

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LCR

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is LCR. My date of birth is 1959 and I am presently 58 years of age. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I spent much of my childhood in care and got moved about from place to place. My memory's not very good though, and I am very confused about times and dates. I have great difficulty being exact and it's difficult for me to be precise about where I was and when.
3. I first went into a place that I think was called "Ardeer Children's Home" in Arrochar with my brothers and . I was about eight so it must have been 1967, or thereabouts. We were only there for a wee while and then got put to Nazareth House in Kilmarnock. We were all there for a couple of years until I reported something and I got moved to another place run by nuns in Newcastle. This must have been around 1970. and never came with me, they got moved to Milngavie. It's not right to split siblings up.
4. I think I was in Newcastle for about ten months and then got moved to Cardross Park Assessment Centre in Cardross. I got reunited with my brothers there. I'd not been there for a year when I got moved again. I'm not certain, but I think it was to Bellfield Remand Home in Dumbarton. That's when I got split up from my brothers again.

5. I got moved from Bellfield after less than a year too and ended up at St Ninian's in Falkland. By my reckoning, this must have been around 1972. I spent the most time there and eventually got moved after about three years for running away all the time. They put me to a place run by the Salvation Army in Kilbirnie. It was called Redheugh Adolescent Unit. I think it was after there that I ended up in St Mary's Kenmure in Bishopbriggs, which was a List D school, a secure place.
6. I might have got the order and the dates wrong. I was in so many places it's difficult for me to remember accurately. I think I may well have been in other places too, but again I'm not sure.

Life before going into care

7. My first memory is living with my dad [REDACTED] and mum [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] Duntocher. We moved from there to [REDACTED], Duntocher, when I was just a few years old.
8. I had three older brothers [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], and two younger brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] died when he was just a few months old, before I was born. I remember my mum talking about him. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] died when they were just children too. [REDACTED] is two years younger than me and [REDACTED] is two years younger than him. I also had a younger sister called [REDACTED] but she died of pneumonia when she was a baby. I never saw her.
9. Mum and dad split up after we moved to [REDACTED]. Mum was taking lots of valium and spent all the time in bed. Dad disappeared with another woman just along the street, but kept coming back and getting mum pregnant. That's when it all started going pear-shaped and me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] got taken into care. I was about eight at the time. I think West Dunbartonshire Council must have been involved. I remember later on I had a lot of dealings with a social worker called Mr Stansfield over the years. I was very fond of him.

“Ardeer Children’s Home, Arrochar”

10. All I remember of “Ardeer” is walking along a stretch of motorway next to the Clyde. Nothing happened there, it was fine. I believe I was being dealt with by the social work department at that time, but I don’t know for sure. We, my brothers and me, were all moved after a few months to Nazareth House in Kilmarnock, but I don’t know why. Maybe because we were Catholic.

Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

11. It must have been in 1968 that we went to Nazareth House, when I was about nine years old. I remember my mum took us to see “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid” at the pictures while we were there. That came out in 1969.
12. I know the home was run by the Sisters of Nazareth, but I can’t remember any of the nuns’ names. The mother superior was tall and they all had these ashen faces. They wore big hats, but that’s all I remember. There must have been at least thirty, maybe up to fifty, kids there at the time. The youngest would probably have been about three years of age and the oldest about eleven or twelve.
13. There was other staff there as well as the nuns. Cooks, cleaners and a handyman. You hardly spoke with them though.

Routine at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

First day

14. I remember walking into the place. If you took a right, that's where all our living spaces were. If you took a left, that was where all the nuns' living quarters were. It was like a very big, long, mansion house with a massive hall up the middle.

Mornings and bedtime

15. We slept in dormitories that were upstairs. I can't remember how many kids were in each dormitory. Families were kept together, so I was in the same bit as my brothers. Girls and boys were kept separate though.
16. We probably went to bed about nine o'clock and got up about half-six, seven in the morning, when we would go and get our breakfast. They would line us up before going to school and give us all a big teaspoon of malt to battle the cold.

