

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GHE

Support person present: Yes

1. My name at birth was GHE. I have always been known as GHE. GHE has been my surname since my second marriage. I was known by the surname GHE after my first marriage. My date of birth is 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. My dad's name was but we used to call him He was an engineer. My dad was a work hard, play hard drinker. My mum's name was She stayed at home to look after the family. She loved being a mum. I'm from a big family. I have four brothers and two sisters. I am the youngest in the family. The names of my siblings are and.
3. Life in the family home was difficult. It was alright when we were out, or when my dad was out at work, but not when he was in the house. I remember that any trouble was always blamed on "our fucking GHE." I always got the blame. He was a physical guy and I remember receiving a hiding from him regularly. My dad was violent to all of us children. I was the last one to get it because I was the youngest kid. He moved down the age order until we fought back. He was violent to each of us one at a time in age order. He would use his belt until we fought back. He'd then just move on to the next youngest child.

4. I didn't see my oldest two siblings being hit. I can't remember my oldest brother being at home. I only just about remember my oldest sister being at home. She got married then moved up to Stornoway. Then there was five of us at home and I saw it all. I copped it now and again if I was sat next to one of the others and the belt was brought out.
5. When I was at home I was a bag of nerves. I had to sneak about when my dad was at home. If he heard me I'd get a hiding. One day he was laid asleep on the settee. I was maybe five years old. I remember sitting on a chair and thinking that I daren't move even though I needed the toilet. I remember that I wet myself rather than let him near me. I then went to the bedroom to get changed. Later on my dad came in and gave me such a hiding because my brother grassed me up. Every school I was at I was a bag of nerves. I remember occasions when I would put my hand up to go to the toilet. If I was told to wait until the break I'd wet myself. I remember feeling the embarrassment that caused. It was all because of the way my dad treated me. Looking back, no-one looked out for me in my family.
6. My first school was in East Bierley. I followed my older siblings to the same primary school. That wasn't good because I was the last one going to that school. I think the teachers thought they could tame us. I didn't go onto the same secondary school as my siblings. I ended up somewhere else. By that time we had moved to a club in Cleckheaton. We then moved to the Windy Bank estate. Later on we moved from there to my uncle's house in Wakefield. Looking back at all the places we lived, they were forever decorating. I think they just got bored of covering up the cups of tea and the dinners that were running down the walls.
7. I experienced childhood sexual abuse when I lived in West Yorkshire. When I was aged five I saw sexual abuse. At that time we lived [REDACTED] in Cleckheaton. It may be Bradford but I am not sure. There was a cut through [REDACTED], through a snicket to the top of the park with goalposts down the far end. There was a big toilet block. I was five and my older sister [REDACTED] was aged ten. We went to the park and two guys were walking towards us. They knew [REDACTED] and called her over.

I went on to the swings. The men took my sister into the bushes. I saw it happening. It never got spoken about afterwards. I never went to that park again.

8. The next experience I want to talk about in my statement came a little later on. By that time my mum and dad were running a bar [REDACTED] in Cleckheaton. It was a [REDACTED] until they got the licence for [REDACTED]. My bedroom was on the top floor in the middle window. I have a photograph of the club. One night my mum and dad were busy in the pub. I was in bed asleep and it was dark. [REDACTED], who is my brother, came into my bedroom. He took my hand and did it. I remember that I woke up and screamed. When I screamed he jumped up to the window. I saw exactly who it was in silhouette. It never got spoken about after it happened. I didn't have anything to do with my brother for years after it happened. Then he got me and my son to run a pub for him. I had to tolerate him. We fell out years ago and he threatened me down the phone. I said to him "remember the [REDACTED]?" I then told him that I'd sink him.
9. We moved up to Stornoway when I was between ten and ten and a half. Me and my brother didn't have a choice in that. My dad had a choice of a pub in Liverpool or the [REDACTED] in Stornoway. He chose Stornoway. One day we just packed up and moved. At that time I was enjoying my school and enjoying having mates. We didn't take everything, just whatever fitted in the boot and four of us in the car. I'm not a good traveller and it was eleven and half hours in the car and four and half hours on the ferry. My dad started in the [REDACTED] after we arrived. Mum worked in other pubs. Dad then got fired from the [REDACTED]. Then mum worked in the prawn factory.
10. Initially we lived with my older sister for three months before moving to the other end of the island in Portnaguran. We then lived in a caravan in a back garden in Sandwick. Then the council got us a house [REDACTED] in Stornoway. Stornoway was like going back to the olden days. The swings were tied up on Sundays because it was such a religious place. We weren't even supposed to cook on a Sunday or hang the washing out. We had to go to church. We'd gone sometimes to Sunday school in West Yorkshire, but in Stornoway it was rammed down our throats. We were told to

conform and were seen as outsiders. It was alright if you were there as a tourist but if you live there you have to conform.

11. I lived there for seventeen years in total and was repeatedly told to “fuck off to where you come from, you English bastard.” It was a difficult life in that community. I didn’t know Gaelic and they spoke it on purpose in front of me. I did drop French in school to do Gaelic and was studying the books so I knew a few words but I couldn’t speak it fluently. I knew people were talking about me because I’d hear my name among the Gaelic words. I remember times when I would tell them what they were saying about me. That led to certain people never speaking in Gaelic in front of me again.
12. For between three to six months my brother and I didn’t go to school. It was great not going to school for so long. Whilst my mum and dad were working my brother and I did whatever we wanted. I eventually went to school. You had to be eleven to go to the Nicholson Institute. I remember that we had to get the bus all the way to school. I was ok for the first year. I was a goody-two-shoes and I did my homework. Then I started to get bullied. Money was taken off me and my bags were thrown about. The bullies kept telling me there was something wrong with my clothes or my hair. I was terrified, no friends, no nothing. I didn’t want to be there. I then started nicking clothes in an effort to try and fit in. Somebody then grassed me up and I admitted to it. I was up in court and there were four of us in the dock. They were getting me to nick stuff that they were selling for booze. The oldest was a boy aged fifteen, sixteen or maybe seventeen, my best mate, another lad and me. I was the second youngest and the judge, Sheriff Booker-Milburn, blamed me. He said that I was the instigator and I was in charge. The other children were all from Stornoway. I remember that I stuck two fingers up to the judge when the others bowed and my dad dragged me out of court by the back of my neck. I think I got two years’ probation.
13. My dad was worse when we were in Stornoway. He had a time limit for me being home. I didn’t get why because in Yorkshire we could be home at ten o’clock when I was younger. However, in Stornoway I had to be in by eight o’clock. I started staying out until nine or ten o’clock. I remember that I’d sometimes get word that my dad was out looking for me. I’d stay out and the police would have to come after me.

