

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HCN [REDACTED]

Support person present: No.

1. My name is HCN [REDACTED] although I have used the surnames HCN [REDACTED] HCN [REDACTED] and HCN [REDACTED] in the past. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mother is [REDACTED] and she was born on [REDACTED] 1954. I think [REDACTED] was the surname I was given when I was born, but I've no idea what my dad's name was. My mum won't tell me who he was, but from what she has since told me, she had met somebody called [REDACTED] and she took on his name, although he wasn't my real dad.
3. I had a younger sister called [REDACTED] who is now deceased. She was born on [REDACTED] 1973. I also have another younger sister called [REDACTED] who's known as [REDACTED] and a brother called [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is thirty-six now and [REDACTED] was born on [REDACTED] 1991. We've all got the same mum, but different dads.
4. I've no idea where I was born or brought up and I have few memories of that time. One I do have is of being at my Aunt [REDACTED] somewhere in Glasgow. Aunt [REDACTED] was married to a man called [REDACTED] and she was my mother's sister. I recall eating bread and sugar there and that the house never smelt nice.
5. I have since obtained records which say that [REDACTED] and I stayed at Aunt [REDACTED] and not with our mother, but I don't know how long that was for or why.

6. This might be a dream, but I have a memory of Uncle [REDACTED] climbing into bed beside me. I've no idea what age I would have been, but it must have been before I was seven years old. All I can remember is him coming into bed behind me and possibly putting money under my pillow, but that's it. Looking back now, I think I was sexually abused in some way by him, although I have no more memories than that.
7. I have very limited memories of my childhood, there are only a few instances that stick in my mind. I know traumatic things must have happened, but I think I have blocked a lot out and I get very frustrated about that.
8. I do know that [REDACTED] and I were put into Nazareth House in Kilmarnock, but I don't know why. I thought I was about seven years old when we went, but my records say it was on [REDACTED] 1977 when I would only have been six. Apparently [REDACTED] and I were both in care before that as well, but I don't remember that. I don't know where that was, or for how long it was, or why.

Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

9. There are only a few things that have stuck in my head about Nazareth House in Kilmarnock. I don't remember much about the building itself other than it was on three or four levels. We all slept in dormitories at the very top of the stairs and on the ground floor there was an old folks' home, a kitchen and a chapel.
10. I have a memory of there being priests and nuns at Nazareth House and that [REDACTED] SNR when we went there, [REDACTED] SNR was called Sister [REDACTED] LGO. She was small and stout and she was an older woman, possibly in her late-fifties or sixties. I don't remember what we had to call her. After Sister [REDACTED] LGO left, Sister [REDACTED] LKI came [REDACTED] SNR but I don't recall what any of the other nuns were called.

11. For some reason I was always in fear of Sister LGO but I liked Sister LKI. I don't know why I felt like that, it's just that I always get very emotional when I think about Sister LGO.
12. As well as the nuns there were other staff and I remember two of them. One was called Anabelle Caselli, but I can't remember the other woman's name.
13. I think it was mixed boys and girls at the home, but I don't know how many children, nuns or staff there were. I'm not sure what the ages of the rest of the children were either.

Routine at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

First day

14. I don't remember going into Nazareth House. What I do recall is Sister LGO cutting all my hair off. I now wonder if that was possibly when [REDACTED] and I arrived, but I don't know why she did it.

Mornings and bedtime

15. I remember there were at least three dormitories where we all slept. One in the middle had four beds in it and there were five or six beds in the other two, which were on either side. [REDACTED] and I were together in the dormitory in the middle for a while, but I don't know how long for. The only other thing in that dormitory was a standalone mirror between two of the beds.
16. I don't know what time we got up in the morning, but I do recall that we had to say the Rosary as soon as we did.
17. I have a memory of hiding under a bed and a nun was standing beside the bed. I don't know why I was hiding, what I had done, or what might have happened before or

afterwards. All I do know is that I didn't want to come out and everybody, all the other children that were there, was laughing at me.

18. I was moved to one of the other dormitories at some time, but I don't know why. I remember Sister LKI being there and for some reason I felt comfort knowing that. I think that was the first time I'd ever felt comfort.