Food

17. Breakfast was the usual, cereal or porridge. I think we got lunches at school. The evening meal was okay. I don't remember much about it. We got supper too, which was sliced apple and a sandwich. We were never force fed or anything like that.
18. I think there was a tuck shop once a week. Families would send in parcels of biscuits and stuff too. The kids would get to keep some of the stuff and the rest would get shared. My brothers and I never got any of our own though.

Washing and bathing

19. Showers were okay. They were in a building outside and we would be supervised by the nuns. I can't remember how often we got a shower.

School

20. We all went to a normal school along the road. Our uniforms were kept in a room at the back. We would get changed in there and then get walked round in a big crocodile. I can't remember what the school was called, but it was Catholic and there was a Protestant school right across the road.

Recreation

21. There was a recreation room, which I can picture now. We would get shown movies there once every three weeks or something. The Variety Club would come round as well and they would entertain us. So would the Round Table.
22. There was books and games too. Outside, there was a courtyard with a play area and a tennis court at the bottom.

Holidays

23. We never went home at all and I can't remember if any of the other kids went home or not. I do remember they took us to Butlin's in Ayr for the day, though.

Birthdays and Christmas

24. They would celebrate birthdays and Christmas. We would get presents from charities like the Variety Club and the Round Table. I never got anything from my mum or dad.

Visits/Inspections

25. Our mum came to visit us one time and took us out to see a movie. There were no other visits. I don't remember a social worker coming to see us or any inspections at all.

Healthcare

26. All I can remember of the healthcare is that there was a Matron there, one of the nuns.

Religious Instruction

27. Religion was everything, it was battered into you. There would obviously be prayers at night and you would have to go to confession once a week with the local priest. I was an altar boy for the first canon in Scotland, in 1969. That was just them trying to shape me. Brainwash me.

Abuse at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

28. The mother superior was a bitch. When I arrived I was hen-toed. She used to make me wear my shoes on the wrong feet and walk up and down the big, long hall on my tiptoes for about an hour. If I dropped my feet she would cane the back of my legs.
29. I never had any problems with bedwetting, but I remember there was some kids who did. The nuns would just grab them, there was no empathy or anything like that.
30. It was all just strict discipline. We were constantly getting slapped, kicked, caned and belted with a cane. They would belt you on the back, on the waist, anywhere. If you didn't jump they would clip you, pull you, or whatever. It could be a backhand on the face, they didn't care. They blamed you for everything.
31. My younger brother [REDACTED] accidentally smashed a bottle over a nun's nose. He was just playing in the courtyard, flinging the bottle in the air. The other nuns grabbed him and were beating him. I started fighting the nuns, trying to protect my brother. I suppose we were disruptive.
32. The guy that was the live-in [REDACTED] had learning difficulties. He made me touch his thing a couple of times. He wasn't just doing this to me, he was doing it to all the

other kids too. I don't remember his name, but he wore trousers that looked like they were made of potato sacks with a rope at the waist.

Reporting of abuse at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

33. I never reported any of the physical abuse. Nobody would listen.
34. I complained about the [REDACTED] to the first sister and then the mother superior came and had a chat with me. I remember her telling me not to repeat it and that she would deal with it.

Leaving Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

35. Two or three days later I was away, moved to Newcastle. That was obviously them dealing with it. This would have been about 1970 I think and I was taken to another place run by nuns in Newcastle. It was right across from a graveyard and might have been Nazareth House too. I don't know for sure, but there's got to have been social work involvement then as well.

Nazareth House, Newcastle

36. The nuns in Newcastle all wore the same uniform as the ones in Kilmarnock. The address [REDACTED] sticks in my mind, but I don't know for sure. Nothing happened there, just the same strict discipline. I think I was probably there for ten months before I got moved to Cardross Park Assessment Centre.

Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Cardross

37. At that time Cardross was a children's home. Later on it got changed to a young offender's institution. It was a beautiful big house next to the golf club. There was probably no more than about sixteen or seventeen kids there. I think the oldest was probably about fourteen.
38. I think Cardross was run by the social work department. I don't remember any of the names of the staff at all though. There was about five or six of them and I think they were all males, I don't remember any females. They all wore casual clothes, no uniforms or anything. Only a couple of them lived in.
39. I remember walking into the house and the recreation room was to the left. There were stairs straight ahead that went up and round. Past the stairs was a door that led to a small room. It was called "The Black Box" because it was just a square with no light and no window.

Routine at Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Cardross

Mornings and bedtime

40. We slept in small dormitories with four or five beds at most in them. There were three or four dormitories and I think the kids in each were all about the same age. We got woken up at about half-past seven and went for breakfast.

Food

41. I don't remember much about the food there.

School

42. We were schooled inside Cardross by the staff. There was a classroom in the place, which meant we never got out.

Religion

43. The staff used to take us up to the priests' college up the road from the home. I don't remember any other religious instruction while I was there.

Birthdays and Christmas

44. I don't think I was there over my birthday or Christmas. I don't remember any of the other kids having a birthday either.

Visits/Inspections

45. Mr Stansfield, my social worker, used to come and see me at Cardross. I remember because one of the teachers had said something about his dad dying. I thought he meant my dad had died and I just laughed. I hadn't seen my dad in years. It was only when Mr Stansfield came a week later that I realised it was his dad that had died. I was really apologetic.

Running away from Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Cardross

46. I ran away once from Cardross, because they kept putting me in the Black Box all the time. I think I got about three miles. I was punished by getting put back in the Black Box again.

Abuse at Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Cardross

47. The staff at Cardross were bastards. If you done anything wrong you got put in the Black Box, the room at the back of the stairs. You were told to strip down to your pants and got locked in. You could be in there for hours and hours. That included wee kids of four or five too. That was their way of destroying you.

48. A couple of the staff would give you a kick or a slap if you struggled at all. I only remember one of them though. He was wee and fat and quite mean.

Leaving Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Cardross

49. I probably looked on Mr Stansfield as a surrogate father. He was a nice guy to talk to. I could sit down and open up to him. It was decided after less than a year that I was getting moved again. I can't remember whether that was to St Ninian's School in Falkland or Bellfield Remand Home in Dumbarton. I think it was Bellfield. This must have been about 1972, when I was about thirteen.

Reporting of abuse at Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Cardross

50. I never reported getting locked in the Black Box to anybody.

Bellfield Remand Home, Dumbarton

51. All I remember of Bellfield is that it sat on a hill. It was all enclosed so you couldn't run away, and we were locked in. There must have been around fifteen boys in there. We were in large rooms with about four or five of us in each. There was a school in the place and rooms where they taught us woodwork and metalwork.
52. I don't recollect anything much happening there.
53. I was only in Bellfield for less than a year before I was told I was getting sent up to St Ninian's School in Falkland. I was told it was a good school and I was very lucky to be getting a chance to go there. Places were very sought after.

St Ninian's School, Falkland

54. When I first arrived at St Ninian's, I looked at the place and thought it looked okay. It was a massive house in its own grounds. The grounds were outstanding. It was run by the Jesuits and Brother Ryan was in charge. I think there was probably about five brothers there. The only other one I remember was called Brother LMZ he was quite fat and wore glasses.
55. St Ninian's was for boys only and I would reckon there would be about fifty there. There was two "families", or houses of boys. One was called the Ramsays and one was called the Stuarts. We used to play sports against each other.

Routine at St Ninian's School, Falkland

Mornings and bedtime

56. We slept in wee single bed-spaces at St Ninian's, in a big room with partitions. When we got up in the mornings we'd get washed and then go down for breakfast. After breakfast we'd all go to our various classes. We'd all be in bed by ten o'clock. We would have to kneel at our beds and do our prayers.

Food

57. The food was okay. I was an altar boy so I used to dish everyone's cornflakes out. I would crush down my own and put extra on top.