14. I got expelled from the Nicholson Institute on two occasions. That led to me getting into trouble and needing to go to Leurbost in Ranish. I got asked not to come back there. That led to me going to Lewes Castle School. I had a difficult time at Lewes Castle School. I wanted to be a singer when I was there but knew it wouldn't happen. Then I wanted to be a mechanic and was told I couldn't be. I was told girls can't be mechanics. The staff told me that I'd have to do catering or office work instead. I was treated the same as I was at The Nicholson Institute because I wasn't from Stornoway. I'd been in front of a judge and I was labelled a trouble maker. I think that I thought if I carried on behaving badly I'd get sent back to Yorkshire and be able to stay with my older brothers and sister who were still living there. I never thought about my behaviour potentially leading to children's panels and assessment centres.
15. My social worker was a woman called Miss D McAuley. She worked for the Western Isles Social Work department. I got her name from my records. She was no use to me. No one was trying to help me. I was labelled a "trouble maker" and "delinquent" and was always seen as the one to blame. I remember always focusing on the thought that they'd send me to Yorkshire and away from my dad. He was still being violent towards me but I didn't report him to anyone. Everything in my family was covered up. I was told I was liar all the time so I kept my mouth shut. I had no choice. Any reports I made would just come back saying I was a liar.
16. There were a couple of children's panels before I went into care. The panels were held in the council building. I didn't know the people who were on the panels. There were hearings before I moved school following school reports about how bad my behaviour was and that I wasn't turning up for class. That was a regular thing when I didn't like the subject. I remember that my dad came to all those hearings. Looking back, I was a rebel and I didn't give a shit. I was out of control and no one was trying to help me.
17. There was a final children's hearing before I was put into care. By that time I was out of control and I was staying away from the house. Sometimes I would go to the grounds where the school and college were and go into the forest. I remember my

dad and the police were always looking for me. I remember times when I would be on a bottom road that had a walkway bridge over it. I would see police cars coming for me and I'd go off over the walkway so that they couldn't get me in the car. I would only come home when I was hungry and tired. Sometimes that could be after four or five days on the run. I didn't focus on the trouble I was getting into when I was getting away from my dad. I had no help and that was my way of escaping him.

18. I don't remember any discussion about going off the island at my final children's hearing before going to Kinmylies. I wasn't involved in the discussions that were being had. Back then children were there to be seen and not heard. The hearings were for the adults to do the talking. All I remember is being told by the panel that I'd be going to an assessment centre in Inverness on a certain date. It wasn't long after the children's hearing before I was in Kinmylies Assessment Centre.
19. I think that at the time all it meant to me was that I was getting away from my dad. It didn't cross my mind about my mum being left behind. Looking back at that time in my life I never thought about my future. I was told I would end up in prison one day because I was such "a troublemaker" and "a nothing." My family, the school and the authorities had all put me down and told me I was no good.

Kinmylies Assessment Centre, Inverness

20. Kinmylies was an assessment centre located on the outskirts of Inverness. I think I was in Kinmylies in 1982 aged thirteen. I was there for three months. It might have been a bit more than that. I know that it was knocked down in 1985.

Secondary Institutions

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Kinmylies

51. I think I left Kinmylies in 1982. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later] Someone said in the final children's hearing I went to before I was moved that I'd be going away on a certain date. I knew then that I'd be going somewhere else. After that hearing I went across for a visit to Balnacraig School. I remember my dad being on that visit. Looking back, I think that visit was arranged for me after it was decided that I would definitely be going there. I think they'd already made their minds up before the hearing. There wasn't a conversation with me about what options there were.
52. I remember that during the visit I spoke to Mr SGQ [SNR] in his office. I then met [SNR] Mr GHG. I was given a tour of the place by him. He pointed out rooms like the dining room and other rooms. During the tour my dad stayed in a room talking with [SNR]. After the visit we flew back across to Stornoway until it was time to go again. I had some time at home for a week or two before I flew back to the mainland. I didn't end up going back to Kinmylies again and didn't have any chance to say goodbye. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]

Balnacraig Residential School, Fairmount Terrace, Perth

53. I knew Balnacraig was a residential school for girls before I went there. I didn't know whether it was a secure place because they didn't say whether they'd let you out alone before I went there. I soon found they wouldn't. I remember planning escape routes through different doors as soon as I got there. I decided I wouldn't be there long and then they'd put me back down to Yorkshire.

54. We were told what to do and when, and to respect the adults by the staff. No one was coming to support you or guide you. I just saw it as a place where I'd be told what to do and when to do it. I was the child and the adults were going to tell me what to do. Staff saw me as someone who would manipulate them. I was quiet and I stood back to observe things. I remember the words to a song that the girls at Balnacraig used to sing which quite neatly sums up how we all felt about Balnacraig when we were there:

"Come to Balanie Come to Balanie

It's a life of misery

There's a signpost in the garden

Saying welcome to all of thee

Don't believe it Don't believe it

It's a bunch of bloody lies

If it wasn't for the panels I would be in paradise

Build a bonfire, build a bonfire

Put ^{SGQ} on the top. Put ^{GHG} in the middle

And burn the bloody lot"

Layout

55. I have a photograph of Balnacraig from a website and I can identify the recreation room. My first bedroom was above the recreation room. There was a craft room on the right hand side of the back entrance. Mr ^{SGQ} office was in the centre of the ground floor. The bedrooms were upstairs in the building.
56. I have a second photograph of Balnacraig taken from above. There was a separate house for Mr and Mrs ^{SGQ-SPO} in the grounds. There was a wall ^{SGQ} from the house where Mr ^{SGQ} and his wife stayed. There were big grounds. Just inside the entrance gates was a big sloping grassed area where we played roly-poly and could do gymnastics. There were also bushes which we used to hide in to smoke.

