

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ILB

Support person present: No.

1. My name is ILB. I am known as ILB. My date of birth is 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Cumbernauld. My mother and father were and . I have five brothers and two sisters. We were born every two years or so. From oldest to youngest we are , , , , me, and . It was just a normal childhood. We were always out running about.
3. My dad was a just after the war and then worked for on the nightshift. My mum did work before but stopped once the children came along.
4. I went to Cumbernauld Primary School until primary six. It was alright. It was a small village, so everyone knew everyone. We'd just run about with our cousins and that.
5. My dad died and my mum couldn't look after us all, so the five youngest children got put into care.

Mugdock Children's Home, Milngavie

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Mugdock Children's Home

30. I was at Mugdock Children's Home for three years and the only complaint or question I have is, 'why did I get chucked out of the place?' I still don't know why. I was thirteen years old, and I came back from school and was told I was leaving the next day. Me and [REDACTED] got put to Cardross Park the next day. [REDACTED] got put down to my Auntie [REDACTED]'s in Devon. The others stayed at Mugdock.
31. I have no clue why I was set to an assessment centre. I had never even sworn at anybody. I don't know what me and [REDACTED] did. [REDACTED] was only about ten. I don't even know if my mum knew we were being moved.

Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Dunbartonshire

32. I honestly can't remember who took us to Cardross. It was a nice building with a big, long drive up to it. You went in the front door and there was a reception, with the room you were locked in all day on the right and the lassies room on the left. I was about twelve or thirteen when we went.
33. [REDACTED] KCZ [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED]. There were also staff members called [REDACTED] GMS [REDACTED], [REDACTED] ILC [REDACTED], Malloch and [REDACTED] ILD [REDACTED].
34. There were boys and girls. Maybe about twenty boys and twelve lassies. The boys were about eight, nine years old up to fifteen, but the lassies were a wee bit older. My sister [REDACTED] came back from Devon, and she went into Cardross as well.
35. As far as I knew we were in there for care and protection. That's just what it was called in those days. Cardross was a secure unit, so we were locked in there.

Routine at Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Dunbartonshire

First day

36. We got taken into a wee reception bit and told to change clothes. It was just normal clothes. We then got put into a room beside everyone else and that was it until we got dinner. We got locked in that room every day. I just thought 'what is this place?' I was a bit apprehensive. It helped that me and [REDACTED] were together. I am glad they kept us together.
37. We just followed everyone up to the dorms in the evening and were told there was a couple of empty beds so grab one. The dorm I was in at first had about ten boys in it. There was a wee door that connected to another dorm and there were another ten boys in there. [REDACTED] was in with me. We weren't locked in our dorms. The doors on them were wedged open.

Mornings and Bedtime

38. We got up in the morning about seven, half seven and into the ablutions to get washed. We then went downstairs for breakfast and got locked up in this big room at reception after. That was it until lunch and then back in there after lunch until dinner. It was just the boys locked up together. Sometimes in the evening we got out for a game of football if it was nice and then it was up to our beds about half eight, nine o'clock. Weekends were exactly the same.

Mealtimes / Food

39. The food was no bad. I liked my grub. They weren't so bad in there and if you didn't want it, you didn't have to eat it.

Washing / Bathing

40. They took care of all our washing. We just put it in the washing basket. There were showers and they were always supervised at night.

Clothing / Uniform

41. Cardross supplied our clothing, but it wasn't a uniform. It was just whatever fitted you I think.

Leisure time

42. We were just locked in a room all day. There was a wee snib on the door and they would only let us out for the toilet. There was about fifteen or sixteen of us and we used to roll up socks and play crab football. We had to make up our own games. We'd have piggyback fights and things like that. You had to stand up for yourself.
43. There was a television we could watch at night. We could not just go and put it on. The staff had a two-prong key to put it on. There was absolutely nothing else. There was no supervision. It was quite a shitty place.

