

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

GZC

Support person present: No

1. My name is GZC and I have always been known by that name. My date of birth is 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I was born in Blackhill, Glasgow but when I was eight years old my dad died and soon after that we moved to a housing scheme in Easterhouse, Glasgow. I lived there with my mum, , my brother, , and my sister, . was eighteen months older than me and was three years older than me. I had other older brothers and sisters, , and , but they didn't live with us. I was the youngest.
3. After my dad died my mum had to work all day so my siblings looked after me. However I did what I wanted really and when I was still at primary school, about ten years old, I started sniffing glue. I had seen older children sniffing glue but I didn't know anything about addiction because I was just a child.
4. When we moved to Easterhouse, I started going about with an older crowd that were already sniffing glue. I started at St Leonard's Secondary School but when I was in first year I started skipping school. I was shoplifting and sniffing glue and the police would catch me and take me back to school. I was lonely and sniffing glue became like a friend to me. I did it after school and at weekends

5. Social work became involved and I had to go to children's panels, at Albion Street, for skipping school and for shoplifting but they didn't know that I was sniffing glue. No one noticed that I was doing this until I was thirteen or fourteen. When I think back to it now I don't understand how the adults round about me didn't notice.
6. I used to go and meet my mum coming off the bus when she got home from work and one day I turned up after I had sniffed glue. At that point my mum tried to get me help and she phoned the social worker who then came and spoke to me. The social worker asked me why I was sniffing glue and what I was playing at but they didn't offer me any help. I didn't understand the ramifications of coming off glue and no one told me about that.
7. The panels were looking into why I was skipping school and eventually it came out that I was sniffing glue. I remember some of the panels but not all of them. I remember my mum came to one after just having her cataracts removed at the hospital so she was still a bit blind. I wanted to walk her to the bus stop and they wouldn't let me and I had to run so that I could walk my mum to the bus stop and make sure she got home.
8. They didn't believe anything that I said at the panels because I was classified as a trouble maker, an attention seeker and an unruly child. No one ever sat me down and talked to me. They gave me chance after chance to go back to school and then they sent me to an [REDACTED] for education but there was no education there. Monday was Art, Tuesday we went to the Magnum Leisure Centre all day, Wednesday was a half day and Thursday was cooking. I don't know what [REDACTED] stood for but the [REDACTED] was on [REDACTED]. I think there was a child psychologist involved with the centre but I don't remember speaking to them. There were other children there and I had a few run ins with the staff.
9. I was taken back to the panel and they decided that I was going to Balnacraig School. I had an allocated social worker but it was always changing, I remember Ann Johnstone and Jackie Kennedy being my allocated social workers at different times. The social work department never gave my mum any assistance.

**Balnacraig School, Perth**

10. I was twelve or thirteen when I went to Balnacraig and I was brought there by car. There was a big house that you lived in and, in the same grounds, there were outer buildings with classrooms that made up the school. Inside the front door of the main building was all wooden panels. There was a snooker room, the Head teacher's study and at the back there was a room for the admin woman who was called Jenny. Balnacraig is at the bottom of Kinnoull Hill, not far from Perth city centre and you could walk along a railway bridge and then into the town.
11. There were twenty four or twenty five girls there in total. I think I was the youngest and the ages went up to sixteen. I think the youngest ever in Balnacraig was a girl called [REDACTED] and she was only eleven.
12. There were teaching staff in the school and separate care staff in the house. I remember Mrs Liddle and Mrs McDonald were staff in the house. Mrs McDonald was an old granny who taught you how to cook and she was lovely. The teaching staff came into the house for a meal but otherwise they were separate. In the school you were only taught Maths, English, History, Art and P.E. Mr Roy taught history and he was good. I remember [REDACTED] SGQ [REDACTED]'s wife, taught art.
13. SGQ [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] and he taught P.E. He had a study in the main house that had a big fire in it. Mr GHG [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] and he was in charge of punishments if SGQ [REDACTED] wasn't there. He would shout in your face if you were in trouble.
14. The teaching staff came in from outside and none of the staff lived there but there were always two members of staff on duty at night. SGQ-SPO [REDACTED] ended up living in a house on the grounds [REDACTED] and then they stayed [REDACTED] at Balnacraig for a while.