School

58. The school was on site, and it was mainly the brothers that ran it. We were there for normal school hours, probably nine o'clock to three. There was a couple of lay teachers for woodwork and crafts. I think there would be a maximum of about ten boys in each class.

Sport and Recreation

59. What was good at St Ninian's was that they found what sport you excelled at. The sports curriculum was fantastic. We did football, cricket, hockey, badminton, tennis and table-tennis. If you were any good you were pushed to do it.
60. Every day we would be out playing sports. I loved hockey. The brothers would referee the games between the two houses. Occasionally we would go out and play teams from elsewhere. Not often though.
61. Crab football was a big thing too. It was in the badminton court inside and we would all be shuffling about on our bums, kicking a ball. I don't think the brothers took part.

Holidays

62. Some people got home at weekends or for holidays, but I didn't. I had the run of the place to myself sometimes. Brother LMZ saw that, and I think that's why he decided to take me to visit his family in England one time.

Birthdays and Christmas

63. Birthdays and Christmas were celebrated, but I didn't get anything.

Visits/Inspections

64. I think Mr Stansfield, my social worker, came to see me at St Ninian's. I don't remember any inspections.

Healthcare

65. I don't remember anything about healthcare at St Ninian's, except that you weren't allowed to smoke. Everybody did though, I was thirteen when I started. Boys would

bring tobacco back if they'd been away for the weekend. Otherwise, you could get it in the village shop.

Pocket Money

66. I think we got about £2 allowance a week at St Ninian's. You worked for it though, you had chores to do.

Religion

67. I had a right good fight with Brother Ryan because I wouldn't do what he wanted. He decided I was going to be an altar boy, so I was up at six every morning. Me and him doing mass and Latin in the chapel at the school. All of us went to the chapel and we also went to the chapel in Falkland Palace. I liked that, it was a nice chapel.

Running away from St Ninian's School, Falkland

68. I think I ran away from St Ninian's at least four times. The furthest I got was over the Tay Bridge, when I ran away with another wee boy. I can't remember his name. The police would bring me back after farmers grassed me. After I was caught, I'd have to drop my trousers and I would get caned by Brother Ryan. He would take me into his room and give me six or seven, 'till he saw blood'. Lots of other boys used to run away too. I think it was to get away from the abuse.

Discipline at St Ninian's School, Falkland

69. The favourite punishment was a ruler. They would hit you across the fingers with the edge of it. It was damn sore. They did that because the belt wasn't hard enough. I wouldn't show them any fear or pain and that used to make them worse. They got angrier. They punished people all the time.

Abuse at St Ninian's School, Falkland

70. I called Brother LMZ "Hands everywhere". He was always cuddling and I thought he was feeling his way, but I wouldn't let anything happen. When he took me to visit his family, that's when he was trying to be all cuddly with me. I wouldn't let him.
71. When we were doing our prayers at night, Brother Ryan used to walk round all our bed-spaces. He was the main culprit. He would pick his favourite and take them away to his room and cuddle into them. Certain boys were picked all the time. I never saw anything actually happen, but boys would come back and they'd be crying. He took me to his room one night but I think he bottled it. I just gave him a look and I think that's why he decided to make me an altar boy.

Leaving St Ninian's School, Falkland

72. I think I got moved from St Ninian's because I kept running away. I was moved to a home in Kilbirnie run by the Salvation Army called Redheugh Adolescent Unit. I think Mr Stansfield was involved in me getting moved.


Reporting of abuse at St Ninian's School, Falkland

73. I never reported anything that happened at St Ninian's. I didn't know what I could tell people or why I was running away.

Redheugh Adolescent Unit, Kilbirnie

74. Another Institution

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



75.

76.

St Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

77. St Mary's was a young offenders' secure home. A 'List D' place. The only reason I was put there was because I had been sleeping with a lassie. I was never told I was there because I was serving a sentence or anything. The staff all had keys and we were all locked in. It was like a young persons' prison. I'm not sure who ran St Mary's, but it wasn't the Catholic Church. All the staff had to be called sir.
78. It was mad there, you had to be on the ball. The other lads were from all over the place. They had been put there after going in front of the children's panel or court. They'd all done something bad on numerous occasions. They were hardened criminals.

