

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Hazel GOURLAY

Support person present: No.

1. My name is Hazel Anne Gourlay. Gourlay is my married name and my maiden name was Shaw. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1947. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I was educated in England before doing an honours MA in English at St. Andrews University from 1967 until 1971. In 1971, I became a social work assistant in Dundee. It was a new post set up by the director of social work there to ease the caseload. I worked there for four years. During that time I was seconded to Strathmartine Hospital in Dundee, which was a long stay hospital for people with learning difficulties. I worked in a specialised group with six children who had IQs below 30. A very forward thinking psychiatrist thought that we could improve their situation.
3. I remained in that post until I left to have a family. While my children were growing up, I did adult basic literacy with the community. I was also an Open University tutor in children and early learning and English. We lived in Biggar. I helped to set up a playgroup there because I felt that it was a good thing for children. From the playgroup, I was put onto the community council as a representative of children. I then became chairman of the community council in Biggar. I think I was the chairman for three or four years, but I really don't remember. I believe that if you live in a community you have to contribute to that community. If you want a good community you have to make it.

4. Our local minister was on the community council with me as the religious representative. He was also on the board at Loaningdale School. He asked me if I would go on the board at Loaningdale, as he described it "to play table tennis with the boys in the evenings". It was quite an informal conversation while we were driving home from a meeting one evening. He thought I would be an asset to the board because of my social work background. I started as an ordinary board member. I went on to be staffing convenor and then chairman.
5. At that time, I'd already been a social work assistant in local authorities so I knew that a List D school was for children who were on a residential order and under supervision. However, I knew very little about the school. I was a young person with two young children. I was trying to do my best for the community that I'd moved into. I've always had a strong sense of duty. I did my bit with the children's playgroup, then I got onto the community council. I think the minister thought that I'd be a good person to have on the board because I had two young children and a social work background.

Loaningdale List D School, Biggar

6. I joined the board of Loaningdale at either the end of 1982 or the beginning of 1983. It was a List D school for boys aged 11 to 16. I think we did have some boys who stayed on beyond the age of 16, but I honestly don't remember that. I remember vividly that there were 26 boys in the school when I first started on the board, but I think the numbers varied a lot. I know at one point there were 50 boys in the school when John Wilson was headmaster. He wasn't happy about that because the school wasn't designed to house so many. It was designed to take 40 and we were probably up to that number most of the time I know that we tried to run full all of the time because it was economically viable and better for the children. It depended on local authorities being prepared to send children.
7. I never actually played table tennis with the boys, although that was how the minister had put the role to me. The role involved running the school in terms of administration, appointing staff, making sure that the finances and buildings were alright and that sort

of thing. It wasn't about working with the children at all. My position wasn't a job. It was a voluntary position of being on a board of managers.

8. Before joining the board, I was introduced to the headmaster, John Wilson. He showed me round the school and introduced me to some of the staff. A lot of the staff were local so I'd known quite a few of the staff beforehand. John Wilson was on the point of retiring. He was a very old-school Scot. He wore the kilt. I didn't know him beforehand, but in my opinion he'd been broken by the fact that he'd set up a therapeutic community. It had been working extremely well, but he was forced to turn it into an approved school, which was a short, sharp shock therapeutic community. A lot of children had troubled backgrounds. They had been taken out of peer pressure situations. Some of them were truants. Suddenly, he had to take people who were on supervision orders. He was polite and pleasant, but my own impression was that his ambitions for the school were no longer being fulfilled. There had been a murder in Biggar in 1967 and a pupil at Loaningdale had been convicted of the crime, which had put a severe strain on the school's relationship with the community and made it difficult for him to pursue what he saw as the ethos of the school.
9. Mr Wilson said that he'd be very glad to have me on the board. It was very informal, as I remember. No references were obtained when I was appointed. I'm not aware of any references being obtained before board members were appointed. I then attended the next board meeting and tried to gather what it was all about. During my first meeting with him, Mr Wilson didn't explain the ethos of the school nor what the role on the board was all about. I learned about the ethos of the school because I made it my business to do so, but I didn't know much about it before that.

Board of managers at Loaningdale

10. I thought I was just going to go up to the school and be sociable, but that really wasn't what it was at all. The board met on a Saturday morning once a month. Initially, the board comprised of what my father might have called "the great and the good", most of whom were from Edinburgh. Several of them were titled. The whole thing was very informal. People were asked if they'd like to join.

11. I wasn't aware of the 1967 murder before joining Loaningdale as we didn't move to Biggar until 1978. After the murder, efforts were made to involve far more local people who would be more hands-on and possibly mend the breach that the murder had caused. I was more in that latter phase. Most of the other members of the board were local people when I joined.
12. I can remember the first board meeting I attended very well. There was a very old councillor, who was subsequently found in a car which he'd reversed into a litter bin on the High Street. He fell asleep on the scones, which we were all served. We all whispered for the rest of the meeting until he woke up, with butter on his nose. We all pretended that nothing had happened. Another board member was Janet Hassan, who was a psychologist from Glasgow. She had actually trained me when I was a social work assistant. I did a year-long course at Dundee University and she had taught me there. She used to bring her dog to board meetings, who would quite often wee on the carpet and eat the scones. That gives a little flavour of the casualness of the board when I first joined it. It did improve. I think it improved because the board engaged more local people whose involvement was more relevant to the running of the school. People were also being selected based on their expertise rather than their titles, which made the board more functional and fit for the purpose of running the school.
13. The board meetings were always once a month, unless we called an extraordinary general meeting. Other board members included a forensic psychiatrist, Doctor Keith Wardrop, who lived in Biggar and became a very great friend of mine. He was a lovely man, but he's dead now. There was also Doctor Jean McMillan-Watt, who was one of the original board members and chair when I joined. There was Lady Hilda Morton, who played the piano and raised money for the school like that. She used to talk about wearing her very best hat to see the Secretary of State. There was the local minister, Cameron McKenzie, who is also dead now. The local GP, Angus Cameron, sat on the board. There was a policeman on the board, who was a court duty officer and also the local policeman. We subsequently had a second police officer on the board. I believe the guidance teacher from the local secondary school was also on the board when I joined. She was the staffing convenor at the time. We soon got a local builder on the board. He was a lovely man who had his own building firm. He used to identify problems and get his team in to sort them out. We got a bank manager on the board

as well. It was mostly local people. Eventually, we got the local Procurator Fiscal on the board, but he resigned because he felt that there were too many conflicts of interest. There were two local councillors on the board, Adam Lawson and one who I think was called Robison. One of the councillors was from Motherwell, but I can't remember where the other one was from. He might have been from Carluke.