Mealtimes/Food

19. We all ate together in the dining room and I remember other kids being there, but I don't know what ages they might have been. All I can really recall when I look back is me sitting at a table.
20. I don't think mealtimes were a pleasant experience. I remember we were given sago, lumpy custard with a skin over it, semolina, rice puddings and things like that. Things that I've never been able to touch then or since. I don't recall what the rest of the food was like.
21. I couldn't eat those things and I remember one time that I was sent downstairs, possibly to the basement, as punishment for not eating. I remember wherever it was that there were loads of boxes in the room. I had to take the bowl of the lumpy custard with me and I was told I had to eat the custard by one of the nuns, but I don't know which nun it was.
22. The nun left me in the room and I scooped all the custard behind the boxes, hoping she wouldn't see it, however when she came back in she went straight to the boxes. She scooped the custard back into the bowl and force-fed it to me. I don't remember how she forced me to eat it, just that she did.
23. I don't remember seeing any other child getting force-fed or what happened if anyone else didn't eat their food.

Washing/bathing

24. I have a memory of [REDACTED] and I being bathed together, but I'm not sure if the other kids bathed together. I still remember the smell of the stuff they put in our hair for head lice and the pink carbolic soap that we were washed with. We were bathed by Annabelle Caselli, but I don't remember anything else about her or what bath time was like.

Leisure time

25. I have no recollection of what we might have done in any leisure time that we had. I don't think we had toys, books or games and I don't even know if there was a playroom of any sort. I do remember being in a sitting room which had a couch in it, but I don't know if we were allowed to play there, or what that room was for.
26. The records I have since obtained say that I went to majorettes and I remember there was a small building opposite Nazareth House where I recall doing highland dancing. I don't know who took the dancing or how many other kids were there.

Trips and holidays

27. I don't recall going on any trips, but again my records say that we did. There's no detail of where we went or what we did and I certainly don't remember ever leaving the place.
28. The only thing I do remember is spending a few weekends with a couple called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I don't know what their second name was. I think they were maybe foster carers, but I don't know if there was a possibility of us being fostered.
29. [REDACTED] and I used to go and stay with them, although I don't know if we stayed there for the whole weekend. I enjoyed being with them in their house and playing with their Alsatian dogs. They didn't have a family of their own.

School

30. We went to school at St Columbus Primary in Kilmarnock, which I think was a normal comprehensive primary school. I don't think it was a school just for kids from Nazareth House.
31. We were taken to the school in a minibus and I only have recollections of the stupidest things while I was there. I don't remember being in a classroom, although obviously I must have been, or of making friends with other kids, or even playing with other kids.
32. All I do recall are things like picking chewing gum off the ground, rinsing it under the tap inside and eating it. It's strange wee things like that that seem to stay in my mind.

Healthcare

33. I've no idea if there was a nurse at Nazareth House and I don't remember ever seeing a doctor or a dentist. I've no idea what happened if a child was ill or injured.

Religious instruction

34. We used to have to go to the chapel within Nazareth House a lot and for some reason I have a memory that we had to go both before and after school. I remember there were always adults in the chapel with us and I wonder if they were possibly from the nursing home on the ground floor.
35. We also had to say the Rosary a lot, both before and after breakfast and before and after the rest of our meals.

Birthdays and Christmas

36. Although religion was such a big thing at Nazareth House, I've no recollection what happened at Christmas or Easter. Nothing sticks in my mind about any celebration or marking the occasion and I have no memory of birthdays being marked at all either.

Visits/Inspections

37. I do remember my mum coming to Nazareth House once. She was trying to take [REDACTED] and I away, but one of the nuns, I don't know who, was standing at the door to make sure we didn't get out. Mum was wanting to take us home, but the nuns refused and eventually she left. That's the only time I remember mum coming to see [REDACTED] and I.
38. I have no recollection of anyone from social services coming to see us, or of anyone sitting and talking to us and telling us what was happening. I don't recall speaking to anyone official, or whether there was any sort of inspection.

Sibling contact

39. I do know that [REDACTED] and I were not always in the same dormitory, but I don't recall whether [REDACTED] and I were allowed to be together or whether we were kept apart. I don't have a recollection of there being a problem seeing each other.
40. All I do remember is that for part of the time we did share the same dormitory and we were bathed together. I don't know if that was all the time, I just have a vision of us being in the bath together so it must have been at least once.