57. The entrance to the main house had big double wooden doors. The entrance doors were on the far side of the building from the driveway. You walked into a porch then through another set of doors. Then there was a wide wooden staircase that swept up. On the left hand side there was a door to the staff room. The first door on the right was Mr ^{SGQ} office at the front of the building. There was another small room to the right where I remember a psychiatrist seeing me. Further along you walked down a short corridor and turned right to an office in the middle. That office was Mr ^{GHG} s.
58. Straight ahead from the entrance door was the dining room. From the staff room door there was a corridor and half way down was the nurse's room. If you carried on walking there was a couple of steps down through doors to the recreation room. We called the recreation room the "reccy room." There were chairs in there, a piano in the alcove and some gym equipment. That room was used each morning for a handover meeting between the night shift staff and the day staff. It was also used for a tea time meeting between all the staff and all the girls.
59. From the main entrance, along the staff room corridor and beyond on the left hand side was a kitchen. Just before the kitchen was an exit door. Further along the corridor was a little living room with a telly in it for us. Near the small living room was a toilet. This was near the back doors to the school. If you came in the back entrance and turned right there was the craft room which also doubled up as a "naughty room." There were portakabins in the grounds to the side of the building with two classrooms in them.
60. Up the main staircase stairs there was a square landing. To the right of that landing was a long corridor that snaked round with two bedrooms. There was a sliding door, which was shut at night time, and you walked up two steps. Down the corridor to the left was a bathroom. Further on down that corridor were two bedrooms. If you came back on yourself, and turned to the left, there were toilets, a shower room and two more bedrooms.

61. There were more stairs going up from the main staircase to the other block, then doors and windows for staff to see us. Through the doors was a staff room for night staff to stay in. They used that as a base to do their patrols from during the night. Next to the staff room was a door that led to a big empty bedroom. Back out in the corridor were three bedrooms and to the right was a bathroom.

The children in Balnacraig

- [illegible]

██████████, ██████████, ██████████, ██████████, ██████████ and ██████████ whose nickname was ██████████.

Staff

65. There was SNR ██████████ and SNR ██████████ who were ██████████. Staff members usually looked after the children or taught but there were one or two of the staff members who did both things. Over and above those staff members there were night staff wandering about at night to ensure we didn't escape.
66. SNR ██████████ was called SGQ ██████████. We all called him SGQ ██████████. He is now dead. He was from Yorkshire. He always had a fag and a whisky in his hand. He was married to ██████████. SGQ-SPO ██████████ lived in a separate house in the grounds with their ██████████ dog called ██████████. I remember Mr SGQ ██████████ being in his office in the main house standing in front of the fireplace in front of an open fire. There were two chairs and a settee opposite and no desk. He would be sitting in front of the fire speaking to me. I remember he used to call me "GHE ██████████" or "GHE ██████████." ██████████ and SGQ ██████████ went on to get another school with children after I left.
67. SNR ██████████ was called GHG ██████████. He was SNR ██████████. He was known as GHG ██████████. I know he is still alive. I heard he became a social worker later on but I don't know if that's true.
68. Amongst the other staff members who didn't hold a senior position there was a woman called Elspeth who didn't teach but looked after us and drove the minibus. ██████████ ██████████ taught pottery or photography. There was someone called GHF ██████████ who was the matron. There was someone called Mr Roy and a woman called Mrs Lindley. There was also an older woman we knew as "Ma" who was on night staff. There was a woman called Sarah Lawson and a woman called Joyce. There was another staff member called June. There was a German teacher who came in to teach. I remember that the German teacher didn't last long because they had to get rid of him.

Routine at Balnacraig

First day

69. I remember that after I flew to the mainland I was met at the airport by Mr GHG. He then drove me to the school. As we were going up the driveway I was thinking "here goes." I soon realised that I was going to be the outsider in this new place because I wasn't Scottish. After arriving I met the staff on day shift and they showed me my bedroom. I then spoke to Mr SGQ. He told me the rules to follow. I then met some of the lasses. I remember that I hated the school straight away.

Mornings and bedtime

70. At first I was put in a room with a girl called [REDACTED]. She threw a knife at me in the bedroom. She did it out of nowhere. It wasn't because we were in a fight or anything like that. I did a runner after that incident. I know that the staff knew about the incident because in my records it says I was moved to another bedroom after it happened. Although there was that incident near the beginning I do think that there was some thought behind who shared bedrooms with each other. The next room I was in I shared with a girl called [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. She was very quiet and was always reading. We ended up falling out. I was then moved into another room which had the bed facing the door.

Mealtimes / Food

71. We ate together in the dining room. They were round tables and the staff decided who sat at which tables. The only time when you didn't was when I was being punished. On those occasions I was made to eat my meals in the craft room. The food was alright but I was fussy and ate what I liked. I wasn't forced to eat anything at Balnacraig. At night time on weekends you could make your own toast.
72. At one point I went on a starvation protest for about five days. I'd had enough of the place. I remember that when I did that I still had to sit at the table in the dining room.

They still placed the food in front of me. I refused to eat any of the food that they tried to tempt me with. They kept an eye on me. After five days I was drained. I started eating again because I was starving. I wanted to get out of there and my protest didn't work.

Washing / bathing

73. There were occasions when staff sat while you bathed. That depended on how naughty you'd been. A staff member called GHF used to sometimes sit outside on a chair with the bathroom door open. She sat outside the bathroom to check I wasn't self-harming. I remember her doing that mostly during times when we were getting punished. I don't think she was the one in charge of doing those sort of things. I think with me it just happened to be her every time. I don't remember having anyone else doing that with me. You didn't get a shower or a bath when you were getting punished and made to wear a tracksuit. I remember going two weeks at a time without getting a shower because of that punishment.

Clothing / uniform

74. We had to wear a school uniform during the day. There were two uniforms, a blue set and a grey set. When school finished you'd change before going down for tea. If we needed new clothes we would be taken by a staff member to get them. I remember an occasion when GHF took three or four of us at one time to get clothes. During that trip she measured us for bras. I remember feeling embarrassed and going red.

School

75. We were taught lessons in the portakabins. I remember being taught English, Maths, German, Pottery, Photography, Science and Geography. History, French, Maths, Music and Art were my favourites. When I was aged fourteen my IQ was tested. I achieved a score of 112. I've seen that written in my records. Looking back, I didn't

get to use my intelligence at Balnacraig. I wanted to do GCSE subjects but never sat any of my exams.