14. The board meetings were fairly formal. We would have an agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting. We had a bursar, who would give us a financial report. We would have a report on any building work that might be necessary. We would discuss any staffing issues. We would talk about any boys who had come into the school and learn a little bit about their backgrounds. I expanded that a lot because I thought it was important. We would discuss upcoming events and fundraising. The headmaster would raise any issues that he was concerned about, mostly things about buildings and getting enough pupils to make the school financially viable. We would go through categories such as finance, admin, buildings, admissions and staff. People could also raise any issues they wanted to discuss in 'any other business'.
15. I appointed a friend of mine, who was a librarian, to take the minutes. She was a mother of three and I thought that it was important to have more women on the board. I don't know who took the minutes before she was appointed. She provided minutes for the managers. We also had a firm of accountants from Edinburgh. Graham Thom audited and took formal minutes for the school. Graham kept his minutes in the firm of accountants in Edinburgh. I think minutes would also have been kept in the bursar's office. I kept my notes myself of board meetings, but I've been unable to find them. If there were action points after a board meeting, the headmaster would normally be responsible for them. The accountant was obviously responsible for anything financial. The staffing convenor might speak to relevant members of staff if an issue came up.
16. I think some of the staff members would come into board meetings if they had something to raise. For example, if the person in charge of education wanted to change the syllabus or the head of social work wanted to do a field outing then they might come into the meetings. The secretary of the school was very good at contacting everybody and everybody knew her. It would mainly be senior staff who would come into board meetings. We did do several fundraising dances and I think the fundraisers

came in. One of our members of staff was a very talented fencer. She wanted to compete in the Olympic games. The headmaster wouldn't let her and she came to a board meeting to appeal about that. She didn't compete because the headmaster insisted that she didn't. He felt that she needed to see where her priorities lay. I argued in the other direction. I thought that the chance to represent your country was something that would be quite inspiring for the boys, but he had the final say on the staff.

17. In those days, people joined boards because they felt that it was a social duty. They turned up on a Saturday and they said yes and then they went home. I was not prepared to do that. I felt that it was far more important than that. Most of the board members were at the school once a month, whereas I was there every day. I joined as a board member and later became staffing convenor, then chairman. I can't remember exactly when I became chairman of the board, but it wasn't very long after joining. It was one of those things where if you showed your head above the parapet, then you were very quickly appointed. I have always felt it important to use my qualifications and abilities to best effect in whatever setting.
18. I knew that the minister's suggestion that I play table tennis with the boys was not appropriate. I knew from my social work experience that you didn't just crowd in. As it happened, after I'd been there for a number of years, the headmaster thought we should extend some of the activities. I was fortunate enough to have two ponies. From around 1987, I would take the ponies up to the school and trot around the football field. I think it was the headmaster's idea, to give the boys another activity. The boys had another experience, but that was as close as I got to socialising with the boys.
19. I worked very closely with John Weatherhead, the headmaster who took over from John Wilson fairly soon after I joined the board. He became a bit of grandfather figure to me and my children. I was the chairman of the board and we were trying to keep the school open for a lot of years. I got on extremely well with John Weatherhead. We had the same idea, that children were like mushrooms if you gave them the right environment. Some of our kids came back with their wives and children to show them the school. That's the best recommendation you can have.

20. I was the only board member who did anything hands on with the boys or knew any of their names. I was at the school every day. Anybody had access to me. Some of the kids did talk to me. I did know some of the children and got to know them. I used to have lunch with them quite frequently. I thought that it was part of them knowing who I was in case they needed anything. I used to visit the depute head social worker, Bill Whiteside, as well. I had a lot in common with him. We went to the same church. We would also discuss students. We had several students coming on placement for social work qualifications.
21. The guidance teacher also got up to the school quite often to assist with staffing issues. The forensic psychiatrist was also at the school frequently. He had been very involved in the murder in 1967. He always maintained that the boy who was convicted hadn't done it. He still maintained that until he died. He was quite convinced it wasn't a boy's murder on all sorts of evidence. That was my first introduction to the whole thing. He was at the school a lot because I think he had helped the headmaster at the time, John Wilson, through the trauma of the murder. Jean McMillan-Watt was at the school a lot as chairman of the board. Lady Morton was also there a lot because she helped with the Secretary of State. There were a lot of moves to shut the school after the murder. I don't think the board members were ever amongst the boys when there wasn't a large group of people present.
22. The managers all went to socials at the school, but the boys weren't involved in those. I think all of the staffing people on the board were there a lot during employment of new staff, but they weren't in contact with the boys. The builder probably talked to the boys when he was working at the school. I'm not sure whether the two policemen were involved with the children. The Procurator Fiscal, councillors and bank manager on the board definitely weren't. Other than the boys seeing them wandering about, I don't think they would have had any contact with those board members.
23. In those days, boards named people who looked good on paper. Most of the board members turned up and rubber-stamped whoever was daft enough to take over as chair. It went on like that. That is not what I do. My father always said that if a job was worth doing, it was worth doing well. I felt that the children and whether they improved were the important things in the school. They did improve because we worked really hard at balancing therapeutic side and making sure the staff all melded together and

the kids all melded together. It worked very, very well. For at least three years of being on the board, I was very proud to be associated with it.

24. Although I was very involved at the school, I wouldn't have accepted a paid role there. I was doing it philanthropically and voluntarily and that would always be the case. I enjoyed it and I got a lot out of it. As a parent, I had suddenly become somebody different. I became an adjunct rather than a person. I found that my role on the board gave me something that made me feel my brain and abilities were being used, but I wouldn't have dreamt of taking any money for my role.

Board of trustees

25. As well as the board of managers, there was a board of trustees at Loaningdale. I don't know when it was set up, but it was people who were responsible for all the money. We had five houses, which the staff lived in. We had Loaningdale itself. We had a massive amount of ground, which was sold to Story Homes after the school closed. There was a lot of money. A local bank manager, who is a friend of mine, was chair of the board of trustees. After the school shut, people applied to this trust for grants to do things, mostly connected to children. There was a lot of money, which was put into trust for the benefit of children.
26. There was no overlap between the board of managers and the board of trustees. I didn't even know it existed when I was at the school. In recent years, my friend who had been on that board spoke to me about it. I think he had been approached by the police as part of an investigation into Loaningdale. He told me he had been a member of the board of trustees. I had only been vaguely aware of it until he spoke to me.

Culture within Loaningdale

27. When I was on the board, I made myself aware of what was known as the 'Loaningdale Experiment'. I can remember a speech in the House of Commons about the "short, sharp shock". The idea was that if you removed children from their difficult home backgrounds and peer pressure and allowed them self-discipline rather than external sanctions, then they would learn self-direction. Many of the children at Loaningdale

did learn self-direction. The difficulty was that if you then put children back into their home situations, quite frequently they're not strong enough to withstand the pressures.