Personal possessions

41. I remember that a fete was held at some time and I got a wee teddy that sucked its thumb. That was the only possession I had, I had nothing else and I think I clung to that teddy till the day I left.

Abuse at Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

42. I don't know what had happened, whether my sister [REDACTED] had wet the bed or what she had done, but I recall Sister LGO [REDACTED] hitting [REDACTED] with a belt one time.

43. We were in the dormitory and it may have been that Sister LGO caught us sharing a bed, or maybe it was because [REDACTED] had wet the bed. It was first thing in the morning as we were getting up and Sister LGO was holding a belt and she hit [REDACTED] with it several times as she lay in the bed. I don't know where the belt came from or how many times she hit [REDACTED]. I was screaming, but I don't remember what [REDACTED] was doing and I don't recall if Sister LGO said anything.
44. I also have a vague memory of being in the sitting room and some boys being on the couch. It's so vague I don't even know if I dreamt it. The boys were older, although I don't know how old, and I was standing in front of them while one of the boys had his hands down his pants. I don't know what he was doing or if anything more happened and I don't know who that boy was.

Leaving Nazareth House, Kilmarnock

45. The records I have since obtained from Nazareth House show that I left there on [REDACTED] 1980, when I would have been nine years old and had been there for three years. After I left I went to stay with my mum for a bit.
46. Mum had a new boyfriend called [REDACTED] and she was living with him and his family in Cumbernauld, so [REDACTED] and I left Nazareth House to live with them as well. [REDACTED] and I took his surname and we started calling him dad. I only went back to using my mum's second name HCN [REDACTED] when I was a bit older and had left care.
47. [REDACTED] parents were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and we all stayed in the one house with them and [REDACTED] sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I really enjoyed being with them, but I don't know how long we were there before mum and [REDACTED] split up and she got her own house. I wanted to stay with [REDACTED] and his family, I didn't want to go and live with my mum, however I had to.

48. While we still lived with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I remember I went to the Sacred Heart Church in Cumbernauld with my mother for some reason. I recall one time when, in full view of my mum, the priest, Father [REDACTED] had his hand up the inside of my top and he was rubbing my back. There was nothing more than that, that I remember and I have no recollection of anything happening, but looking back on that now, I know it wasn't right that he did that.
49. Mum got her own house in Cumbernauld, but I didn't like being there. I remember waking up one night and a man was sitting at the bottom of my bed. His name was [REDACTED] and he told me he was my new dad. I learned that mum had married him without [REDACTED] and I even meeting him.
50. I recall going down to the phone box after that, phoning [REDACTED] and begging him to let me go back and stay with him, but obviously I couldn't.
51. Every time I used to walk past [REDACTED] he would slap me and I just hated him. Nothing ever seemed to make him happy even though I always tried to please him. I even called him dad to try and make him happy, but he was an alcoholic and it never made a difference.
52. I used to run away all the time and I remember arguing with my mum one time when she smashed a milk bottle and held it to my neck. I don't know what the lead up to that had been.
53. I don't know if the police were involved, but I do remember a social worker from Glasgow called Ann Woods sitting with me in my mum's house in Cumbernauld. I don't know why she was there or what might have been talked about.
54. I liked Ann Woods for some reason and I remember her taking [REDACTED] and I to the pictures to see 'E.T.'.
55. I went to Sacred Heart Primary School while we were staying with [REDACTED] and when we moved in with our mother on our own I started going to Our Lady's Secondary.

From what I remember I didn't go to school a lot. I was always really quiet and I was always getting bullied because I wasn't dressed right. I always felt ashamed and embarrassed when I went to school so I skipped going a lot.

56. I used to hide under my bed or in bushes across the road from the house just so I didn't have to go. I think that was the reason I got taken back into care again. I don't think I had done anything bad, it was just that I wasn't going to school. I only did half of first year before I was sent to Cardross Park Assessment Centre. [REDACTED] never went, it was just me.