## Routine at Balnacraig School, Perth

### *First day*

15. I was at home for a couple of weeks, after the decision was made to move me to Balnacraig, and no one was bothered whether I went to school during that time. I just did what I wanted and then, on the day that I was leaving for Balnacraig, they had to come and get me because I had run away to use glue. I think it was the social worker Ann Johnstone who brought me and they let my mum come with me.
16. I was told Balnacraig was a school in the country but when I walked in it was like something out of Downton Abbey to me. I remember driving up the lawn and I was scared. I didn't want to leave my mum. I don't think that I understood the consequences of my actions. The panel had said to me that they would end up sending me to a unit and they had spoken about sending me to Ladywell. My sister had been there for three months and it had been a sharp shock to her but I think my mother found it hard that I was going away as well. I didn't understand what I had done that was so wrong that I was being taken away from my mum.
17. When I arrived at Balnacraig I was introduced to my key worker, Miss GHF, SNR, SNR, SGQ, and SNR, Mr GHG. They went through where I would be staying and they asked me if I knew why I was there. They told me that if I was good then I could go home at the weekends. I was taken up stairs and given time to settle in. My mum and I went into the toilet and she let me have a fag for the first time. She told me that she loved me but that it was out of her hands and that she couldn't do anything. I think she felt powerless.
18. I thought I was 'Gallus Alice' before I went to Balnacraig but it was scary when I arrived there because I was going into a strange place with girls that I didn't know and some of them were big.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

19. The bedrooms were up two sets of stairs and then at the top of the stairs you could either go left or right depending on whether you were in group A or B. The groups weren't arranged by age or the area that you came from and I don't know how they decided which one you were in but I was in group A.
20. I was in a room for four girls when I arrived but the size of room that you were in depended on your behaviour so if you were good then you would be moved into a room with only three people and then only two. When I arrived I shared a room with three other girls, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I still talk to [REDACTED].
21. Someone came round to wake you up and then you would get washed and dressed. There was a gong that let you know when it was time for breakfast.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

22. There was a big dining room that everyone went to and you all sat in different groups. You sat at your key worker's table and she might be there if she was on shift. Breakfast was cereal and then you were given a biscuit on your morning break. You went back to the house for your lunch and then for an afternoon break. You were given dinner when you got home from school and supper was at 8:00 pm.
23. The food was ok and you got enough but you weren't given anything in between meals. Now and again you were taken out to the shop at weekends to get a sweet but your behaviour had to be perfect to be allowed that.

#### *Washing/bathing*

24. The bathroom was on the first floor, immediately to the left of my bedroom. I used that and so did the girl that I shared a room with and the girls in the room next to us.

#### *Clothing/uniform*

25. The school uniform was a skirt, jumper and a shirt. You wore one colour one week and a different colour the next week but I don't know why that was.
26. Outside of school hours you had your own clothes that you had brought from home. I had to put a yellow cross with my initials on my clothes to show that I was in Group A.

#### *Leisure time*

27. There was no supervision in the evenings. 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm was your own time and you could watch television if you wanted.

#### *Trips and holidays*

28. We were taken to a home for adults with disabilities and I used to volunteer there on a Thursday night which I enjoyed.
29. We used to go swimming or on the odd trip and at weekends you could go to the shop on your own if you had been well behaved but there were no holidays
30. Miss GHF, my key worker, used to take us to her house in Perth sometimes for a cup of tea which was nice because it felt normal but she only did that if you had been good.

#### *School*

31. We were in school at 9:00 am until about 2:50 pm and then you went home and changed your clothes. You had to hang your uniform up and then do your chores.
32. I remember doing social and vocational studies and modules in school. I did a photography project in art and that was the only qualification that I received but I wasn't given the certificate. We didn't get much curriculum but I know that I passed that.



33. I never learnt anything at school. Everything I have learnt is from, after school, when I went back to college in my thirties. The quality of education was poor and I think they put the lessons in just to cover themselves.

