

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HPX

Support person present: No

1. My name is HPX though most people just call me HPX. My date of birth is 1955. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Barshaw Hospital in Paisley and my parents were and being my mum's maiden name. I have two brothers who are who is 71 and who is 60. I also had a younger sister called who was the youngest of us but who died a few years ago.
3. We stayed at Paisley. My dad dealt in scrap metal and mum was a full-time carer for my grandpa who stayed in where we also stayed sometimes. I went to Carbrock Street Primary School and used to walk there with my brother. Primary School was good and I recall I was good at sums. The only teacher whose name I remember was Mrs Leitch who taught music.
4. My father was always coming in drunk and would argue with my mum. I was about seven years old when things started to go wrong. My dad died in 1961 or 1962 of lung cancer and I remember I didn't get to go to the funeral because I was too young. My mum struggled to cope and me and my brother ended up in a children's Home called Chapel House in Paisley. My mum was getting ECT treatment in hospital.

5. I don't remember if social workers were involved in us going to Chapel House and I think we were actually in there a couple of times though I don't remember for how long. I know my dad's brother took us out of that place for a while. [REDACTED] and I ran away from Chapel House once and made our way back to our own house only to find it had been boarded up. I don't know where our mum was.

#### **Chapel House, Ardgowan Street, Paisley**

6.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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I don't know why we left there but myself, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were sent to Barrholm Children's Home in Largs though [REDACTED] says he has no recollection of that.

#### **Barrholm Children's Home, Largs**

7.

We were in Barrholm for somewhere between two and three years. Secondary Institutions - to

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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9.

Secondary In I don't know where my mum was. I don't recall how it was I came to leave Barrholm but from there I went to stay with a foster family called [REDACTED] who stayed in [REDACTED], Paisley. It was only me who went there.

**Foster care with The [REDACTED] Family, [REDACTED], Paisley**

10. I don't recall how I got to the [REDACTED]'s but they had three sons called [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were all around my age. I stayed with that family in [REDACTED] for a year and went to Maxwelltown Primary School. I shared a room with the three boys and the [REDACTED]'s were really good to me and used to take me on trips to Saltcoats and Largs. I think they might have known my mum.
11. The food was always good and I used to walk to school and I really enjoyed going there. I remember that after school myself and the [REDACTED]'s, cousins of mine called [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], would deliver potatoes, eggs and tomatoes while the driver did our homework in the van for us. The [REDACTED]'s knew I was doing this and I would sometimes bring them home some potatoes.
12. The [REDACTED]'s were an older couple and I don't recall who arranged for me to go there but my social workers by then were Mr Borland followed by Mr Tolland. I don't know where my brothers were at this time and I never saw my mum while I stayed there. I don't recall ever having to see a doctor or dentist.
13. I don't know how it came about that I left foster care and I'm not sure where I went when I did leave but I was about eleven or twelve. When I was twelve or thirteen sometime in [REDACTED] 1968, I'm not sure where I was staying at the time, I stole a can of spray paint and Paisley Juvenile Court sent me to Bellfield Remand Home in Dumbarton for seven days detention.
14. The Juvenile Court also gave me a further 14 days in [REDACTED] 1968 and then 28 days in [REDACTED] 1969 and I was sent to Bellfield on both occasions. During the 14 day, or maybe it was the 28 day remand sentence, I was sent to Cardross Children's Home because Bellfield was overcrowded but I was only at Cardross for a few days and have

no real recollection of it. The routine, the staff and all the rest were the same each time I was in Bellfield.

### **Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton**

15. Bellfield was a big mansion and had about 200 boys therein all aged between eleven and fifteen. I recognised some of them from [REDACTED]. I can't remember the Governor's name but the staff I recall are Mr LIG [REDACTED] who was about forty and was SNR [REDACTED], had a finger missing and always wore leather patches on the elbow of his jumpers, Mr KFT [REDACTED] who was in his 30's and zKFQ [REDACTED] who was the gardener.

### **Routine at Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton**

16. We would get up early in the morning and get washed, dressed then go for breakfast in the big hall where some staff were present. After breakfast we would work outside in the gardens and greenhouse weeding, planting and cutting things. It was good fun and educational and we did this instead of going to classes. In the evening we would watch TV or play table-tennis before going to bed about 9:00 pm when the lights would be switched off.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

17. You would get cornflakes and maybe some eggs for breakfast. The lunch was the main meal of the day. The food was good and you could eat as much as you wanted. I don't remember anybody having any problem with the food.

### *Washing/bathing*

18. There were showers which had doors that we could use. There would normally be a member of staff nearby keeping an eye on things to make sure nobody was carrying on.



### *Clothing/uniform*

19. Bellfield gave us a uniform to wear but I don't remember what it consisted of.

### *Leisure time*

20. We played a lot of football and also got taken to the baths in Dumbarton on a Thursday or a Friday by three members of staff but we weren't taken on any other trips.

