
63. I attended Wellington Farm daily, although there were boys who stayed there on a residential basis. I think there were about sixty boys there, but I don't know how many were day pupils and how many were residential. I did speak to some of the boys who stayed there at break times. I got the impression that staying there was similar to being in Doctor Guthrie's. I wasn't aware of any abuse there. I thought Wellington was alright.
64. I left the house at about 7:30 am. I had to get a bus from Wester Hailes to the Gracemount area of Edinburgh. I would then get the school bus to Penicuik. I didn't have any choice, but they gave me an incentive. If I went to school, I got £2.60 on a Friday. I also got some fruit every day as well. I did brickwork at Wellington. I only did one subject, but it was good because I learned a trade. They would also take us out on the bus and drop us about ten miles away from the school. We then had to run back.
65. They told me that I would have to stay at Wellington until I was eighteen if I didn't get a job. The school got me work experience at a shop called [REDACTED] before I left. I worked there three days a week and went to school the other two days. I worked at [REDACTED] for about six weeks, but I didn't get paid. I was only at Wellington for about two and a half, three months. I didn't get any qualifications at school.

66. After I left Wellington, my friends had all got into taking drugs. I was being prescribed Valium by my GP. I told him that I'd experienced abuse when I was in care so he started giving me sixty Valium tablets a week when I was sixteen, seventeen. I think he prescribed them because I was anxious and I found it hard to fit in with my friends. I was very quiet.
67. I had a job in the YTS scheme. I did joinery, painting and decorating and cooking. I did that for about eight months. I enjoyed doing that because it was a job. I didn't get any support from social work after leaving care. I was left at Howdenhall and they washed their hands of me. I finished the YTS scheme when I was nearly seventeen.
68. I took drugs for a while and took every drug that was going, but it wasn't for me. I stopped taking drugs but I started drinking instead. I moved away from my friends and travelled about. I stayed down in England with my nephew for a while. My mental health wasn't good. I was in and out of hospital about twice a week because I was taking overdoses. I've never really been able to hold down a job because of my alcohol use. I've worked in factories, as a labourer and as a chef.

Reporting of abuse

69. I never reported what happened to me in care to the police. I just thought it was a normal thing because it was happening to other people as well. There was nobody to turn to anyway and I didn't think that anybody would believe me. It wasn't until recently that other people's stories started to come out and I started thinking about my time in care. I saw things about the Inquiry.
70. My mum was in a home called Smyllum Orphanage. It happened to my mum as well. She was abused there. She used to tell us that she was beaten up in Smyllum. She told us that she and her sisters used to march up and down the corridors. I don't really know what impact her time in Smyllum had on her. We don't really speak about it.

71. I've only started talking about my experiences in care in the last year or so. I speak to my nephew about what happened because he was also in the homes. He was in a lot more homes than I was. He's just started to speak to me a bit more about abuse that he experienced. He'd never spoken to anybody about it before, but he's applied to give evidence to the Inquiry.

Impact

72. It wasn't until I came out of care that I felt the impact of my experiences. I was just left on my own, out in the real world. I had no support to help me. I found it quite hard to fit back into the system again. Before I went into care, I didn't suffer from anxiety. I was able to talk to people. When I came out of Doctor Guthrie's, I found it really hard to fit back in with my friends. They were doing different things and I'd missed out on it all. Being back around them, I felt out of place. I found it hard to talk to people. They had all started taking drugs and I didn't know what drugs were. I had been taken out of the world and was then dropped back in it again when I was sixteen.
73. I felt withdrawn from my mum when I left care. I had been really close to her before I went to Howdenhall. I've never really spoken to her about what happened to me in care. When I came back out, I couldn't really handle telling anybody about it. It really split me from my family. I moved out of my mum's when I was sixteen. I also found it difficult to get on with my siblings when I came home. It was hard. Before I went into care, we had been close. My sister had moved away with her boyfriend and my brother had moved away with his girlfriend. I was really left on my own. I moved out of my mum's and managed to find myself accommodation in a bed and breakfast. I wanted to get away from people telling me what to do.
74. I took an overdose when I was about nineteen. I then saw a psychiatrist for a couple of years. That triggered things off and started a cycle of memories of care returning and thinking badly of myself every so often. I would attempt suicide and end up in hospital again.