28. Loaningdale was a place with no locks and no sanctions. I do remember an incident with one boy who decided that he wanted to go home for a weekend, which had not been planned. He hung on to the bottom of the milk float to go down the drive. Afterwards, we asked him why hadn't just walked out of the grounds. He said that wasn't as exciting. Boys could have just walked out at any time. They stayed because they wanted to.
29. We had children from Wales, Ireland and the islands. We had children from all over the country who we felt were appropriate and who would benefit from the system. It then changed so that the children only came from within Strathclyde region. We had to take the people that they needed to accommodate. It unbalanced the school. The decision was taken by the local authorities.
30. The length of time children stayed at the school varied greatly. I remember one thirteen year old boy who came to the school because of truancy. After a year, he was absolutely fine and he went home. His home background was so dreadful that he was back about a year later for another year. He then went to England and ended up in borstal. I would say that the average stay was about a year.
31. It was all boys at the school until the very last year, when girls were introduced. I thought introducing girls was a bad mistake. There was no possible justification for not realising that girls and boys need different skills. Initially, five girls were accepted to the school. All my social work career, I felt that girls caused more problems. I found them much more difficult than boys.
32. To my knowledge, staff weren't consulted or giving extra training before girls started at the school. That was one of the contentions I had that it wasn't a good idea to place girls there. The school had always treated boys. The whole facility were not geared towards having two sexes in the school. I thought it was a very bad mistake and so it proved. The local authority pushed for girls to be introduced. By that time, Strathclyde had taken over and other regions weren't sending children to us. The two councillors

on the board applied a lot of pressure because a lot of the finances were coming through them.

33. The decision to stop sending children outside their regions was purely financial. Councils couldn't justify spending money outwith their regions. All the List D schools fought against it because we all offered a different type of care. They were lumping everybody together, which they don't even do in the prison system. I really thought that it was a very bad idea, but so many things are economically driven rather than therapeutically driven.

Strategic planning

34. I was involved in strategic planning to the extent that we wanted to keep the therapeutic side of the school going for as long as it was possible to do so. Structurally, there was also some strategic planning. It was discussed at board meetings. To a large extent, we had a budget for the education department and a budget for the social work department. The accountant kept an eye on how that went. The bursar administered the day to day expenses for the children's clothing, travel or whatever. I think the board was really responsible for things like expenditure on buildings. We had five residential houses that the staff lived in. If things were needed for those, then we were responsible for okaying it.
35. Safeguarding wasn't part of strategic planning. Obviously, the whole modus operandi was about safeguarding children and making sure that they had a good life. It wasn't something that we spent ages doing. It was just understood. There was no safeguarding officer or anything like that. It was a different time.

Other staff

36. When I first started on the board, John Wilson was the headmaster of the school. John Weatherhead took over from him and he was succeeded by LUJ [REDACTED], who closed the school. There was a deputy head of social work, Bill Whiteside, and a deputy head of education, Arthur Fossey. On the teaching side of things, we had English, maths, metalwork, woodwork and PE teachers. There were a lot of social workers working in

the school. I can't remember how many, but it was enough that each child could have a key worker. I don't think all of them were qualified social workers. A lot of them may have been social work assistants. When I got there, everybody was in the process of being qualified.

37. There was a secretary of the school, who was very good at contacting everybody, and a part-time secretary. There was also a seamstress, who was lovely. They were local, as was the cook. When I first went to the school, there was a lady who had been the secretary but had become the housekeeper. One of the changes that the headmaster and I made was to persuade her to take retirement. She didn't know anything about nutritional cooking. She left and we replaced her with a lovely girl, who introduced choice menus. She tried to extend the boys' knowledge of things like aubergines and peppers.

Recruitment of staff

38. I can't honestly remember when I became the staff convenor, but I think it was probably within a year or two of joining the board. I think the other board members voted for me and elected me, as they did when I became chairman. I think the existing staff convenor wanted to give it up as she was still working as a guidance teacher. She remained very useful when it came to asking questions of potential recruits, particularly with teaching staff because she knew what was needed.
39. Although board meetings were once a month, we would meet much more regularly if we were doing staffing. If we were trying to fill a post, we advertised in various papers and social work publications. We did that through the secretary. We would write an advertisement. Every time we advertised a post, we would get about 150 applications. Initially, I went through applications and ruled out anybody who was obviously not suited to the post. For example, if their work experience did not marry with the ethos of the school and if the reasons they gave for wanting to work at the school were suspect. We would go through them as a committee and get a shortlist. The committee would comprise of the headmaster, the guidance teacher, the forensic psychiatrist and me. We would then interview over two or three days. It was always known as the court of the star chamber. We would have an individual interview in the morning. The

candidate would then have lunch with the staff and the boys so that the staff and the boys could see whether they fitted. We would get feedback from the staff and the boys to see how they had interacted. In the afternoon, we had a group interview to see whether they fitted with other people. It was hard going.

40. In the time that I was there, most of the people we appointed were social workers although we did appoint some teachers. Teachers were different and needed to have a teaching qualification. I remember one of the social work jobs that we advertised for was a social work assistant. We received 150 applications. I interviewed candidates alongside the forensic psychiatrist, the guidance teacher, the headmaster, the two councillors and two other members, who varied. There were a lot of people on our interview panels, which was why they were known as the court of the star chamber. I can remember that a minister and his wife applied for the job. There was also someone who applied from the local long-stay hospital. He couldn't understand why we didn't just inject the boys if they were troublesome. He said that in his interview and, amazingly enough, he didn't get the job.
41. By the time I became staffing convenor, I had trained as a social work assistant. I had studied for degrees. I read extensively, as I still do. I knew what was necessary in terms of fitting in with the other staff at Loaningdale. I knew that we needed to have people who believed in the ethos of the school. Unless they did, they wouldn't be able to get that across. One of the things I really emphasised was that if anybody didn't try to visit the school before coming for interview, they didn't really have much of a chance of getting the job. If you weren't interested enough to see what it was about, you shouldn't really have a place in it. I felt very strongly about that. I don't think we ever appointed anybody who hadn't taken the trouble to come and see what the school was all about.
42. Some of the candidates we interviewed were quite obviously good, but wouldn't have fitted in with the other staff. That was important as well because it was a team. As a therapeutic community, you have to actually get on with each other. Otherwise, the children are the first people to play the system. The staffing board tended to agree on which candidate to appoint. It was usually fairly obvious. The only time that there was disagreement was the last time, when a headmaster was being appointed to take over

from John Weatherhead. There were four of us on that interviewing committee, myself, the forensic psychiatrist and the two councillors. The forensic psychiatrist and I thought that LUJ was a disaster, but the councillors wanted him. They had the finances so they had the final say.