Cardross Park Assessment Centre, Cardross

57. I was sent to Cardross Park Assessment Centre around 1981, when I was ten or eleven and I was there for roughly a year. I don't think I was treated badly while I was there, but my memories of there are even fewer than they were of Nazareth House.
58. I don't know who ran the place, or much about the building itself, all I do remember of the place is that we got taught in an outbuilding and I think we slept in single rooms. I have a vague memory of standing in the doorway to my room and looking down a long hall. I don't even remember if it was all girls or how many kids were there.
59. Bob Marley music got played all the time in the place and I recall one female member of staff, although I'm sure there would have been more. I recall her sitting in the classroom in the outbuilding and that she always had breath that smelt of coffee. I don't know her name or remember anything else about her or any other member of staff.
60. I don't remember anything more about Cardross other than running away from it with another girl. We ended up at a pub in Clydebank called 'The Boilermakers', although I don't know why and then we went to somebody's house. I don't know whose house it was, or how long we were there, but there was a party in the house and I ended up

losing my virginity to a man that was there, who was about twenty-eight at the time. He was a man called [REDACTED] and he was called [REDACTED].

61. Some time afterwards, I don't know how long, we were taken back to Cardross. I don't who took us back or what happened when we got back.
62. I have a memory of seeing [REDACTED] again, but whether it was in his house or not, I don't know. I remember there were love bites on his neck and his sister was there. I presume I must have run away again from Cardross, but I don't recall any specifics. I don't remember what happened on that occasion.
63. In all the time I was at Cardross I never saw my mother once. I never got home to see her and she never came to see me. Similarly I don't remember my social worker Ann Woods coming to see me either although I do remember my social worker was changed at some time, possibly while I was at Cardross. I don't know why, all I do know is that at some stage Ann Woods stopped being my social worker and a lady called Nan McCabe took over. I don't know where Nan McCabe was from, all I do recall is that I didn't like her for some reason.

Leaving Cardross Park Assessment Centre

64. I was taken straight from Cardross to Balnacraig around 1982 or 1983, when I would have been twelve or thirteen years old, but I don't remember leaving. I don't know why I was taken to Balnacraig, I don't remember ever being told, however I was at Balnacraig till I turned sixteen years old.

Balnacraig School, Perth

65. Balnacraig School was a big house situated out of the way on the outskirts of Perth. There were three levels and when you went in the front door a winding staircase led

- upstairs. There were dormitories on the middle and top floors and a kitchen and dining room on the ground floor.
66. The school was situated in its own grounds with a wall all around and a gate at the end of the driveway. At the side of the driveway was a big grass area.
67. We were never allowed outside without a member of staff and like Cardross the school was in an outhouse within the grounds. We never went to a normal comprehensive school.
68. Again I don't know who ran Balnacraig School, but SNR [REDACTED] was Mr SGQ [REDACTED]. SNR [REDACTED] was Mr GHG [REDACTED] and Mr SGQ [REDACTED] wife [REDACTED] was one of the teachers in the school there. I think SGQ-SPO [REDACTED] stayed on the premises somewhere in a bit that I think was [REDACTED]. Another lady stayed just outside the grounds, but I can't remember her name.
69. There were quite a lot of other staff, but the only one I remember is Miss GHF [REDACTED]. I don't know what they all did and I can't remember any of the others' names.
70. Balnacraig was all girls, I think there were twenty-four of us, aged between twelve and sixteen. Those girls I remember are [REDACTED] [REDACTED], a girl called [REDACTED] GCR [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], who was also from Cumbernauld.
71. We addressed the staff as 'Mister' or 'Miss' and I think we called Mr SGQ [REDACTED] 'Sir'. His nickname was SGQ [REDACTED], although we never called him that to his face and I don't remember any of the nicknames we had for the other staff. Sometimes Mr SGQ [REDACTED] would call us by our second names, but we were mainly called by our first names.
72. Most of the time I was at Balnacraig I just kept to myself. I don't have a recollection of being scared of any of the staff or teachers and I would say that I dealt with being at Balnacraig a lot better than I had with Nazareth House. Perhaps that's because I was older and I had been through the system a lot by then. Perhaps I was more resilient by then anyway.

Routine at Balnacraig School

First day

73. I remember walking into the place and sitting on a bed in the dormitory and trying to talk to one of the other girls who was putting 'Duran Duran' posters up. I'm not sure, but that may have been the day I arrived, however I have no other recollections of my first day at Balnacraig.

Mornings and bedtime

74. I think there was only one single bedroom and the rest of the rooms were all dormitories with between three and six beds in them.
75. I was in a couple of different dormitories on the top floor and I think the first one I was in had five or six beds in it. All we had in that room was a bed each and a wooden unit that had a mirror on it.
76. The staff had an office on the same floor as the dormitories and whichever member of staff was on duty overnight would wake us up in the morning. I always got up earlier than the rest of the girls because I wanted to get showered and do my hair before everybody else. There were no issues, I just wanted privacy.