76. The quality of the teaching was alright but there were always kids messing around in class. I remember that whatever you did in class Mr ^{SGQ} got you for it. That could be for anything. It was often because you talked back in class. He'd mainly get you when we had our teatime meeting with all the staff. He'd point at you and shout "you" or sometimes "you girl, stand up." He'd look at me and say things like "^{GHE}." I'd stand up with attitude. He'd tell me what I'd done wrong and then tell me "tracksuit." That was always the punishment he used, putting on the tracksuit.

Religion

77. One of the positive things about ^{GHF} was that when I was good she would take me to church with another girl. I liked that because I got to do singing.

Work / chores

78. We didn't have to do many chores. I don't know whether they were given as a punishment. I remember making our own beds and sometimes having to mop the bathroom floors.

Trips / holidays

79. We went on trips to St Andrews, Skye, Dundee, Aviemore and Pitlochry. Those trips were all organised. ^{GHF} and Elspeth came on those trips. I remember Elspeth drove the mini-bus. Not all the staff went because they had to stay behind for the girls that didn't go on the trips. About a year into my time at Balnacraig there was a trip to Spain. I didn't go on that trip. Mr ^{SGQ} and his wife took their favourites away. I don't know if any other staff members went too. I remember that Mr ^{GHG} stayed behind at Balnacraig. He was ^{SGQ} whilst Mr ^{SGQ} was away.

Leisure time

80. There was no organised after-school activities. You could play board games, depending on which staff was on. There was a reccy room in the school where we could play records. There was a pony that we got to look after. We only got to do that if we were trusted to. I remember myself and another girl getting to go and groom it. We didn't ride it though. Small groups of us got to occasionally go into town with staff members like GHF [REDACTED] and a couple of other staff members. I didn't get out often.

Pocket money / personal possessions

81. We did get pocket money. The pocket money was held by staff. I'd save up mine to buy records. I didn't have possessions of my own other than clothes. I had some singles in the reccy room.

Birthdays / Christmas

82. I don't remember any birthday celebration. I don't remember any cake or presents. I think when we were in the meeting with staff at teatime there was a round of applause if it was your birthday. Girls went home at Christmas but that wasn't something that happened with me. I remember that there was no party. I can't remember any presents on Christmas Day.

Leave / visits / Inspections

83. There was only one time I went to Stornoway for a visit rather than a hearing. I remember that I didn't want to go back to Stornoway but they made me. Some girls went home at the weekends. About three quarters went home at weekends. There were maybe ten or twelve of us left in Balnacraig at the weekend.
84. I didn't have any family visits and had no social work visits. There was one occasion when my mum and dad were due to come over to see a pantomime at Balnacraig.

Sadly, the pantomime didn't go ahead and my parents didn't come across. Instead we went singing in an old folk's home. I remember everyone watching me sing and being so shy.

85. There was no-one checking in with me and asking how I was getting on. There was no sign of social work. If there was social work involvement they might have been checking in with Mr **SGQ**. As far as I was aware my social worker continued to be someone based in Stornoway. There was a review hearing part way through my time in Balnacraig. I remember Mr **GHG** went over with me to Stornoway to give a report about my behaviour. As usual, the adults dealt with everything and I didn't have a voice. The outcome of the hearing was that they decided I needed more time at Balnacraig.
86. I wasn't aware of any inspections taking place. We could have been kept out of the way if any inspectors came.

Healthcare

87. I remember **GHF** taking me to see a dentist. I don't remember having any medicals and I don't remember seeing a doctor. **GHF** acted as if she was the matron but that wasn't her job title. If you were poorly you'd have to go and tell the staff and they'd decide if you could get help. You weren't allowed medicine in your room. The staff decided if you got any sanitary products. Sometimes they'd give them to you and sometimes they wouldn't. **GHF** was one of the staff members who didn't give you any sanitary products or clean knickers if you asked.
88. There was one occasion when I saw a psychiatrist at Balnacraig. Mr **SGQ** set it up. He must have thought that there was something wrong with me because I was quiet and isolated. It was a male psychiatrist who saw me. I can't remember his name but it's written in my records. I saw him in a room next to Mr **GHG** office. He asked me questions about my family and my childhood. I gave him one word answers. I gave nothing away. I wasn't ready to talk. I remember he kept telling me there was something going on to do with my family but I wouldn't answer.

89. I remember a girl called GCR somehow took an overdose and she wound up on the bathroom floor. I remember GHF dashing about when that happened before they finally called an ambulance. I don't know any more about that incident than that.

Life skills guidance

90. I was given no life education on money, how to run a house and no teaching on cooking. I knew nothing about paying bills as my mum and dad dealt with that. That all came as a shock to me at eighteen when I got my own place. There was no sex education but I did get lectured by Mr SGQ about boys and sex. Up until that point nobody had ever told me about any of that stuff. I knew nothing about boys, sex, children or periods. I'd always been a tomboy. I didn't have dolls as a child and had no time for things like make up and dresses. Everything I knew had been picked up from gossip between the lasses. I remember that I got called a prude by the other girls and they'd make me go red when they talked about those things.

Running away

91. I ran away after the incident when [REDACTED] came at me with a knife in the bedroom we shared. I went out of the main door, through the gates, turned right and went down the main road towards the town centre. The police found me and took me back. The police in Perth were fine to me when they caught me. When I got back all my clothes had gone from my room and I was put into a tracksuit.
92. The second time I tried to run away I wasn't successful. That time is detailed in my records. I was trying to get away through the front door and GHF was holding me from behind. I was kicking out with my feet whilst Elspeth was locking the door. I managed to get out of GHF grip and got to the reccy room. I jumped up onto the chair and put my foot to the window. Unfortunately the window closed in on me. Mr GHG then came up and started shouting at me. He pinned me up against the wall by my throat. I remember his face was close to my face and he

was spitting in my face. In my records it says I was upset because I didn't get to go to Spain but that wasn't why I was trying to run away. It was nothing to do with the trip to Spain. After that incident I was put into a tracksuit and every staff member was told to watch me.