### *Schooling*

21. There was no schooling in the way that normal schools would hold classes. We spent all our time working in the gardens or in the greenhouse.

### *Healthcare*

22. I don't remember seeing either a doctor or a dentist.

### *Work*

23. All the work we did was in the garden. We didn't clean or polish the floors or anything like that.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

24. I wasn't in Bellfield at Christmas or when it was my birthday but I don't recall anybody's birthday being celebrated.

### *Bed Wetting*

25. Bed wetting wasn't a problem for me. Other kids did wet the bed but I don't recall them getting into any trouble over it.

### *Visitors*

26. I didn't receive any visitors when I was in Bellfield and nobody from social work ever came to see me.

### *Discipline*

27. In Bellfield you weren't given the belt or anything like that. The only real punishment was being put in the digger, a cell, for a day or two but that never happened to me. I would say that Bellfield was quite a fair place in general.

### *Running away*

28. Myself and three others ran off one time and made it back to Paisley by walking. We went to my mum's at [REDACTED] but she had a new boyfriend at that time. Later that evening the police came to the door and I hid in the coal bunker with my mate but the police found us. The other two were caught as well and we were all taken back to Bellfield. The oldest of the four of us was put in the digger for a day or two but nothing happened to the rest of us.

### **Abuse at Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton**

29. When I was sentenced to 28 days in Bellfield in [REDACTED] 1969 Mr LIG [REDACTED] was still at Bellfield. When I got back from court he escorted me to the showers which was something he never did. He was wearing a pin-stripe suit. While I was in the shower Mr LIG [REDACTED] put his head in the shower and started performing oral sex on me. He was trying to get me to have an erection but I couldn't get one. I actually told him to be careful he didn't get his hair wet.
30. This went on for what seemed like a few minutes and then he just stopped and left without saying anything. That was the only time it happened to me. I was very young and naïve and hadn't a clue what was going on but I knew that what he was doing was

wrong. I got told that a similar thing happened to a boy called [REDACTED] who came from Paisley but I don't know who told me this or if it was [LIG [REDACTED]] who was also involved in that incident.

31. I didn't tell anybody about what [LIG [REDACTED]] had done because that would have felt like grassing which is something you didn't do in those days. I did see [LIG [REDACTED]] several times after that but it was as if nothing had happened. I would describe [LIG [REDACTED]] as a strict man.

### **Leaving Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton**

32. I don't recall where I went on each of the three occasions I left Bellfield but I was there a fourth time because I was on remand and waiting on a placement having been sentenced to Borstal at Paisley Sheriff Court in [REDACTED] 1969 when I was just coming up for fourteen. When I left Bellfield on that occasion I was collected by either Mr Borland or Mr Tolland, my social workers, who took me directly to Thornleypark Approved School along with another boy called [REDACTED] who he dropped off at Geilsland.

### **Thornleypark Approved School**

33. Thornleypark was massive and [SNR [REDACTED]] Mr [GTX [REDACTED]]. When I arrived I was met by Mr [GTX [REDACTED]] and [REDACTED] Mr Wilson who showed me about the place. I would say there was between 300 and 400 boys there aged between thirteen and fifteen who slept about thirty to a dorm. The staff were all male and included a lot of teachers. I thought Thornleypark was a really good place to be.

### **Routine at Thornleypark Approved School**

34. We got up, washed and had breakfast before doing work or going to school if you went to classes. We would then stop for lunch before going back to work or school. In the evening we would do things like play table-tennis. We went to bed at 9:00 pm and the night watchman Mr McConnachie would be on duty. On a Sunday we would go to Church on Neilston Road.

#### *Food*

35. The food was good and there was plenty of it. I don't remember anybody having any issues with the food.

#### *Pocket money*

36. We didn't get pocket money but they did give you money for your fares home if you went home at the weekend.

#### *Work*

37. Some of the other guys would do work and chores about the place but I didn't as I was always doing painting with Mr Glen which I enjoyed.

#### *Health*

38. I don't remember ever seeing a dentist or a doctor or a nurse but when people got back from weekend leave some of them would have lice. When that happened they didn't just treat those with lice, they treated everybody which, if you think about it, was probably a good idea.



### *Trips*

39. We were taken to Arisaig and Mallaig and then got a ferry to Skye for a week in a hostel. I remember going to a cinema in Fort William. The person who took us had something to do with the Boy's Brigade. That was a good time.

### *Clothes*

40. I think they supplied the clothes.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

41. Birthdays weren't celebrated and we went home for Christmas.

### *School*

42. There was a wee school next door but I stopped going after a while as I was quite advanced. Instead I spent a lot of time painting and they taught me painting and decorating.