43. When we decided to offer someone a job, I would phone them and tell them that they'd been successful. I would then write to them and formally offer them the job. We would obtain references before we interviewed a candidate. We would obtain two references that the candidate had named, but we always got in touch with whoever they had been working with as well. I can remember one particular person who had wonderful references and wonderful qualifications. We phoned the person he had been working for and he said not to touch him with a barge pole, so we didn't. I think that was the headmaster's idea, but it was already an established practice when I became staffing convenor. He had been in a lot of schools and was very experienced. He realised that what is said in paper is not always accurate, especially if employers are trying to get rid of someone. Sometimes, people can't commit to paper what they really think.
44. We did criminal record office checks for all the staff that we appointed. We submitted names to the Criminal Records Office.

Policy

45. I don't think the board's processes, such as recruitment of staff, were written down. We were a very communicative group. Most of the people on the board became my friends. If you work closely with people in such an intense way then you can't do anything else. Some of the staff were in a theatre group of which I was a member.
46. Boys coming into the school were referred. I think that the headmaster and the two deposes had a lot of animated discussion about whether to accept boys or not. It wasn't just a rubber stamp job. The board members had no influence in that. We were told about it, but it was really as a courtesy. The headmaster did discuss with me whether we thought new members of staff would benefit the children. There was no point in taking someone on who might upset the balance or would not benefit. We wanted to help people. It wasn't a punitive system. There was no suggestion of punishment, it was a suggestion of giving people a chance who hadn't had a chance.

47. I don't remember there being any written policies when I was at the school. If there were written policies, I've forgotten. It may be that they did have policies. I've worked in about seventeen different settings in my life and I can't remember. I know we spoke about the policy of the school verbally all the time. I wouldn't have joined the board unless I believed in what they were doing, but I can't remember there being written policies. I read screeds and screeds of stuff when I was on the board, so maybe there were. I did a lot of reading around the subject. The forensic psychiatrist was very good at providing me with books. I like to keep up to date with current thinking.
48. There was a general therapeutic ethos in the school. There were no locks and no physical punishments, but I'm not aware of anybody telling me about written rules about the policy of the school. Maybe the staff had that, but I don't know.

Training of staff

49. I wasn't involved in the training of new or existing staff members. What I did was tell them what our ethos was, but training of staff wasn't the role of the board. Bill Whiteside was involved in training. He would take people on. I can remember him allowing someone to have hands on experience at Loaningdale because she was going to do the social work diploma. He definitely trained staff. He used to supervise people who were training and doing courses. That was definitely his role.

Supervision/staff appraisal

50. I wasn't involved in any supervision of staff or staff appraisal, but if there was a problem I was sometimes involved. I can recall one occasion when that occurred, probably in either 1987 or 1988. After a weekend, the headmaster phoned me on the Monday morning. He said that one of his members of staff, a social worker, was really upset. He had lost his temper with one of the more infuriating boys. I can't remember whether he said that he had in some way physically struck the boy or pushed him. The boy definitely wasn't injured. At most, it was a back hander. I didn't speak to the boy about this incident, but the headmaster definitely did. The member of staff was very upset. He wanted to resign. He said that it was against everything he believed in.

51. The headmaster asked me if I would go and see the member of staff with him. We spoke to the member of staff. It was fairly obvious that the boy had been pushing him in order to get him to do what he had done. We discussed with the member of staff what effect it would have on the boy if he resigned as a result of it. I think we convinced him that it was the worst possible thing he could do for the boy because he would then know that he was in control. He would know that all he had to do was behave like that to everybody and he could control adults. The member of staff agreed, but he was very upset. I think it took a while for him to get over what happened. I can't remember the name of the boy. The member of staff was GYF, who was known as GYF. He was a very gentle soul and he was very upset about what had happened.
52. I'm certain that the incident with GYF would have been recorded. I would certainly have mentioned it at a board meeting. I would have thought it important to do that. The headmaster would have mentioned it to his head of department, Bill Whiteside, so I think it would be recorded somewhere. It certainly should be. That was obviously important. Bill would have had to talk to GYF about it as well. It wasn't something he would want to hide.

Education/training

53. I don't think the people involved in education at Loaningdale felt that there was more of an emphasis on practical and social skills rather than the academic side of education. The deputy head was very keen on education, but obviously the social side of the children was important. They needed to learn to integrate with each other and society. I think the education was superimposed on that, but I wouldn't have said it was less important in the eyes of the staff. I think some of the children did sit external exams, but I wasn't really involved in that side of things. I was more interested in the social work side of things.
54. The practical skills of metalwork and woodwork did stand the boys in good stead. A lot of the boys really enjoyed those subjects. They made a lot of things in those subjects, which they loved doing. I don't think many of the boys were wild about English and maths, but then how many children are? There was also the PE side. Children went to learn to ride Icelandic ponies. They also went swimming.

55. When it came to moving on to independent living, the cook taught boys cookery and basic skills. I think the woodwork and metalwork teachers used to help them with some practical things so they could do basic DIY and that sort of thing. I'm not sure if they were given help when it came to finding a job after leaving the school. I would have thought that would have been Bill Whiteside's remit and he was good like that. To a large extent, I would think that people in residential care would expect that to be the work of the social worker in the community. That social worker would be responsible for discharging the order and seeing what happened afterwards.

Religious practice

56. There were Catholic and Protestant boys at the school. The boys' religion wasn't taken into consideration at all when they were accepted into the school. The local minister did come and visit the school so boys were able to talk to him. I don't think any of the Catholic boys were really practising, but we did try to get the local priest to come and visit the boys. The local priest didn't come. He refused to come to the school.

Living arrangements

57. There were different staff involved in the residential side of things than the education side. It was very clearly divided, although there were times when the teachers were involved in the weekend and evening rotas. The residential section was separate from the main building, which was a big country house. It was a newly built glass building. The residential section had the bedrooms and was divided into two halves. Downstairs, there were the kitchens and canteen, the office of the deputy head and recreation rooms.
58. The admin block was in the main building. It contained the headmaster's office, the seamstress, the bursar and the secretary. The headmaster's flat and a meeting room were upstairs. There was then the education block, which was a separate building. They were all within close walking distance. There were sheds and things as well. One of the first things I did was to question why we were paying a vast amount of money for one of the sheds. It turned out that the gardener was heating the potatoes so that they didn't go off, which I didn't think was particularly financially viable.