93. The third time I ran away I was away for four days. I was aged thirteen or fourteen. A lad was hanging around near Balnacraig. For some reason he started picking on me. Somehow I ended up meeting him in town. He took me to his sister's home. His sister had kids and she wanted me to look after them for her. She told me that if I did that she wouldn't grass me up. In the end I didn't do that because the boy then wanted me to go to Glasgow with him to his father's. We got a bus up to Glasgow and went to a block of flats. I remember that after we arrived there was a lot of commotion in the flat and I had to hide in a room. The Glasgow police then came in. When they came into the flat they were brutal. I know they called me an animal in their report but they shouldn't have acted the way they did. They had my arms up behind my back and they marched me to their van. They then took me to a police station and put me in a cell. I remember that it was cold and I needed a pee. I asked for the toilet and they told me to calm down and that I'd have to wait. I was panicking. I kicked off again and they had me pinned to the mattress. I was hungry, cold and tired. I was later put into a children's home in Glasgow for the night. Two social workers picked me up the next morning and took me to Balnacraig. They didn't ask me why I'd run away. When I got back to Balnacraig ^{GHF} [REDACTED] made me strip off my clothes and searched my bag for fags.

94. I remember two of the other girls were used to chase girls when they ran away. Their names were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They were two of the favourites in the school. They were fast. I remember one time when me and another girl ran away and they chased after us. They caught the other girl before [REDACTED] came after me. I ended up running into the town before being caught by the police again. After that incident that was it for me for running away. I think by that time I realised my GCSE exams were coming up and there was going to be a children's hearing about me.

Bed-wetting

95. Bed-wetting wasn't an issue for me at Balnacraig. I did hear about the odd girl wetting their bed but it wasn't advertised if a bed needed changing.

Abuse at Balnacraig

Tracksuits, the craft room and the use of the empty bedroom

96. The main form of discipline I recall being used at Balnacraig was being told to put on a tracksuit, being put in the craft room and being made to sleep in the empty room upstairs. That whole punishment routine could be your routine for one day or up to two weeks. I remember it always being cold in the craft room. There was a sliding door and a glass panel for staff to see into the room. When you were in there you had just a tracksuit to wear. You had no jumper, no jacket or slippers. There could be anywhere between two and eight or nine girls isolated in the room at the same time. Inside the craft room was always a staff member who sat with us. Sometimes that was GHF [REDACTED]. The staff member told you when you could go to the toilet. You had breakfast, dinner and tea in that room.
97. Part of the punishment involved the books that were in the room. There was a trolley with books on it. You had to pick a book from the trolley which you had to read. After a while Mr SGQ [REDACTED] would come into the craft room. You could hear him coming down the corridor. When he arrived the staff member on duty would leave the room. Mr SGQ [REDACTED] would then decide who to pick on. He would tell them to shut their book and pass it to him. He would then look at the book and ask things like "what's the third word on the fourth paragraph on the second page." No matter what you said the word you picked was always the wrong answer. He'd then tell you to read the book properly before leaving the room. You weren't allowed to get another book for ages. Mr SGQ [REDACTED] picked on me a few times like that.

Once in a blue moon it would be Mr ^{GHG} who came into the craft room when we were being punished. When he came into the room he'd either sit in a chair or stand there twiddling his fingers and staring at us. Looking back, he was intimidating us. He was doing that to try and wind us up.

98. On A-side of the building there was an empty bedroom next to the staff room. They left the room empty so they could put girls in there for punishment in their tracksuits. If you were being punished you were placed in there to sleep instead of your own bedroom. All you had was a sleeping bag. There weren't pillows never mind mattresses in the room. I remember one point when there were twelve to fourteen girls in there all being punished at the same time. We were still cold from being in the craft room all day. We could only use the bathroom when staff said we could.
99. The tracksuits were dark blue or black with a yellow stripe down the side. They were always put onto you after you came back after running away. The staff would take away your clothes and make you wear this tracksuit, sometimes with no underwear, and no other clothes. Being in a tracksuit meant the other kids couldn't talk to you. If they did speak to you they would be told to get a tracksuit to put on and sit in the craft room alongside you.

^{SGQ} and ^{GHG}

100. Some of the activities that they made us do at Balnacraig were abusive. I remember we were made to play a game called murder ball. It was a physical game where anything went. I remember that Mr ^{SGQ} thrived on that game. He loved making us play that. Another activity that Mr ^{SGQ} made us do that was abusive was boxing. At one time I fell out with [REDACTED] for some reason. We didn't have a fight we just fell out. One day after that happening we were in a meeting in the reccy room with all the staff. During the meeting Mr ^{SGQ} told us that he knew what had happened and that [REDACTED] and me had fallen out. He then gave us big adult boxing gloves and said if I wanted to fight then I needed to put them on. I refused to do it.

101. Mr ^{SGQ} took us every week to a leisure centre called The Glebe. It was very rare that anyone took his place when we went to The Glebe. Looking back, I think that was because he was a pervert. I remember that when we went there we would all have to go in our tracksuits. Mr ^{SGQ} used to watch us and make inappropriate comments. There was a warm up routine that Mr ^{SGQ} would make us do. Whilst we did it Mr ^{SGQ} would make us say "I must, I must improve my bust. The bigger the better, the tighter the sweater." He loved the swimming sessions he took us to because we were all in swimming costumes. He'd look down the line and look us up and down. You could see his eyes lighting up when he did that.
102. It was well known that both Mr ^{SGQ} and Mr ^{GHG} had their favourites amongst the girls. Being a favourite meant the girl had to sit on the chair arm next to them in their offices and accepting them being touchy-feely. They didn't force the favourites to go into their offices. If Mr ^{SGQ} or Mr ^{GHG} were busy doing other things they just gave a gesture to the favourites to say to go into the room. It didn't happen all the time.
103. I remember the main favourites with Mr ^{GHG} were [redacted] and [redacted]. Mr ^{SGQ} favourites were [redacted] and [redacted]. Now and then other ones would go through to the offices. I remember that if either Mr ^{SGQ} or Mr ^{GHG} doors were shut you had to knock and wait for them to shout "come in" before you could go into their room. I remember times when I'd walk in and the favourites would be there sitting on the arm of the chair with Mr ^{SGQ} and Mr ^{GHG} arm around them. Their arms would be round the favourite under their bust and the favourite might have their hand round Mr ^{SGQ} or Mr ^{GHG} neck.
104. Sometimes you would discover that Mr ^{SGQ} or Mr ^{GHG} door was locked. You'd discover that you couldn't go in and it was quiet. I remember thinking to myself "where's so-and-so?" You'd look around the reccy room and discover they weren't there. You could tell from the smug looks on Mr ^{SGQ} and Mr ^{GHG} face later on that something had happened. There was one occasion when Mr ^{SGQ} came over to the school building in the middle of the night. Mr ^{SGQ} came over from his house to get a girl taken out of her bed and down to his room. That wouldn't ordinarily

happen unless someone had really kicked off. I remember a girl had to go down to his office. I can't remember her name but it was one of his favourites. She was from A Block, so not from the block I was in.