Mealtimes/Food

77. I can't remember what the food was like, but I have no recollection of being force fed. We all ate together in the dining room at different tables and there were always a few members of staff eating with us, although I don't think there was a staff member at every table.

Washing/bathing

78. I think the shower was next door to the bedrooms and we all just washed ourselves. There was always enough shampoo and stuff to wash with and I don't have a recollection of there being a problem with washing when we wanted.

Clothing/uniform

79. We had to wear a uniform for school and otherwise we wore our own clothes. The uniform was a grey skirt and jumper, white shirt and tie and trainers. I had no personal possessions and, like at home with my mother, I used to get embarrassed because I didn't have a lot of clothes.
80. I remember one time being taken out by a member of staff to get a pair of shoes, but most of the time I was ashamed of what I had to wear. Often I was glad to be put in the tracksuit that we had to wear as punishment.

Leisure time

81. After school was finished for the day we would all go to a room that we called the recce, which was like a big hall. We could listen to music in there and I remember getting taught how to knit and playing bingo with an old woman who was also a member of staff, but there wasn't much else.
82. There were never any sports, even at school and we were never allowed outside without a member of staff. We couldn't even step on the grass without a staff member being present. The whole time I was there, we never went outside the grounds to do anything.
83. The only difference at the weekend was there was no school. We never got taken out to do anything.

Trips and holidays

84. The only trip I recall there being was when a few girls were picked to go to Haggerston Castle and I was one of them. We were taken by the minibus that Balnacraig had and stayed there with some of the staff for a couple of nights. I don't remember if we did anything, but the trip was fine.

School

85. There were a couple of different classes, which were both held in the outhouse that was separate from the main building. I remember there were maths and art classes, which I think were taught by Mr SGQ [REDACTED] wife [REDACTED]. There was also a man that came in to teach, but I can't remember his name. I think he taught English.
86. I don't remember any problems at school, although I was always really timid. I don't remember having any homework to do and I had no qualifications when I left.

Religious instruction

87. Unlike Nazareth House, I don't remember any prayers being said and I don't think we had to go to church either. Religion was not a big thing at Balnacraig.

Birthdays and Christmas

88. I don't recall birthdays being celebrated and I spent every Christmas at Balnacraig, but I don't remember much about it. I don't remember there being decorations, or a tree, or a special meal, or anything like that.
89. I do have a memory of people coming in and sitting down in the dining room for a meal. I don't know if this was Christmas or if it was just before I was due to leave. A man sat at my table and gave me a bottle of perfume. I was over-the-moon because I'd never been given a present for years.
90. Afterwards there was a dance and Mr GHG [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] asked me to dance and I remember it was a slow-dance. As we danced, he asked me to be his au

pair when I left. It never happened, but I was so pleased because I had a bit of a fancy for him.

Visits/Inspections

91. Visitors were allowed at the weekend, but I don't remember if that depended on whether or not you had behaved. I think my mum came twice in the whole time I was there. I don't remember much about her coming other than one time we just sat in a room.
92. I've no recollection of my social worker Nan McCabe coming to see me at all, although I suppose she might have and I just can't remember.

Family contact

93. Every Friday we all had to go down to the recce room and sit in a big circle around Mr SGQ. One-by-one we'd all have to stand up and ask "please sir, can I go home?" You would then only get to go home if he thought you had behaved.
94. Girls did go home, but I seldom did. I think part of the reason for that was that I wasn't happy at home and I didn't want to go anyway. One of the staff would take the girls that were getting home down to the train station in Perth in the minibus and pick them up again on the Sunday.

Running away

95. If you ran away or you did anything wrong you would be put in a tracksuit and slippers. I ran away a lot, so I was in that tracksuit a lot. I remember one time being in the tracksuit and slippers when I ran away, but I can't remember where I got to.