59. The social workers worked in shifts. There were always people there, including at night. The supervision levels were very good. The depute who supervised the social work staff was very good. His name was Bill Whiteside. I really can't be sure what the ratio of staff to children was. I know that it was a reduced number during the night, but I don't know what that number was. It was a rota system, so you would be on nights, weekends or whatever.
60. I can't remember which members of staff lived on the premises. I can remember we had houses and that was one of the attractions for staff who came to the school. The deputy head of education who took over from Arthur Fossey definitely had a staff house, as did Arthur. I can't remember whether GYF [REDACTED] lived in a staff house. The school was up on a hill, there was a big field [REDACTED] in but I can't remember whether it belonged to the school. There were flats on the estate. The headmaster lived in a flat above the administrative block. Unless he was on duty, he went home at weekends because he had a house in Berwick-upon-Tweed.
61. Anybody could walk into the residential areas. They weren't locked, but there were always staff there. The domestic staff were there all the time. They did the cooking, the meals, the washing and the cleaning. There was never a time when there wouldn't be a member of staff in the residential blocks.
62. When girls started at the school, they must have been housed in a different section. By that time, I was working in Key Housing. John Weatherhead had left and the new headmaster, LUJ [REDACTED], had arrived. I had very little contact with him. I don't think I ever went into the actual dormitories at the school. I was aware that there were two sections and that the dormitories were upstairs. I don't know how many children were in each section. I'm not aware of the children doing chores, but I would think it unlikely that they weren't expected to sweep the floors or clear the tables. That probably did happen, but I've simply forgotten.

Mealtimes/food

63. When I first arrived at the school, the housekeeper knew nothing about nutritional cooking. The headmaster was not happy that she had been appointed as a secretary and moved over to housekeeping without much knowledge about it. There was a

feeling that she wasn't really interested in it and he felt that the vital thing for children to be healthy was a decent diet. The headmaster and I encouraged her to retire and replaced her with a lovely cook.

64. I was instrumental in choosing the person we did choose, Helen. I had known her since she was about ten years old as her family lived on our road. I knew that she was a really caring and very qualified person. She was a very good cook. She introduced choice menus, which was quite unusual in those days. She realised that the role was not just about turning out meals but also about helping the boys to understand nutrition, see different foods and understand the importance of why they should eat certain things. She tried to extend the boys' knowledge of things like aubergines and peppers. I can remember one little lad who would never eat the dinner beforehand. After she introduced the choice menu, the headmaster said to him that he must be happy that he had a choice. He replied, "No, it's worse. There are now two things I don't like." A lot of the Glaswegian kids had a great sense of humour.
65. I often ate meals at the school. After Helen took over, I thought that the quality of the food was very good. People used to comment on the food being good when they came for interviews too. Most of the children liked it too, but some of them didn't because they wanted chips with everything. I don't know what happened if they didn't want to eat the food. I suppose they would fill up on things from the tuck shop. They used to get 'ginger', what Glaswegians call fizzy pop.

Trips/holidays

66. Children were taken on lots of trips. They used to go riding. They also did the usual sorts of things, like go to the zoo and the seaside. I can remember Bill Whiteside taking them fishing one day. They caught lots of trout. Bill was thrilled, but the children were saying they wouldn't eat that and throwing them all away.
67. I am aware that two of the staff had a caravan. Children who weren't able to go home on holidays went to the caravan. I wasn't aware of that when I was on the board, but I learned that subsequently. I think the caravan belonged to GYF or a member of staff called Shona. It was the two of them who took children to the caravan, but I only discovered that latterly.

68. In the summer, most of the children went home and kept to school terms. Some of them didn't get home because there was no home to go to. GYF and Shona would take those children away to the caravan. As far as I was aware, both GYF and Shona were always present on these trips. I wasn't aware that was happening at the time, but I would have thought they needed to get permission for doing that.
69. At the time, I thought that it was tremendously philanthropic of them both to give up their holidays to do that. I then began to believe that it was probably not a great idea. It opens you up to all sorts of debate. It's one of these things that if you're kind to someone, somebody will misinterpret it somewhere along the line. I don't know. Maybe if I had been involved in a professional capacity I would have advised against it, but that's retrospective thinking and I wouldn't want to be wise after the event. I don't know of there being any other informal trips.

Christmas

70. Some of the kids stayed at the school over the Christmas holidays. We used to have a Christmas dinner. The headmaster would do the carving and I would serve the food. He thought that would make for a nice family atmosphere I think there were about twelve boys at the Christmas dinner, but I can't remember. It can't have been on Christmas day because I always celebrated Christmas day with my parents. I think the headmaster did want me to stay for Christmas day, but there was no way I wasn't going to see my parents.

Care of children

71. When it came to healthcare, we had a local GP. He was also on the board of managers. I think it would have been Bill Whiteside's responsibility to ensure boys were taken to the doctor if they needed medical treatment. I'm not aware of regular health checks taking place, but I'm sure that would have been done. It really wasn't the remit of the board to look after the boys. Maybe I should have been more involved in the day to day running of the school, but I didn't see that as my role at the time. I wasn't there as a social worker.

72. When children were in the school, their key worker in Loaningdale and their allocated local authority social worker would monitor their progress. Bill Whiteside would oversee that. The local authority social worker was responsible for putting the child in the school. I don't know how often social workers met with the children. That wasn't part of my role. I don't know whether children met their social workers alone. I do know that there was a room allocated for social work meetings in the residential block.
73. When it came to children leaving the school, I think that most of them went through the Children's Panel system. Most of them were at the school under section for a residential placement.

Discipline and punishment

74. I wasn't aware of there being any corporal punishment at Loaningdale. I was very much against it. I would not have sanctioned it if I'd known it was happening. I'm sure I would have stopped anything like that. I don't believe in that. Hitting someone is never going to make them feel any better. I'm very much against it. I'm not aware of the school having any written policy about corporal punishment. I'm not aware of boys having any responsibility for disciplining other boys.
75. Corporal punishment was something that I discussed with the headmaster, John Weatherhead. He and I were both of the same view. He told me that he had been subject to physical abuse as a child and there was no way that he would have sanctioned it. I used to belong to the head's association. We used to go to conferences. I can remember sitting for dinner at a conference in Yorkshire. Somebody from another List D school spoke about his headmaster regularly beating the children. I can remember John being so upset that he walked out of dinner and drove back to the school. He was very much against physical punishments. He was a good man.
76. As far as I was aware, withdrawal of privileges was used as a punishment. Boys wouldn't be allowed to play snooker or watch television or whatever. I can remember one occasion when someone visited the school, the headmaster mentioned the fact that boys were put in their pyjamas as a punishment. Boys didn't like that being done.

It was done to prevent them leaving the place, but there was also an element of indignity. As far as I was aware, punishments tended to involve withdrawal of privileges but I don't know whether that included going home. Most of the boys didn't want to go home. Most of them wanted to stay at the school. It was a good place to be.