Routine at St Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

Mornings and bedtime

79. The rooms we slept in were sectioned off, similar to St Ninian's, but it was all modernised. There was only two in each one and there was a wardrobe and drawers at your bed space.

80. Only a couple of staff stayed the night. The rest came in for the day.

School

81. We got schooled in the place. A guy was brought in from the outside to teach us how to bake. We made pies and bridies and things like that. I never sat any exams when I was there.

Visits/Inspections

82. Eventually I got allowed home to visit my mother a few times. It was when I got home one time that something happened and I ended up in Polmont Young Offenders Institution.

Abuse at St Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

83. I was slashed in the face by a boy at St Mary's called [REDACTED]. He was another inmate like me. I had stood up to him and he didn't like it. I was making my bed up and he jumped out from the wardrobe and slashed me with an opened-up architect's clip, that was about an inch wide.
84. SNR [REDACTED] there was called LNI [REDACTED] and he used to hit us a few times. He was known as "Big Warm Hands" because he had hands like shovels.

Leaving St Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

85. When I used to get home I would meet up with a bunch of guys at Buchanan Street Bus Station. We used to get involved in crime, pickpocketing and things like that. My mother was still taking valium all the time and was suffering depression. I had turned sixteen by this time, so I moved in with my girlfriend.

Reporting of abuse at St Mary's Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

86. I went to see the nurse in St Mary's after getting slashed in the face and she fixed me up. It was never reported to the police or anyone else though, they kept it in-house.

Life after being in care

87. I spent a long time living a life of crime after I had left care. When I got back with my brothers, they would break into cars and steal cassettes. I would sell them and I got done for that a few times.
88. Not long after I moved in with my girlfriend I was stopped by the police and they found a knife on me. I had it for protection. I got four years in Polmont Young Offenders Institution for that. By the time I'd got to Polmont, I'd been well schooled in the way to behave in these places.
89. We did loads of stuff in Polmont. I got my O-levels in there and got a job in the kitchen. That was the best job. I was trusted and because I was a cook, everybody was my pal.
90. Eventually I got a job selling double-glazing, and I was doing brilliantly. When I was thirty-six I met my ex-partner [REDACTED] and she showed me the error of my ways. I'd been giving money to my brothers and that stopped then. That's when they fell out with me and all the arguments and fights started.
91. [REDACTED] had a boy and a girl when I met her. They're my babies, even though they're twenty-five and twenty-six now. We also had a child together, a girl, who's fifteen now.

92. I set myself up as a roofer and roughcaster, but I don't work now. I injured my back in an accident and I'm permanently on a high prescription of pain killers.

Impact

93. When I first got moved from Nazareth House in Kilmarnock that's when my brothers fell out with me. I was their older brother, their protector, and they thought I'd abandoned them. Later on, my brother [REDACTED] battered me about it. We call him 'Psycho' because his mind has just gone. I lost all my front teeth.
94. What they done to me, splitting me up from my brothers, changed the whole dynamics of my family. I have no bond with them. I paid for [REDACTED] to go to University to try and make up to them. They blamed me. I've had no contact with them since my mum's funeral six years ago.
95. One of the reasons [REDACTED] and I split up was because of my problems with depression. I'm too soft with my daughters as well. I had discipline beaten into me, so I'm not going to repeat it. I can't discipline them and I don't understand anything about boundaries.

Records

96. I put in a Freedom of Information Act request for my records about a year-and-a-half ago. West Dunbartonshire Council said they had nothing though.

Other information

- 97. The only time I ever reported what happened to me was at Nazareth House. I have never reported anything else. The only person I have ever talked to about my time in care is my ex-partner [REDACTED].

- 98. 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... LCR [REDACTED]

Dated... 2/11/2017