105. Both Mr ^{SGQ} and Mr ^{GHG} were very touchy feely. That happened with me. They always had their hand either on your thigh towards your rear or rubbing about under your bust. I remember times when they'd look you up and down and stare at your bust or your arse when you were walking. I remember times when I was in Mr ^{SGQ} office when I was stood by the fireplace in my school uniform and skirt. I'd be trying to pull my skirt down over my knees and he'd tell me to lift my skirt higher.
106. Mr ^{SGQ} wasn't ever physical with me but I think he was with some of the other girls. You could tell when he was in a foul mood from his face. One time walked into a room with him in the morning and we could see she had a black eye. We all knew that Mr ^{SGQ} was the one who had done it. That was the rumour that went around Balnacraig amongst the girls. I think the staff were aware of that incident but did nothing about it.

Bullying

107. There was no regular oversight of the girls by the staff. If girls wanted to bully someone they would just wait for an opportunity when staff weren't there. I think staff were aware that bullying was going on. I know of occasions where staff heard on the grapevine that two girls had an argument or that certain girls didn't get on.
108. Staff did try to police the bullying. If word got back to staff that there was bullying going on they'd come rushing over from the staff room. The girls would hear ^{GHF} coming down the corridor and they'd tell the others to stop whatever they were doing that they shouldn't be. If staff actually saw any bullying or violence it would be brought up in one of the daily meetings in the reccy room. If that was raised Mr ^{SGQ} would then just say "tracksuit." Depending on how bad the situation was there could be one or two girls wearing a tracksuit on those occasions.

Reporting of abuse at Balnacraig

109. Both Mr SGQ and Mr GHG would look at me funny because I was an observer who would stand there and listen. I think they knew they had to be careful what they said and did around me. I think, in particular, Mr SGQ knew I knew about him. They kept me out of the offices a lot. I didn't make any reports at the time. I was always told I was a liar and making things up when I was young. I kicked off sometimes because I wanted out of the place but I didn't talk. I was a shy quiet stand-offish type. I don't know if anyone else made any reports of abuse. Even if they did it would have probably been covered up.
110. Looking back, the staff just followed what Mr SGQ told them to do. They knew about the way Mr GHG and Mr SGQ behaved but chose to keep their mouths shut. It was all covered up. They saw things happening themselves and heard girls having conversations about what was happening. The staff were probably worried about their jobs so whatever Mr SGQ said went and that was the law. They were also probably concerned that they might get into trouble if they reported anything.

Leaving Balnacraig

111. I left Balnacraig in the lead up to sitting my GCSE exams. I remember that at that time I was concentrating on not getting into trouble so I didn't run away. I was also aware that there was a children's hearing coming up in Stornoway. I was told before I went to the hearing that I could stay at Balnacraig and do my GCSEs or return to Stornoway. I was told that Stornoway Castle School was willing to take me and put me through my GCSEs if I wanted that. I then flew over to Stornoway with Mr GHG.
112. The hearing was held in the same building in Stornoway that it always was. During the hearing Mr GHG said to the panel that I could have stayed with Balnacraig to complete my exams but Stornoway Castle School had agreed to take me on condition I did my GCSEs there. He explained how well behaved I'd been. I discovered then

that the decision had already been taken. I was being taken away from what I was doing in Perth and I didn't have a choice. My records say I chose to go back to Stornoway but that absolutely wasn't what happened in reality. Why would I have chosen to go back to my mum and dad and be taught something different from what I was getting taught in Balnacraig?

113. After the hearing I went back to Balnacraig to finish [REDACTED]. At the [REDACTED] Mr GHG [REDACTED] took me to the airport again for a flight back to Stornoway. I can't remember if he came on the plane this time. I flew back to Stornoway and my dad met me at the airport when I arrived. I was back in Stornoway in [REDACTED] 1984. By that time I was fifteen years old.

Life after being in care

114. By the time I returned back to Stornoway permanently my mum and dad were living in a council house on [REDACTED]. There was no support from the social workers and nothing from Balnacraig after I returned to Stornoway. Shortly after arriving back I had to go to Stornoway Castle School to meet the headmaster with my mum. As far as I was aware it had all been agreed that I was going there to do my GCSEs there. However the headmaster said that although I was going back to the same class with the same people I wasn't getting to do my GCSEs.
115. I remember that when I did start school I would go into the classrooms feeling angry. I just didn't understand why I couldn't have stayed to do my GCSEs in Perth. I now realised I would never get any qualifications. That resulted in me being at the back of the class with my feet on the table and smoking. I was marched up to see the headmaster on that occasion but I wasn't expelled. The next incident involved me throwing a pile of bibles at the RE teacher. I was again marched off to the headmaster. On that occasion I was expelled. I had lasted at the school only a few weeks. Looking back, I thought there was no point in being there because I wasn't doing any exams.