77. I know that bullying was considered to be unacceptable. Any sort of stealing, spitting or anything antisocial was not allowed. The staff were very hot on any sort of bullying or mocking. They clamped down on it, unless it was good-humoured. The board wasn't involved in disciplinary matters.
78. I wasn't aware of any guidance about restraint. There were certainly courses about how to do physical restraint and how to hold people. Obviously, some of the boys would get upset. I did those courses in other settings. I'm pretty sure that as I was doing those courses, staff at Loaningdale would have been doing similar courses as well. I don't know that for certain, but there were recognised courses about restraint locally. That was certainly available and I would have thought that Bill Whiteside would have used that, but I don't know that to be the case.

Visits/inspections

79. I was never aware of a parent visiting a child at Loaningdale, but that doesn't mean that they didn't come. I was based in the administrative block most of the time, unless I went to see Bill Whiteside in the residential block or visited the classrooms. I was aware of people coming to the school who had been at the school, sometimes with their children.
80. We had social workers and councillors visiting the school. People from other schools would also visit in the same way that we visited other schools. We would see whether they were doing things better than we were and if so, how? I went to Raddery on the Black Isle, Ballikinrain in Balfron, Wellington School near Penicuik and one in England, but I can't remember its name. We were trying to find ways of doing things better. Raddery had a thing about foot massage, which I found extraordinarily suspect. They all sat around, massaging each other's feet. I found it really difficult to sit there and have my feet massaged by the boys.

81. Originally, I think these trips started because the headmaster, John Weatherhead, thought we should know what other schools might be doing better. He had been at Ballikinrain so we went there. He felt that they had been good when he was depute there. We went to Raddery because they were a therapeutic community. Because the therapy involved feet, I think we quickly dismissed that one. At the time, everything was up in the air. People were putting embargoes on sending people outside their regions. We wondered if there were ways we could diversify which would make the school economically viable.
82. I also went to meetings of chairmen and heads of schools in an attempt to learn better ways of doing things. They would suggest that I come and visit their schools. I think the school I was most impressed with was Ballikinrain. I think it was the closest in therapeutic thinking to Loaningdale. I wouldn't have sent children to Raddery because I think there are very few children who would have benefitted from that. Wellington wasn't my sort of regime at all. It felt harsh, military and unfriendly. I didn't feel welcome there as a visitor. It sounds smug, but I learned that I thought we were doing better than they were.
83. I wasn't aware of any inspections taking place at the school. The councillors on the board obviously visited and inspected in as much as it was part of their establishment. There must have been inspections of the educational side, but I wasn't aware of that. That was to do with the running of the school professionally and not part of my role.

Record-keeping

84. I think minutes from board meetings must have been kept in the bursar's office. They were also held by Graham Thom at a firm of accountants in Edinburgh. Every member of the board was given a copy of the minutes after each monthly meeting. There would be notes from staffing meetings as well. I kept all my copy minutes, but I've been unable to find them. I wasn't at Loaningdale when it shut so I'm not aware of what happened to minutes from board meetings. A teacher from Biggar took over to wind the place up. I think it's likely that she would have kept the notes, but I don't know. I don't know who was responsible for the records when the school closed.

85. I can remember there was a filing cabinet in the corner of the bursar's office, where children's records were kept. The bursar was also dealing with the financial arrangements with the councils responsible for the children, so that would be in their files as well. The bursar would have been responsible for those records, but Bill Whiteside would also have kept social work notes and Arthur Fossey would have had notes from the education side of things. The issue of records came up when the police came to speak to me. The difficulty was that the social work department had destroyed all the records of all the children. I thought that the whole point in keeping these records and minutes was so you could go back to them, but the police officer couldn't find any records for any of the children who had been at Loaningdale. I would have thought that the social work department should have been responsible for those records when the school closed because they were confidential. They shouldn't have been allowed to just float, but I don't know what happened because I wasn't there.

Concerns about the school

86. When I was at the school, I didn't have any concerns about the safety or welfare of the children. If I had, I would have done something about it, whether I thought it was my role or not. I have never ever backed away from doing that. I felt very strongly that one of our roles was to help the children. If I felt that anybody was hurting the children, there is no way that I would have let that go on. It would have been against everything that I believed.
87. Before I left the school in 1989, a man called LUJ [REDACTED] was appointed to take over the role of headmaster. I didn't think that he was right for the job. He was used to public school kids and not used to the sort of kids who attended Loaningdale at all. The councillors on the board wanted him. The forensic psychiatrist and I did not want him. We didn't have anything against him as a person, but he didn't have any experience of any sort of delinquency. He hadn't been used to any sort of discipline problems or anything like that. Within a year of his appointment, the school had closed down. We had more windows broken on one night than we'd had in 26 years. He just had no control.

88. I had already applied to the university when LUJ [REDACTED] called me out at 3:30 am. He said that there had been a riot and he'd lost control of the school. I had just had an operation, but I went up to the school. The police had sent up dog handlers. It didn't need that. It just needed someone with authority and LUJ [REDACTED] simply didn't have any. The staff were upset because they'd never had any broken windows before and we had 27 windows broken. I sent the police dog handlers home. Some of the children had cuts because there was broken glass around. It was just chaos. I arranged for children who had been injured to get treatment. They just had minor injuries, like cuts. I think some of them might have been taken to the local cottage hospital. I don't know because all I was interested in was establishing control. I don't think anybody was badly hurt, but nobody was doing anything. It was just awful. There was someone in charge who wasn't in charge and the staff were all so shocked. After the school closed, LUJ [REDACTED] went down to work in a public school in England. He wrote to me and told me how much happier he was and I wasn't surprised at all.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

89. If a child wanted to make a complaint about a member of staff, there may have been a process amongst the staff. There certainly wasn't a formal procedure amongst the management board. We would have been open to anybody speaking to us about a complaint. The children did know that. I would say that when I was having lunch with people. I would tell them that my door was always open. I now feel that I should have made that a lot clearer. I should have had a morning a week when staff or children could have come to speak to me. I was doing my best. If I was doing it now, I would say that it was important that boys, staff and management could come to me with anything that they wanted to talk about. At the time, I was just learning on my feet.
90. I suppose there must have been a complaints procedure at the school, but I wasn't aware of any formal complaints being made. I wasn't aware of any member of staff raising a concern about another member of staff. There were the usual moans that you would get amongst any group of people, but I wasn't aware of any formal complaints.