Discipline

96. If anyone did anything wrong they wouldn't be allowed to go home and they would have to wear the tracksuit and slippers as punishment. Sometimes you would also be fined and put down to the recce room. Although I remember being fined as a punishment, I don't remember ever having any money.
97. I remember swearing one time and one of the teachers, I'm not sure who, told me money would be taken off me. Perhaps it was money that we were getting from the home to buy clothes. I certainly have no idea whether my mother was sending me money and I never saw any if she was.
98. Sometimes you would be locked in a wee room on the ground floor by yourself if you'd done something really bad, if you'd been disruptive or whatever. That happened to me a couple of times. The room was maybe fifteen feet by eight feet and all there was inside was a light, a chair and a sink. There was a window, but it was small and had frosted glass so you couldn't see out. You wouldn't be locked in overnight, but you could be in there for a few hours.

Bed Wetting

99. I know that one girl wet her bed, but I don't know how it was dealt with. Mr SGQ mentioned in front of everybody about this girl having done so, humiliating her. This girl was in the single room and I'm not sure if she had been put in there because she had wet the bed.

Abuse at Balnacraig School

100. Often six or seven girls would be with Mr SGQ in his office and one of them would sit on his knee. Often when we were in there, SGQ would make rude, sexualised comments to make us laugh. It was as if we were all trying to get his attention, but at the time we didn't think there was anything wrong in what we were doing. He was encouraging us to sit on his knee and we wanted to. We wanted his attention.

101. Most of the time Mr SGQ was the only adult in his office with the girls, although sometimes Mr GHG would be there as well. I wasn't aware of anything indecent happening at the time, but more recently, after I joined a group, I saw that other girls made comments about Mr SGQ behaviour. One girl mentioned that another girl had been moved from Balnacraig while I was there because she had made allegations of sexual abuse against SGQ. I don't know if anything else happened, but this girl also commented that Mr GHG was sleazy too.
102. To me, when I was there, I wasn't aware of there being anything sexual, I wanted to be a teacher's pet. Looking back now, I craved an older man's attention. Some girls refused to go near his office, but I didn't click as to why at the time. Looking back now, I know SGQ behaviour wasn't right and nor was it right that Mr GHG asked me to be his au pair and had a slow dance with me.
103. Two girls that were at Balnacraig with me were constantly bickering with each other and one day they started fighting. One of the other girls made to try and break it up, but I told her just to let them fight because I thought if they fought it out they would sort out their problem.
104. As they fought, they made their way into a small room and one of the girls ended up putting the other girl's head through a window. As this girl brought her head back up again, she cut her face on a shard of glass. I don't remember what happened afterwards, although I think she must have been taken to the hospital because it was quite a bad cut.
105. A short time afterwards, I was sitting in the recce room when Mr GHG told me Mr SGQ wanted to see me in his office. I went up and all the staff were sitting in a semi-circle and as soon as I walked in, Mr SGQ punched me right in the face with his closed fist.
106. I went flying and SGQ started screaming at me about how I had scarred the girl for life because I had stopped the girl from breaking the fight up. He blamed me for it and didn't give me a chance to explain why I hadn't stopped them.

Reporting of abuse at Balnacraig School

107. When my mum came to visit I told her about getting punched by Mr SGQ and I think she told my social worker Nan McCabe, but nothing ever came of it. I certainly don't remember being told something was done about it.

Leaving Balnacraig School

108. As I remember, pretty much as soon as I turned sixteen, the front door was opened and I left Balnacraig. I was given the train fare and I went home to my mum.
109. I had no further contact with Nan McCabe, my social worker, after I left Balnacraig. There was no support at all, I was just left on my own to get on with it. I look at some of the kids that have been in care now and the support that they get, but I got nothing like that.
110. Mum had met my younger brother's dad, by that time and I didn't like staying there, I never felt comfortable. My sister had fallen pregnant when she was thirteen and she gave birth at fourteen. She went to stay with the father's family and so it was just my younger sister and brother and that were with mum. I don't think I even lasted a couple of months there.

Life after being in care

111. I went to share a house with a man called . It was a private let and I was going to take a job as an au pair in London, but I didn't have enough money for the bus fare. I don't think the guy meant any harm, but I used to sleep with a chair up against my bedroom door handle.