75. I still struggle with anxiety to this day. I have a stutter. I think I took drugs and alcohol to help me cope with my anxiety. I tried every drug going after I left care. My GP referred me to a drugs worker who helped me come off the drugs when I was sixteen. Drugs weren't for me. I came off the drugs and moved onto drinking alcohol. I thought that I'd rather drink alcohol than take drugs. I've been in rehab for my use of alcohol twice. I was in the Ritson Clinic at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital about three years ago and five years ago. That helped me for a while.
76. I've been given medication for my anxiety. It helps a wee bit. I've previously had a CPN and a keyworker, but I find it hard to speak to them. It's difficult to have a conversation with them. I haven't always found them very helpful, but I do still see a CPN at my doctor's. My CPN would ask me if I'd been diagnosed with anything and I would say that I don't know. My doctor kept on blaming everything on the drink so I didn't find that very helpful. Nobody would tell me anything and I'm not really a person who asks a lot. I was admitted to hospital in May 2022 after a suicide attempt. I was kept in hospital longer and I saw a psychologist. I told her about my experiences in care. I've now been diagnosed with complex post-traumatic stress disorder. I've managed to get a referral to a psychologist through my keyworker. I've really had to push for that. I've never had a counsellor or a psychologist before but I'm going to start with a psychologist in the next month.
77. I don't think about being in care often. I sort of blocked it all out. I thought what happened to me was normal anyway. Being in care definitely affected my self-esteem. It took me years to get into a relationship with someone. I've been with my partner on and off for about ten years. The last time I was in hospital I had a flashback to being assaulted by GQB at Howdenhall. I'd never had a flashback before. I could see his face and everything and he was punching me. It was terrifying. They had to get one of the nurses to sit by my door at night. I kept waking up in sweats in the middle of the night.
78. I've never been able to hold down a job. I've always been in and out of employment because of my drinking. I think my lack of education is my own fault because I didn't go to school, but I didn't really get much education when I was taken into care so it

certainly didn't help. That was supposed to be the whole reason that they took me out of my home.

79. I have one daughter. I try to give her everything that I didn't have. She gets spoiled. I think I'm more protective of her than I would have been because of my experiences. I don't trust people in authority. What happened with the police when I was in care is always at the back of my mind. It makes it difficult to speak to people in positions of authority. I go into my shell and keep everything to myself.

Records

80. I applied to the council to get my records. Redress Scotland helped me with that. I've just received them in the last three weeks. I've been with through them with my Redress worker, Scott. Most of the records are redacted so it's hard to make them out. Lots of it contradicts itself as well. There was a section about me going swimming every week at Doctor Guthrie's, but then lots of it is redacted so I don't know what it says. It felt strange going back to that time. The records went all the way back to primary 7. I realised that a lot of things were going on behind my back. I didn't want to see my records myself, but my Redress helped me. Scott put me at ease and he said it wasn't right what had happened to me.

Lessons to be learned

81. I think there should always be at least two members of staff with children in homes. I don't think abuse would happen as much if there were more staff involved. Most of the things that happened to me were when staff members were on their own.
82. When children go into a home, I think they should have a point of contact who helps them to get on with their lives and supports them. There was no support for me when I left care and there was nobody to turn to when I was in care. I think it would have helped if someone from outside the home came in once a week. If they stayed in a

room, children could go and speak to them if they had a grievance. It needs to be someone independent from the home. Social work just washed their hands of me when I went into care and there was no support when I left care.

Hopes for the Inquiry

83. When I think back, the brutality and the violence I experienced in care definitely had an impact on me. It's still going on with kids in this day and age so it's good to get my voice heard. I hope that it might help kids who are in care just now. I've read in the papers that abuse has still been taking place in Edinburgh and in the same place that I was in, Howdenhall. It's not right. That's what prompted me to come forward to the Inquiry. I want people to know what went on.
84. 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

GKV

Dated

12/8/2022