Schooling

44. There was a bit of schooling. I went to Hermitage Academy in Helensburgh for about four, five months. I had been at Cardross Park for a while before I went. I asked why I wasn't going to school and that's when it started. I didn't mind that I had missed some. I probably did have a bit of catching up to do. I got the train there. [REDACTED] went to Cardross Primary and when [REDACTED] joined us, she went to Hermitage too.
45. I was treated the same at Hermitage Academy even though I was in care. In fact, the lassies liked me more. I think they felt sorry for me.

Bedwetting

46. I never had a problem with bed wetting and I can't remember how it was dealt with. There was only really one boy, [REDACTED] that had a problem with it. I don't think he got abused or anything. He maybe was called names by the other children.

Birthdays and Christmas

47. You never got much at Christmas. It could not have been very good as it does not stick in my head. Birthdays were not celebrated at all.

Visitors

48. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED]

Family Contact

49. My mum never came to visit us, but my brother [REDACTED] used to come down on the train to take us home for the weekend. That was near the end of our stay at Cardross Park and once a month. My mum had moved to Falkirk by this point.
50. I saw my brother [REDACTED] every day and my sister [REDACTED] when she was in the home. [REDACTED] met [REDACTED] at Hermitage Academy and they got married at sixteen, so she left Cardross. I would still see her when I was at school as she worked in a local café, and I would go there for my dinner.

Personal possessions

51. If you were over thirteen you got four fags a day. I was over thirteen so got them. I wish I hadn't.

Running away

52. Fourteen of us ran away one day. I threw a chair at the window of the room we were kept in all day, and it cracked. It was just that toffee glass, so we were able to push it out and we were all away. I did it because of the staff. Me, [REDACTED] and my cousin [REDACTED] stayed together. We all got caught in Helensburgh by the police and taken to the police station, then back to Cardross.
53. I ran away a second time on my own because of the staff again. I got just before Helensburgh and was caught by the police. I was trying to get to my sister [REDACTED]'s this time, I think. The police did ask why I was running away, but I did not tell them.

Discipline

54. When we ran away, the next day, the lassies were brought in, and I was put over a table and belted on my bare arse. I had never seen the belt before or heard of it. I think the lassies were brought in to humiliate me. My sister was one of them. [REDACTED] had the same the night before. It was KCZ [REDACTED] that did it. We got four of the belt and were marked after. My cousin was moved and never got the belt. He was a bit older and about fifteen. The second time I ran away I never got the belt.
55. We also got put in the cooler the first time we ran away, which was a dark room beside the dining hall with a leather mattress in it. There were wee holes drilled at the top of the door to let light in and we used to stand on the bed to try and see through them. This was the main form of discipline in there. You got it for misbehaving or being cheeky.

Abuse at Cardross Park

56. There was a staff member called JLC [REDACTED] who once tried to grab my balls and that when I was in the shower room. I did not see him trying this with anyone else and it happened to me the once with him.

57. The worst one though was the staff member called **GMS** who would flick us on the knob with his nails when we were naked. It was sore. We had tears in our eyes. It happened to everyone. I think he just liked seeing us in pain. He later got caught sexually abusing a wee guy called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. It was because of these two staff members that I ran away.
58. There was also a member of staff called **ILD** who used to ping us with elastic bands on the legs when we were running about in the cold. That was sore.
59. When I was in Cardross I started glue sniffing. I saw a boy doing it in a classroom one time and asked him what he was doing. After trying it for the first time I ended up addicted for about four years. Everyone was doing it. I don't know the staff knew it was going on. I never saw anyone being pulled for it.

Reporting of abuse at Cardross Park

60. I never reported what was happening to me to the staff at Cardross because it was the staff that were doing it. I don't know why I didn't tell the police.

Leaving Cardross Park

61. I was in Cardross Park for about a year and a half. I don't think there was any others there as long as us, but there were a few there a wee while. I ended up running away and got put into Bellfield Remand Home. I was told I was getting moved. The next day I was gone. [REDACTED] did not come with me.

Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton

62. As far as I can remember I was taken with a member of staff from Cardross and a social worker to Bellfield. It was like an old mansion again. It sat on top of a wee hill. You went in and there was a reception and the television room on the right and another wee room on the left. The dorms were up the stairs. It had the same lay out as every other place really.
63. I am sure it was a guy **KFT** who **SNR**. He was in a car accident and always had a wee ball in his hand to exercise it. I also remember **GVZ** and Mr Malloch. I was in Barlinnie prison later on and Mr Malloch was a prisoner there too, so I don't know what he got up to.
64. It was all boys in Bellfield. There was about twenty of us aged between twelve and sixteen years old.