112. I stayed there for a few months before I went to another private let in Cumbernauld with two girls. I got a job through the Youth Training Scheme in a sheet metal works, but I only lasted there a few months.
113. I met a guy called [REDACTED] when I was seventeen and we started a relationship. His grandad was a councillor in Glasgow and he got us a house in Glasgow. [REDACTED] and I had two children together, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], but there was a lot of domestic violence.
114. One day, when I was twenty-two and [REDACTED] was at work, I ended up leaving with the kids and went to a women's refuge in Stirling. We stayed there for quite a while, but I ended up getting back with [REDACTED] again and the refuge found out so I got moved to a bed and breakfast in Cessnock Street in Glasgow.
115. I got offered a house back in Cumbernauld and stayed there for a few years. [REDACTED] and I carried on an off-and-on relationship, but there was still a lot of domestic violence. The police were involved on a number of occasions and I was often violently beaten by him. At one time I was working behind a bar and my employers thought I'd been in a car crash I was so badly bruised. I had to leave that job because of [REDACTED] jealousy and possessiveness.
116. Eventually we broke up again and I moved into another private let in Cumbernauld with the kids and stayed there for a few years. After a while I got back together with [REDACTED], but the abuse started again and I went into another women's refuge in Cumbernauld. [REDACTED] and I broke up for good when I was twenty-five.
117. I got a job in a tele-sales place and met another man when I was thirty-two. We had a child, [REDACTED], together before we separated after a year or two.
118. I did wee odd jobs for a while and then, when I was thirty-six, I went to Cumbernauld College to study health and social care. I wanted to work with children and families because of what had happened to me.

119. I did two years at college and took a year out to spend time with [REDACTED]. I felt guilty because I'd always been there for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I felt as if I hadn't for [REDACTED].
120. After that year out I decided I wanted to go into mental health nursing and went to the University of the West of Scotland in Hamilton to study. I should have qualified in 2013, but I was halfway through my third and final year when my wee sister [REDACTED] died. The university insisted I take a year out even though I didn't want to and after I'd done so, my heart wasn't really in nursing anymore. All I kept thinking about was that I wanted to do nursing to help other people, but I couldn't help my own sister.
121. I went back in 2014 in any case and qualified in mental health nursing the following year. After I did I started with an agency and I now work in different mental health hospitals.

Impact

122. I was quite institutionalised by the time I left Balnacraig and I went off the rails when I was in my early twenties. I was doing what a lot of kids probably do when they are sixteen or seventeen, because I'd never had that chance. All the time I was in care I was being told what to eat, when to sleep and what time to get up and even when I left I ended up with a man who controlled me.
123. I was in a very violent relationship with [REDACTED], he even hit me over the head with a hammer. I had been controlled all my life until I left him in my early twenties and as a result I went off the rails when I did.
124. I am so insecure that I can't hold a relationship. I have really bad abandonment issues, I think everybody I get involved with is going to leave me. I don't trust anybody. I know lots of people but I wouldn't say I have any close friends because I have been let down so many times.

125. I carry a lot of shame with me and I don't have any relationship with my mother whatsoever. I don't contact her or speak to her, even though she only stays a few minutes away from me. I get embarrassed with her.
126. I hate this constant feeling of shame that I have of people knowing that I grew up in care and that they might know who my mum is. I feel as if there's a stigma and it's horrible.
127. Throughout my childhood I was never shown any love by anyone, but I have broken that cycle with my own kids. My kids are my world and I can't even contemplate how my mother could have put [REDACTED] and I in care. I am very protective of my own children.
128. My education in care was an absolute shambles. I've managed to educate myself when I was older, but what I was taught at Balnacraig was very lacking.
129. Some of the mental health nursing study I did focussed on childhood experiences and I found that very upsetting. I had to walk out of the class a number of times. I don't know where the emotion comes from because I don't remember a lot, but the minute the lecturers started talking about childhood I found it hard.
130. I have been totally turned away from religion from being at Nazareth House and from the behaviour of priests like Father [REDACTED].
131. My sister [REDACTED] and I never really spoke about Nazareth House. [REDACTED] was never a happy person, she was always quite depressed and I used to tell her that we'd both had bad childhoods, but we just needed to get on with it.
132. The whole time [REDACTED] was here I never acknowledged how she must have felt. I always thought about myself and not how it must have been for her. She was so much younger when we were at Nazareth House and so much younger when we left and stayed with our mum. It must have been so much harder for her.