116. At fifteen and a half I got a job in a café. By that time I was staying out of the house and going wild again. My dad wasn't working and was out drinking all the time. I was in my bedroom a lot and music was my only good thing. Things continued like that for a while. I felt I wasn't going to be anything, I wouldn't get anywhere and that I wouldn't get a decent job off the island. There was no social work input. Everything had gone but I realised I was nearly sixteen and I could be sent to prison. It was around this time that I started drinking. My dad got me into going to the pub. My dad was a drinker and he was happy if you bought him pints.
117. After getting the job in the café dad wanted £30 out of the £55 I earned every week. My mum didn't know this. One time when I was seventeen I didn't meet him to give him his money. He was livid. I'd been out at the pub drinking and had walked home drunk. Mum, dad and my brother were all there when I got back. My dad was shouting at me for being out drinking and I was standing up to him. He punched me in my face. He punched me so hard that it resulted in all my top front teeth being pushed back. It was at least four teeth that were damaged. Blood poured out of my mouth. After he punched me I had to go out to a phone box to call for help because we didn't have a phone in our house. My brother was made to go with me. I had to go to a dentist the next day to try to get my teeth straightened. I then went over to stay at my sister's house which was about ten miles away. In the end it was all covered up. The story was that I'd come home drunk, tripped up outside and hit my face off the concrete steps outside.
118. When I was about seventeen and a half there was an occasion when I was back in Stornoway to do shopping. I decided to call in at my mum and dad's. Dad was angry with me and he hit me again. There followed a fight between mum, dad and me. I got on top of him and managed to punch him. After that fight he never touched me again. I think he decided to leave for Yorkshire because of me. He left my mum behind. She later decided to join him in Yorkshire leaving me on my own in the house at [REDACTED]. My dad later came back for his furniture but that was the only time he ever returned. At that time I knew nothing about bills or rent. I didn't even know how to cook. The council eventually came after me because the rent wasn't being paid. They then tried to evict me. At the age of eighteen I took an overdose and had my stomach

pumped at the hospital. That happened just before the council kicked me out the house. I called the newspaper and my photo was on the front page of the [REDACTED]. I was homeless with nowhere to live and furniture piled up outside.

119. I ended up at my sister's place for three months. At that time I was working in the cafe and being a roadie for my boyfriend. It was difficult living with my sister. She had her own family of four kids. We ended up in a fight. My sister took me to the council and told them that I needed a house in the next few weeks otherwise she would be kicking me out. Fortunately they found one for me. I was eighteen and I had my own house. Then the bills started coming in again. I just didn't understand I was responsible for them because my mum and dad had always been the ones to have paid them.
120. By the time I was twenty one I was pregnant. Six weeks in it was discovered that I had an enormous ovarian cyst. I had to have an operation to remove it. I was terrified of hospitals but the operation went smoothly. After my baby boy was born it took me a year to realise he was mine and I had to take care of him. I remember that he was allergic to baby milk. He was screaming and I decided I couldn't do it anymore. Fortunately my sister was giving me advice. Even with that it took a year for me to realise I couldn't hand him back like I did when I was babysitting my sister's children.
121. The father of the baby was staying with me. We weren't married at that time. His mother didn't like me. We ended up getting a bigger house together. We married when I was twenty five in 1993. That was a mistake. I thought he was the best I was going to get. On my wedding day I wanted to change my mind but all my family were there and I couldn't back out. After getting married we had a second son together. The relationship with my first husband could be volatile at times. There was an occasion when he held a knife to my throat after he'd been drinking whisky. I told him if he ever pulled a knife or hit me again I would be gone. I ultimately lived with him for nine years in total. Over this time my oldest son was a problem. He would hit me, draw on walls and generally kick out at me. His school was always calling me because of his behaviour. I would just tell them that they weren't doing their job properly. I think that I said that because of how I was treated in school. Because of my experiences I was always going to defend my kids.

122. I left my first husband in 1995. Things were going wrong and he was getting nasty over money. The final straw was an occasion when he had me by my throat in the kitchen. At that time I was only six and a half stone. I knew I couldn't stay with him any longer. I got my bags together, found out the cost of a ferry ticket and filled the kitchen cupboards and freezer with food. I knew I couldn't take my kids with me because I had nowhere to live. All I had was a suitcase and a bag. I ended up with my brother and his girlfriend in Yorkshire. I then tried to get a flat in West Yorkshire.
123. I would travel up and down the country to see my kids. The boys came to visit me. I would go up to Ullapool to get them and take them back later on. I remember that my solicitor in Yorkshire couldn't deal with Scottish law and that caused problems. Eventually the courts ordered custody to my ex-husband. My solicitor then advised me to keep the boys when they next visited and put them into a school in Yorkshire so I did. Unfortunately that backfired. A judge ordered me to return them. My ex-husband came down to West Yorkshire with the police, his dad and a social worker. The last time I saw my oldest son he was fourteen. My second son wanted to stay with me. I then got married again. The man I married then started messing me about. He left me with my third son, [REDACTED], who was three years old. I had no money, no car and my mum and dad had to help.
124. I have had various jobs since returning to Yorkshire. I started at Fox's Biscuits then worked for Toys r Us. Later on I was a trainee bus driver before being a postie for a while. I had to pass an exam to do that. My time as a postie came to an end because I was attacked by a dog. I was off work for a long time and they paid me off. Since then I have been a cleaner, a childminder and helped out in my sister's hotel. The finale was the pub near Hull that I was managing.
125. My living circumstances has changed over the years since moving down to Yorkshire. I initially spent two years living in a private house. Then I got a council house. I've been there for eighteen years now. The council house I got was in the same area that my mum and dad lived in. I remember that as soon as I moved into that house I was seen as "the bees knees" by my parents. I remember that at this time my dad would

treat my mum badly. I would try to get my mum out of the house to get away from him and so that she could have her own life and friends. I think by that time I had more power in the family and I was standing up to him. He passed away in 2009. After that I spent every weekend looking after my mum and I was working Monday to Friday. Sadly my mum passed away in [REDACTED] 2021.

Impact

126. Living in Stornoway was a problem. At first it was like a holiday for me and my brother. The problems started when I went to school there. I was getting bullied and that fed into my issues with trust. I now have issues with trusting people and dealing with authority. I just don't like people telling me what to do. That's from all the negative stuff said to me when I was in care. I don't trust people who think they're in authority. I was told to do as I'm told. I'm too old to be told what to do now. That goes for anybody kidding on that they're my friend. It just ends up with me thinking they are taking advantage of me.
127. Maintaining relationships just doesn't happen with me. I have been left with no friends. The same goes for my family. I've blocked most of my family out. I'm only in touch with two of them now. At times my relationship with my children has been hard. That is particularly the case with my first son. It took a year for me to realise he was mine and I couldn't hand him over to anyone else. For the first four years he didn't sleep. I had to push myself to parent him.
128. I've had to teach myself all the life skills that I have needed. I hadn't a clue about all of that after leaving care. My first husband didn't have any skills around the house. He didn't know how to cook or clean. He didn't even know how to change a light bulb. I had to teach myself to cook and manage a household. I taught myself all sorts of skills in Stornoway like peat cutting, creel fishing and doing the bobbins on the loom for tweed making.