Routine at Bellfield Remand Home

First day

65. The first day I was shown around and then put into the television room. You weren't allowed to move around in there.

Mornings and Bedtime

66. It was the same again really, we were up about seven in the morning. We got washed and went down the stairs for breakfast. Then it was into the television room for the day. If it was a nice day, we were out in the tennis court. In the evenings we just watched television as well. The weekends were exactly the same.

Mealtimes / Food

67. As far as I can remember the grub was alright. I can't remember anyone having any issues with it. I always liked my grub.

Washing / Bathing

68. The showers were supervised and there were sinks as well. I had no issues in there.

Clothing / Uniform

69. They provided us with clothes and there was no uniform. You had a number on your clothes so after it was washed you got it back.

Leisure time

70. There was a tennis court they used to lock us in during the day. If you wanted to get out, you would have to climb over it. It was more or less the same as everywhere else.

Healthcare / Medication

71. I can't remember ever seeing a nurse or a doctor in this place. I did not see a dentist.

Visitors

72. I had no visitors in Bellfield. I did not receive any letters and never saw any of my family. There were no official visits to see me, and I don't remember seeing any officials in there.

Running away

73. I ran away once from Bellfield because of the staff. It was me and another guy from Cumbernauld called [REDACTED]. We didn't get out of Dumbarton and the police caught us

and took us back to Bellfield. Nothing happened we just got put back in the television room. We did get asked why we ran away, but I did not tell anyone.

Discipline

74. You would get a cuff on the lug if you were cheeky or didn't do what you were told. All the staff would do it. They also had a wee digger that you were put in if you ran away. I was never put in there. It was like an isolation room with only a bed in it and you were in there on your own for days.

Abuse at Bellfield Remand Home

75. One time I was through the back at the toilet and **GVZ** came through and tried to touch my balls and masturbate me. I managed to get him away from me and said no, it wasn't happening. I was crying because of that, but I didn't tell anyone. I was asked by other staff why I was crying, but I just couldn't say anything. It was embarrassing. **GVZ** was a staff member and a wee fat baldy guy with gold rim glasses. It just happened that one time and I don't have a clue if it happened to anyone else.

Leaving Bellfield Remand Home

76. I was in Bellfield for about five, six months. It was just a shite hole. I don't know why I was moved from there. There was no panel or anything and I hadn't done anything wrong.

Kibble Approved School, Paisley.

77. Kibble was alright for an approved school. We were out working and got sports and things like that. There was no abuse at Kibble. I was there for two years. I was released from there a month after my sixteenth birthday.
78. I went to a panel at Cumbernauld Library with my mum in 1976 and that was the only panel I had ever been to in my life. I knew I was getting out at sixteen, but I didn't know I was going to a panel. A social worker was there, but I don't remember their name. My mum just said I want him home and they said he is sixteen now, take him. I went up to my brother's house in Cumbernauld and it felt brilliant.
79. It wasn't until I got out of approved school that I started getting into trouble. I think it was because we had just moved through to Falkirk, and we had to fight a lot. My mum also still had all the children at home, and she was struggling. My first giro was three pound odds.
80. I got caught stealing out of a car and was taken to Airdrie Sheriff Court in [REDACTED] 1977. I was given three months detention at Glenochil. It was one charge and the first time I was ever in trouble. I was sixteen years old. I don't think the Sheriff even knew or cared that I had been in an approved school before.

Glenochil State Young Offenders Institution

81. There was about one hundred and twenty boys in Glenochil aged sixteen to twenty-one years old. Glenochil was hardcore. The building was just like a prison.

Routine at Glenochil

First day

82. I was taken straight from the court to Glenochil. I was taken into reception and had to put the prison uniform on. I got given a pillow slip with blankets and shoes or whatever and then put into a cell. I was in a cell on my own.