133. [REDACTED] tried to kill herself several times and I just thought it was her trying to get attention. I never thought for a minute that she would actually do it and it was only when I lost her that I realised how bad she must have been feeling. I never took her feelings on board and I feel a responsibility for that.
134. I am absolutely certain that [REDACTED] depression was linked to her time in care. I didn't find out until after she died that she had been abused quite a lot as a child. I think some of it was outside care, but I believe the whole of her childhood had a part to play. She remembered everything that had happened to her, all the bad things, while I blocked a lot out.
135. [REDACTED] wasn't in care after we had both been in Nazareth House and I possibly had a lucky escape because I was and therefore I wasn't in my mum's environment. My other sister [REDACTED] and my brother [REDACTED] are very damaged as well and I've no doubt that's down to our mother and the life she led.

Counselling

136. I have been for counselling a number of times, just to try and remember things from my childhood so that I can try and deal with them.
137. The first time was when my children [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were still young, because I wasn't coping at the time. I went to my G.P., Dr Twaddle from Avonhill practice, who referred me to a counsellor, however the counsellor started crying because she said she felt so sorry for me. I didn't think it was very professional and was put off a bit although I did go and see another couple of counsellors after that. I just got hold of their names from the phone book.
138. I didn't find the counselling any good. I was getting frustrated because I suppose I was wanting them to give me answers and I wasn't getting any. I felt as if all I was doing was constantly reliving everything and not getting anything back. A lot of the

time I would spend the whole session crying and I would come out feeling tired and drained.

139. I would like to pursue more counselling. I want to unblock the memories and deal with the issues I have.

Reporting of Abuse

140. I've never reported what happened to [REDACTED] or I when we were in care to anybody. I did get in touch with an organisation called Survivors of Care when [REDACTED] died and spoke to a lady there, who I think was called June. She came out and visited me over a few months and she managed to get my records from Nazareth House, but I've never officially reported what happened to the police or to anybody.

Records

141. June from Survivors of Care managed to get me some of my records from Nazareth House, but a lot of those records are nothing to do with me, they're more to do with my mum's history. Amongst those records is one photograph of me, which was taken when I was about seven. I don't remember it being taken or if there had been some special occasion. I am happy to provide a copy of those records and that photo, should the Inquiry wish them.
142. I'm trying to get as many of [REDACTED] and my records as I possibly can and I have contacted Thompsons Solicitors to try and help. I have spoken to a lady called Shona from there, however I received a letter from her recently saying that she had been told a lot of my social work records have been destroyed.
143. If there are more records of my childhood and my time in care, I am keen to get them.

Redress

144. I contacted Thompsons Solicitors because the more I was seeing in the media about Nazareth House made me think more about what had happened with me and with my sister [REDACTED]. I thought I too should apply and see if I can get compensation. [REDACTED] and I were put through some horrible times so I thought that if I was entitled to something, then I was going to try and get it and get something back.

Lessons to be Learned/Hopes for the Inquiry

145. The social work department need to listen to children. I was never given an opportunity to tell my social worker what was happening, but I'm positive that my mum told Nan McCabe how I was getting treated and yet nothing happened.
146. People in authority just seem to get away with things and nobody listens to the kids. Kids need to be able to feel that they can open up without being scared of the consequences.
147. Bad people who want to abuse children are always going to get through the cracks in the system and it's hard to think what can be done to stop them, however it must be made as difficult as possible.
148. It's up to the other adults involved in the care system, who would know if things were wrong, to speak up. If I had been an adult in the institutions I was in, I would have known when things were wrong and I would have been a 'Whistleblower'. I don't understand why people don't say anything.
149. I also believe that where children and vulnerable people are being looked after there should be cameras everywhere, even in the bedrooms. If staff are doing the right thing they shouldn't be worried about a camera being there.

150. I would like to see everybody that abused kids held accountable, although a lot of the people involved in my care will have passed away by now. I would also like the organisations involved to admit that they know stuff went on and to admit liability. They must admit that so many children were abused and failed by them.
151. I feel so let down by everybody though that I do wonder whether anything is going to change.

Other information

152. I went back to Nazareth House in Kilmarnock about five or six years ago to try and jog my memory. There was nothing though. It didn't help and I didn't remember any more.
153. Some girls that were at Balnacraig set up [REDACTED] a few years ago and I joined the group. I couldn't remember half the girls that joined, although a lot of them remembered me.
154. 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..... HCN [REDACTED]

Dated..... 25 February 2021