### *Visitors*

43. My mum came to visit me once just before Christmas with one of her pals. Neither Mr Borland or Mr Tolland, my social workers, ever came to see me.

### *Running away*

44. I had been in Thornleypark for a few months when I ran away, I think maybe because I couldn't get home one weekend. I went back to my mum's but the police found me after a day and took me back to Thornleypark. Mr GTX gave me the cane for that in his office. I don't recall exactly how many times he hit me but it was about three or four times over my bare backside. I only ran away once and when you did you knew that if

you got caught you would get the cane. Running away was the only thing you got the cane for.

45. On a Friday we had an assembly and if you got three good reports you got home for the weekend. If you got two good reports you got one day at home. This encouraged you to behave as it meant you got home which is probably why the place didn't need such harsh discipline.

### **Leaving Thornleypark Approved School**

46. Before I left Thornleypark they organised for me to get a job at [REDACTED] on Glasgow Road where I was getting £4.20 a week. I actually cried when I left Thornleypark because I really enjoyed being there. I went back to my mum's. The cost of travelling to work proved to be too much for the wages I was getting so I left that job.
47. I went down to London for about nine months where I stayed with my dad's sister and worked in Woolworths and Marks and Spencer's. I went back to Paisley for my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. The police questioned me about some outstanding matters and the fact I was considered a missing person but all charges were dropped. I stayed back in Paisley and got into more trouble breaking into shops and, in [REDACTED] 1972, I was sentenced to Borstal at Paisley Sheriff Court for 1-3 years.

### **Longriggend Remand Centre**

48. Prior to being sentenced I had been on remand for three months in Longriggend. It was a strict place run by prison officers but I had no problems there. I was sixteen and there were boys in there up to twenty years of age. I know that some boys did have problems when they were in Longriggend but I didn't have any. After court I went to Polmont. I was actually in Longriggend a couple of times on remand but never had any problems.

### **Polmont Young Offenders, Falkirk**

49. Polmont was alright but it was very strict. I knew some of the boys in Polmont and had no real concerns about being there. I was in Polmont for about two months before they sent me to Castle Huntly.

### **Castle Huntly**

50. I went to Castle Huntly which was an open prison for about six months and that was also a good place. I spent a lot of time looking after the pigs on the farm and picking totties from the fields. It was an open prison and I was outside all day. The staff were ex-army but brilliant to me. There was no physical punishment and I got a bit of money for working with the pigs which I got given when I left the place at the age of sixteen. I went back to my mum's when I left.

### **Barlinnie Prison Young Offenders Institution**

51. In 1973 I was given a 12 month sentence at Paisley Sheriff Court and sent to the YOI unit in Barlinnie Prison, Glasgow. I did about eight months. I have no complaints about my time there and would even say that I loved my time there.

### **Life after being care**

52. I got another sentence in 1976 and served time in Barlinnie Prison in Glasgow which I actually enjoyed. After that I stayed out of trouble for about ten years. I worked as a painter and decorator and stayed in Paisley and also had a grocer's van for a while. I had a son, [REDACTED], when I was about 23 and then worked with the Council in Paisley emptying the bins for about four years.
53. Although I never married there were two women who I had long term relationships with and I refer to them as my ex-wives. My oldest son was born to the first of them while I had three children to my second wife. [REDACTED] is 33, my daughter is 22 and my son [REDACTED] is 16 and I see them all regularly.

54. Back in 2013 my first wife [REDACTED] was convicted of murdering my second wife [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] My first wife got life imprisonment with a recommendation that she serve at least fifteen years. My son [REDACTED], that I had to my first wife, died of an overdose a couple of weeks before that trial started.

### **Impact**

55. I wouldn't say that having been in care has had any impact on my life. I have thought about my time in Bellfield and what happened to me with Mr LIG [REDACTED] and have always wanted to report it and I would like to see him prosecuted. My second wife thought that my time in care might have affected our relationship but I'm not sure. The fact me and my brothers were separated certainly affected our relationship.

### **Treatment/support**

56. I have never had any counselling or felt the need to talk to a professional in relation to my time in care.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

57. The only person I ever told about what happened to me in Bellfield was my second wife. I have never reported it to the police or to anybody in authority.

### **Records**

58. The only records I have had are a list of my previous convictions which shows the dates when I was sent to various places when I was young. I also have a letter from Dumbarton District Council which is a reply to a letter I sent them making a complaint



about what happened to me in Bellfield. The letter says that they can't access my records and suggested I contact The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry though they called it The Historical Abuse Inquiry.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

59. The only thing I would like to see done is for Mr <sup>LIG</sup> if he's still alive, to be held accountable for what he did to me and be prosecuted. I certainly think that families shouldn't be split up the way me and my brothers were. I'm sure disclosure that they have these days helps with the staff being vetted in such places.
60. 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. <sup>HPX</sup> .....

Dated. 17/2/2022 .....