91. The headmaster, John Weatherhead, was very good. He was the sort of person that people could go and talk to. He'd had a difficult childhood and he was very sympathetic. He was good at DIY. He used to build people's wardrobes and things like that. He was very good at being hands-on with the staff. He was good with the boys as well. He'd been in the army. He could do this thing where he would just touch them with two fingers and they would fall over. He would do that to all the staff as well and they would fall over. The boys thought it was wonderful and asked him to teach them how to do it. He was certainly very approachable. All of the staff would have gone to him if they had needed to. I think it was the same for the boys. He was always there.
92. There was one member of staff who we would have dismissed if the school hadn't closed. His name was IPW and he was the PE teacher. He had a drink problem. We sent him to Icelandic pony place with a van full of children. Someone there phoned the school to say that he wasn't fit to drive. We had to send a member of staff to drive the children safely back to the school. IPW had taken the children for a riding lesson. It was right next to a hotel. I think he'd gone for lunch and had a couple too many. The people at the riding school were worried that he wasn't fit to drive.
93. On another occasion, we had a fundraising dance at the school. Everybody was drinking quite a lot of wine and we ran out. IPW was given money to go and buy some more and disappeared and never came back. The second incident, he wasn't on duty so there was only one occasion during school hours.
94. After the incident when he wasn't fit to drive, it would have been the headmaster's responsibility to speak to IPW. He was never given that responsibility again. You can't risk children with someone who is liable to drink. He carried on in his role in a sort of playing football way, but not in a way that he had any sort of influence over the children. When you live in a small town, you know when someone had a drink problem. He was being closely monitored after that incident. The headmaster was absolutely furious. You spend so much time building up a reputation of a place, then someone phones and says one of your members of staff is not fit to drive. I did feel sorry for IPW. An alcohol problem is an alcohol problem, but we made sure that it never affected the children. He was monitored very closely, he was never drunk on duty again and he wasn't allowed to drive the children.

Trusted adult/confidante

95. If a child was concerned, I think there were people that he could talk to. Children are different. Some of them are very confident. Some of them aren't. I think that Bill Whiteside and John Weatherhead were both very approachable. There were also two very good female members of staff, along with Helen, the cook. I think there were lots of people that children would have felt happy to talk to. They all had a key worker within the school and an allocated social worker in the community.

Abuse at Loaningdale

96. I didn't see or hear of any abuse when I was at Loaningdale. I've been asked to explain how abuse might have occurred, given allegations of abuse have been made to the Inquiry. Certainly in the classroom situation, there shouldn't have been any time when the teacher was on his or her own with a child. There would have been several children in the class so I wasn't aware of that. I suppose that in the social work setting, there might be occasions when keyworkers would have been alone with the child they were working with, in a room in the building. I'm not aware of it, but it's a possibility.
97. I don't think staff were involved in extra-curricular hobbies which meant they took children off the premises. I think it was all done on the school grounds, other than taking them to riding when it would have been a group of children. The only time I'm aware of children being outwith the school with members of staff was when GYF and Shona took children to the caravan. I suppose that when staff dropped children off at home for the weekend, maybe three might be dropped off and one would be left. I was never aware of that happening. Although there were members of staff who lived in close proximity to the main building, to my knowledge they never took children back to their homes. I wasn't ever aware of that.
98. I'm not aware of there being any child protection arrangements in place at the school. It was a different age. On one occasion, I can remember it was discovered that two children at the school had been sexually abused at home. The staff were very upset. They were fond of the children and had found out that they were suffering in that way.

It was the first time that the staff were aware of children being there who had been sexually abused. I think the children had already been at the school and then the abuse had been revealed. We weren't given the details of the abuse because it was confidential. All I was told was that these children had been at the school and the staff were concerned because suddenly they had found out they had been abused.

99. The staff had been unsure how to react. They weren't used to it. We didn't have children who were abused. We had children who were truants and threw bricks through windows and that sort of thing. Maybe we did have a lot of children who were abused, but we didn't know that. The awareness wasn't there in those days. The staff were very upset. They were fond of the children and they found out that they had been suffering something that they didn't know about.
100. I can remember the head, John Weatherhead, saying that he'd had to call all the staff together and talk to them. He informed me that he'd reminded the staff that these children were still the same children as they had been on Friday. He told the staff that the most important thing was to let the children feel that it was a safe place to be. Bill Whiteside had been a local authority social worker so I think he also gave the staff professional guidance. He was very good.
101. Abuse wasn't talked about amongst the board of managers. It might have been amongst the staff. Nobody was talking about abuse in those days, but there may have been staff who did so. However, it came as a great shock to the staff when it emerged that two of the children at the school had been abused. That would imply to me that it wasn't a subject that was regularly discussed.
102. I can remember having a discussion with the head about him speaking to the boys about physical abuse. He spoke to them about the fact that you didn't beat up the wife or the children because the football team had lost. He said that was quite an accepted thing for a lot of the boys in their home background. He was certainly aware that a lot of the children had either seen or suffered from physical abuse at home. He was tremendously anxious that they should feel safe. I'm sure work would have been done with the children about physical abuse, but not by me.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

103. I wasn't involved in any investigations into abuse at Loaningdale while I was on the board. Several years ago, the police got in touch with me. I can't remember exactly when it was. I know that I was on holiday in Portugal and my son contacted me to say the police wanted to speak to me. I think it was two or three years ago. They said that there had been accusations against two members of staff and asked me what I knew about it. I talked to the police on four or five occasions. The police officer then told me that he thought it was all fantasy. I think the police officer came from Lanark, but I can't remember his name.
104. The two members of staff were GYF [REDACTED] and IPW [REDACTED]. I wasn't given the names of the boys who had made the allegations. I told the police that I had no concerns about either member of staff being involved in the abuse of children. I did tell the police that I was aware that IPW [REDACTED] had a drink problem. I think IPW [REDACTED] was still alive at that point. The police officer had actually spoken to IPW [REDACTED] and thought that he was a poor soul. GYF [REDACTED] was long since dead.
105. I'm not aware of any other investigations into abuse at Loaningdale or any civil claims against the school. I'm not aware of anybody that I worked with at Loaningdale being convicted of abuse.

Specific alleged abusers

106. I've been told that the Inquiry has received evidence of alleged abuse against members of staff who worked at Loaningdale at the same time as me. I've been asked to share any knowledge I have of these individuals with the Inquiry.

GYF [REDACTED]

107. GYF [REDACTED] was at Loaningdale the entire time I was on the board until his death. He was on the social work side of things, but I don't know whether he was a qualified

social worker or not. He was already in situ when I arrived. He was involved in the residential care side of the school so he would have worked on the shift system. He would have been at the school as much as any other social worker. He didn't take the children out on trips, other than to the caravan with Shona.