129. My education wasn't encouraged during my time in care. That was despite being good at some school topics. I remember having a genuine interest in things like Music and History. My reports at times before my GCSEs gave me good grades so that makes me think I could have done well academically if I had been given the chance. The IQ test I took at Balnacraig also makes me think that I could have done better if I had been given the support I needed.
130. When it comes to parenting I decided I'd do the total opposite of what my dad did. If I promise something I will always follow through on it. I gave everything to my son. I went without food when I was struggling and bought him everything he wanted. There was no shouting and no smacking.
131. I'm on my guard with everything and everyone. I've been on guard since the age of four. I've had to watch my own back and my mum's back since I was a kid. I'm still on guard now with anything. I'm very vigilant about money and expect payments not to be made or mistakes to be made after I've spent it and then I'll have to pay it back. I make sure bills are paid so there's a roof over my head as I've been nearly homeless four times. At times I feel like I've recorded my life on a camcorder in my head. I can play back my memories from the age of four. I lock away details and information. I don't know why I do that. At times my memory can be a positive thing. I know I can learn song lyrics in less than a day.

Treatment and support

132. My mood is up and down now. It depends on what else is going on around me. I've had a lot of bad luck. Doctors have given me tablets over the years. I've stopped taking them because I decided I didn't want them. I've had help from Livewell in Wakefield. The support wasn't ideal for me in the way it was organised. They wanted me to go to groups for social interaction. That wouldn't work for me. It's not my thing. I don't do women's stuff like cooking and so on. I eventually got a worker I liked. After a while he was on leave for a long time. I didn't want to work with someone else so that was the end of that.

133. I heard about Future Pathways after speaking to the Inquiry. I think I started getting support from Future Pathways in March 2021. The co-ordinator allocated to me is called John. He started talking to me about my life and my needs now. I've had really good support from John. He is so friendly and makes me laugh. He doesn't put me down or dictate to me. I've learned to trust him. My health was getting worse and I wasn't going out but through Future Pathways help I have started doing new things. I had a bucket list and at the top of that was going to a recording studio to sing. I have always been terrified to do that but through Future Pathways I have managed to do record an album. I initially arranged a half day in a local studio and have been there regularly since. Future Pathways covered the cost of the first session but I have paid for all the rest.

Reporting of abuse in adult life

134. I've never made any formal report about what happened to me in care. The only people who know my story are Balnacraig staff and now the Inquiry. I heard about the Inquiry through a [REDACTED] group I was involved with. It is a group for people who were at Balnacraig for a certain time period.

Records

135. There was a reference to Birthlink and recovering records on the website for Future Pathways. I was interested in recovering my records because I wanted to see what had been written about me. The records I have are from Balnacraig. There are no records from Kinmylies. The report that the psychiatrist who saw me at Balnacraig drafted is there. When I got my records I discovered that they are not proper records. There is a lot of repetition of the same phrases. I can see that a lot of the records have been written by the same person.
136. I have tried to recover my social work records but the social work department in Stornoway. I want to see my records from the social work department in Stornoway and for the children's panels. Unfortunately the social work department says that there

is no trace of me in their records. There was one building for the council and I was there regularly so there should be something. I should be able to see everything that has been written about me. There should be photographs. As it stands all I have is two photographs of me with other girls at Balnacraig.

Lessons to be learned

137. No-one stepped in all the way through. The social worker I had was non-existent. The social work departments should have been thinking why I was carrying on the way that I was. They should have thought about me being bullied. If they had dealt with me in the right way I might have opened up about how my dad was. Looking back, aged eleven or twelve, the first year in the Nicholson Institute I was a good pupil and didn't cause problems. Then the bullying started. That was why I then started skipping school and carrying on at the teachers. That was why I was swearing and threatening teachers. Someone should have noticed that change in my behaviour and stepped in to help me.
138. Social workers, and anyone involved with kids or making records, should be monitored to make sure they're not false reporting. There was no follow up when I went back to Stornoway. I went back to Stornoway on condition I did my GCSEs but that didn't happen. Everybody disappeared and all my support was taken away after I returned from the mainland. By the age of fifteen I was off school with no qualifications and needing to get a job. I had no social skills or sex education knowledge. Looking back, children in homes like Balnacraig needed to learn how to do basic things like cooking, fending for themselves as adults and dealing with money. That didn't happen when I was in care. If that isn't something that happens now with children in care then it is something that needs to happen straight away.
139. Children in care need someone who has actually been in that position of being in care themselves. I think there should be mentors for children in care. The care home staff themselves can't do it as their attitude is wrong and the kids won't open up to them. Being a mentor is something I am interested in doing. I would help but I don't want to have to get qualifications to do it. If I was given the chance to be a mentor I could talk

to children in care as an outsider. I could talk to them about what happened to me and what could happen to them. That might help some children open up. I think that would particularly be the case with some of them who, like me, keep quiet during their time in care.

Hopes for the Inquiry

140. Children who are placed in care and can't go home to their families because they're a long way away should have a safe place to go to. I would hope that moving forward all staff are monitored. That goes for all reporting too. All children going into care, at any age should be the number one priority. It shouldn't be the rules or regulations, the paperwork or the staff. It should be the other way round.
141. Life experience is much more valuable than any qualification anybody can get. Qualifications, certificates and courses mean nothing to me. Just because staff are qualified doesn't mean they're not abusing kids in care. It doesn't mean they know how to look after children. Children in care need real people with real experiences to speak to. Someone like me, who can tell by people's faces what they're like and have a constant video in their head, should be allowed to talk to children in care. I think that would allow me to pass on my experiences and help children in care. I think that would lead to children reporting staff abuse once they trusted you. In turn that would allow the mentor to pass relevant information on straight away. Abuse just shouldn't be hidden away. It shouldn't be the case that it takes thirty eight years and a huge Inquiry before the staff who did these things are held accountable.
142. 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.....

Dated.....7/12/21.....