Mornings and Bedtime

83. We were up at six thirty in the morning and had to get washed then down for breakfast. After that we were out on parade and had to march. We did a lot of physical education (PE) throughout the day, but I liked that. We stopped for lunch and dinner, but then it was back to the same again. Lights out was about nine o'clock.

Mealtimes / Food

84. The food was alright. I never saw anyone having any problems with the food.

Washing / Bathing

85. We had ablutions downstairs from our hall with about thirty sinks. There were showers as well, but they were supervised so you were in and out quick. Sometimes you had hardly got the soap off your head, and you were told, 'out'. They controlled the water. Showers were every day after PE.

Clothing / Uniform

86. There was a prison uniform, but it wasn't labelled as yours. When it came back you could have got anyone's.

Leisure time

87. We had an hour's recreation at night to read the papers or watch the television. We got to play table tennis and had books as well. I went to the gym as much as I could.

Healthcare / Medication

88. There was a doctors and dentist in there, but I never needed it.

Work

89. I was put into a sewing machine factory. It was jackets we were making for the prisoners. They also had textiles, joiners and cleaners. You were allocated a job, you couldn't choose.

Visitors

90. There were always groups going about that looked official and they spoke to some people, but not me.

Family Contact

91. My family came to visit me once a month. My brothers and my mum. You had to fill out a visit pass and send it out to them. My family could then hand it in. We got thirty minute visits in a big hall.

Discipline

92. The digger was the discipline in Glenochil. It was a separate cell away from everyone else. It was seven or fourteen days in there. They had two diggers. You would get put in there if you were fighting or being cheeky. I was in there a couple times.

Abuse at Glenochil

93. There were prison officers who would push their knuckles into the back of your neck if you spoke with your mouth full on a break having your tea and sandwich. They would also give you a punch in the kidneys. This was just for talking when you shouldn't.

Reporting of abuse at Glenochil

94. You could have spoken to the prison officers if you wanted to, but I never did, I just got on with it.

Leaving Glenochil

95. I was in Glenochil for six weeks. I was out for a month and a half and got convicted again for car theft. I was sentenced at Falkirk Sheriff Court for two charges and was given two years in Borstal.

Polmont YOI, Brightons

96. Polmont is one of the better places I have been in. It was alright. I had a lot of things to do. We played football and went to the gym. There were good workshops. Some of the prison officers were alright too. There was no abuse there and nothing I want to tell you about there. It was alright as far as it goes. They did have solitary there as well as part of the discipline.

Life after care and institutions

97. I started going downhill after Polmont and was basically in and out of prison until about twenty years ago. All my grandchildren were coming along then, so I thought I better get my act together. The longest sentence I had was thirty months.
98. I started working with my brother [REDACTED] in Cumbernauld in a tyre factory. He lost that and then I had a couple of wee jobs here and there in scaffolding. I then ended up on heroin for eighteen years, but I am alright now. I haven't been near it for seven years.
99. I have four children with the same mother. We weren't the marrying type. I have eight grandchildren and I am about to become a great grandad.

Impact

100. Being in care has fucked up my life up. That's the only way I can put it. There is nothing else I can say. I can't say for definite, but I might have done better if my education was better. I just shouldn't have been in secure care.

Treatment / Support

101. I have never had any counselling. I don't speak about it to anyone. I think about it sometimes, but it doesn't get me anywhere. It is water off a duck's back to me now. It's not getting me anywhere if I sit and moan about it.

Reporting of Abuse

102. I have never reported what happened to me to the police. I am speaking to Thompsons solicitors just now about the redress scheme.

Records

103. I would like to get my records and I have spoken to Future Pathways about this.

Lessons to be learnt

104. I would have to think about what lessons could be learnt from my experiences. I have never thought about it before. Social work should definitely take more to do with you when you are in these places. Someone should explain to children what's going on. I never got one thing explained to me, it was just you are going there and that's it.

Hopes for the Inquiry

105. I just hope that the Inquiry can help everyone that needs to be helped. I think you are doing a brilliant job.

Other information

106. 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..... ILB [Redacted Signature]

Dated..... 3/2/23