108. I observed GYF to be a very gentle soul. He functioned at a high intellectual level. He was very caring. He was a bit depressed. He suffered a lot from being sad. He wasn't married and he wasn't in a relationship as far as I was aware, but he was popular and he had lots of friends of both sexes. Shona was his best friend, but she was married to someone else. I think he would have been a similar age to me. He was a very talented actor.

109. I didn't have any concerns about GYF. I've already spoken about the incident that occurred when he disclosed to John Weatherhead that he had overreacted to a boy and given him a backhander, at worst. He was very upset about the incident and volunteered what had happened. He had been on duty at the weekend and I think there were fewer staff and more children. He was under pressure. This boy had pushed him and pushed him and he was very upset by the fact that he had overreacted.

LUJ

110. LUJ was employed as the headmaster after John Weatherhead left the school in the late 1980s. I think he was in his forties. He was incredibly efficient on paper. He turned up at his interview with screeds of paper. I think he impressed as being somebody who was very intellectual. I think that was why the councillors were impressed by him because he did a very good job at interview. Both Keith, the forensic psychiatrist, and I felt that he wasn't suited to the job.

111. I would not put it past LUJ to have reacted to a boy in some way. He told me that he'd lost control of the school. You don't say that to the chairman of the board, a woman who he knew was just out of hospital, unless you really are losing control. When I went to the school on the night of the riot, he appeared a bit shame faced. He just left it to me to sort it out. I thought that he was ineffective. On one occasion when

we were walking together and one of the girls subjected me to verbal and physical abuse, he did nothing. I was very angry about that, but I didn't hear about him abusing children. If I had, he would have been out on his ear. I definitely didn't know anything about him abusing children. I thought he was just useless.

Mr ^{HIA}

112. I recall Mr ^{HIA} as being the metalwork teacher. I think he must have been into his sixties because he wanted to take early retirement on the grounds of ill health. He applied to us for retirement because his back was very bad and he was unable to work. He then went cycling round the Alps.

113. I didn't like Mr ^{HIA}. I thought he was quite a curmudgeonly sort of person. I would imagine that he might lose his temper quite easily, but I had no suspicions that he would strike any child. If I had, he would have been cycling around the Alps a bit earlier. He left the school before I did. I saw him working with the children if I went into the classroom. I don't think that he was one of my fans either. I didn't hear anything about him abusing any children. I think everybody else just thought of him as being bad-tempered. His heart wasn't in it. We were quite glad when he retired.

Mr ^{HHX}

114. I can't remember a Mr ^{HHX}. It's been suggested to me that he was the gardener. I must have known him if he was the gardener. I don't know it was the same gardener at the school for the whole time.

Mr ^{HGK}

115. I've been asked about Mr ^{HGK}. I understand that he was the PE teacher at the school until 1980. I wasn't at the school until 1982 so I don't remember him.

Leaving the school

116. The school went on until 1990, when it closed. I left the school in 1989 and went back to university in Edinburgh. It was actually John Weatherhead who told me that I was wasting my life, doing all this voluntary work. He suggested that I went back to work. I went to work at Key Housing, which was sheltered housing for people coming out of long-stay hospitals, like Carstairs. Some of them had been incarcerated for moral turpitude or having a baby or just being in an incestuous house. One of the women had been in Carstairs for 46 years for no other reason than at the age of twelve, there was incest in her home. I helped rehabilitate these people and some of them did very well.
117. For about a year, I worked at Key Housing while I was still on the board of Loaningdale. I worked at Key Housing with the intention of trying to get back into university. During that time, I applied to Edinburgh University and was accepted to do the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW). I had to give references and I think the former headmaster of Loaningdale, John Weatherhead, gave me one. I also provided my employers at Key Housing as a reference.
118. I left because the school that I had loved and nurtured wasn't there anymore. We'd introduced girls and none of the staff were used to dealing with girls. Those who have worked in social work will know that girls are a great deal more difficult than boys. Putting girls and boys into a setting where most of the staff had never had girls was not a good idea. There were so many complications with doing that. Adolescent girls have different moods and physical needs. The juxtaposition of adolescent boys and vulnerable girls seems ill-advised without a great deal of careful planning. By the time girls come to the attention of social work, their behaviour is often more extreme and difficult to manage.
119. All of the regions had stopped sending children outwith their region because of finances so we also had everybody that couldn't be housed anywhere else. It just went from bad to worse. I couldn't bear it because the school had done such a great job. In any event, I was also going back to university to do a postgraduate qualification. I studied for a CQSW and diploma in social work and psychology.

120. It was very sore when the school closed. It was something that I thought was really good and it was destroyed by outside agencies. It wasn't a comfortable feeling. I can remember the headmaster having a nervous breakdown and being signed off by the doctor. I was young and said to the doctor that I was too busy to have a nervous breakdown and he said, "Don't you be so sure, dear." It was very sore. 23 members of staff were out of a job. Quite a lot of them were local and a lot of them blamed me.
121. When I resigned from the board of Loaningdale, I said that it would close if I gave up my job. Everybody said, "Oh no, nobody's that essential." It closed within six months. I hate it when people say that nobody is that essential. I know that some people won't take responsibility, put their heads above the parapet, won't care as much. Therefore, to say that I'm not going to do something anymore is a big responsibility.

Lessons to be learned

122. I think there should have been an identified person that was well-advertised and that children and staff could have gone to with concerns. Perhaps there should have been several people in that role because not all of the boys would have been happy to speak to a woman, for example. Either a man or a woman should have been available and we should have had that advertised. I think we should certainly have done more training in terms of awareness. For example, what is appropriate touching and what isn't, what to do if you feel something is inappropriate. These are all things that I think should have done in hindsight.
123. I would definitely make sure that we were aware of the dangers, which we weren't. I think that we were ignorant and naïve in those days. We wanted to believe the best of people who went into caring because that's what we thought they did. My feeling would be that Loaningdale was a wonderful place to be. I felt that everyone really cared. There were some exceptions to that and some people who were serving their time, such as Mr HIA. In general terms, people were there because they really cared about the children. From that point of view, I think the children were safer and also because of the way the whole place was run. There was always somebody on duty

and follow-up people. I really genuinely believe that if any of the staff had witnessed physical abuse then they would have reported it.

124. I think Loaningdale was better than most places at that time. Subsequently, there were far more checks in other places that I went to. Staff had a lot of training in appropriate touching. However, I would say that of its time, it was a very caring place. A lot of the schools I visited didn't have nearly as good care. Some of the schools I visited, I would have been loath to leave my own children there. I think children were safer at Loaningdale and I hope they were. I would feel that a lot of my life had been wasted if they weren't. I think it was a very good place and people did some very good work there.

125. 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....

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the witness.

Dated...

24th August 2023