#### *Healthcare*

34. I was taken to the doctor's a lot because I was always sniffing. I was given cough medicine to take. I was snoring so one of the girls was shouting at me for that and I ended up having surgery to have my adenoids removed.
35. I went into the hospital for a perforated eardrum and I was admitted to Perth Royal Infirmary for a few days. Miss<sup>GHF</sup> came to the hospital with a change of Pyjamas but that was the only visitor that I had because my mum was too far away to visit. The staff at Balnacraig didn't take me to get treatment when I first started complaining about pain so by the time I went to hospital my ear was oozing and I was getting bullied for that.
36. I self-harmed whilst I was at Balnacraig and Miss<sup>GHF</sup> was aware of that but I wasn't given any treatment. I would be given a pep talk by my Miss<sup>GHF</sup> telling me to get a grip but I never saw a doctor or a psychologist about that.

#### *Work*

You had to set the dining table, clean the floor, Hoover, and clean the toilets. There was a rota and you had a chore to do every day. They had cleaners but we had to do our chores anyway.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

37. You were given a pound for your birthday and you had a birthday cake. I made sure that I was given my pound.

38. During the lead up to Christmas we put on a play at Balnacraig. I remember being Molly in Annie and I was "Bo the Drunk" in Calamity Jane. We performed for parents, family and friends who came up to Balnacraig. [REDACTED] organised the plays and I enjoyed them. I went home to my mum over Christmas.

*Visits/Inspections/Review of Detention*

39. Once I went into Balnacraig I hardly ever saw my social workers and I didn't have a phone number for them. I think one of them visited about every six months or if they had a meeting to go to. When the social worker came they told me that I needed to behave or I would be in Balnacraig for longer but I didn't have a chance to speak to them properly.
40. While I was at Balnacraig I remember attending a panel and there was a yearly review. A social worker, one of the teaching staff, one of the caring staff and [REDACTED] SGQ were at the review and my mum would go as well. My mum asked about me coming home to go to school but I would be called in after they had already discussed it and I would be told that I was staying for another year. I was never asked what I thought, I was told what was good for me. There was no plan to get me back into mainstream school but I know other girls did leave Balnacraig and go back to mainstream schools. I asked to go to St. Roch's School in Glasgow which was where my brother was. I said that I would be good but they said no.
41. I went home most weekends and if I didn't then my mum came to see me. It depended on what I had done but she could take me out for an hour or two if it wasn't too bad or sometimes we had to stay in the home.
42. Group A got home one week and Group B were allowed home the next week. I don't know why they did that because there were some girls that didn't have anyone so they never went home.

*Family contact*



43. There was a woman called Jenny who worked in the administration room and you needed to go to her to get your letters which would already have been opened. I used to go in and talk to her and she would cash the postal orders that my mum sent for me. She was nice to me. My mum sent me a letter and a postal order every week and if I didn't get home then she would come and see me. I used to phone my mum but there was always a member of staff in the room so I felt that I had to watch what I was saying.

#### *Running away*

44. I ran away a lot and they would send the police out to get me. Sometimes I would be kept in detention until the duty social worker would come to bring me back. The police were sometimes ok and sometimes they would shout at me and lecture me but they never asked me why I was running away. I used to shout that I was being hit at Balnacraig but no one asked me about that. One night I ran away with another girl and we were taken to another residential home in Port Glasgow. We had to stay overnight before the social worker would come and bring us back the next day.
45. When I got back I would be marched into SGQ study and he would tell me what my punishment would be. Sometimes it was two weeks in the craft room so I wouldn't get any education for two weeks.

#### *Drug Use*

46. While I was at Balnacraig I progressed from sniffing glue to smoking cannabis and then I began to take LSD and speed at the weekends. As soon as I got on the train to go home I had twenty fags and then when I arrived home I would get money from my mum and go out to see what drugs I could get.
47. I spent the Saturday in town with my mum and she would buy me things to compensate for what had happened because she wasn't from a generation that would sit down and speak to you.

48. I used glue until I was fourteen and the staff at Balnacraig were probably told that I did that but no one spoke to me about it. I didn't know what addiction was or what withdrawals were. I used to shake my head a lot and I had a few fights with other lassies because they called me "Noddy". I wasn't given any advice, there was no attempt to address my drug use and no one explained to me what addiction was. My mum was telling the social workers that they needed to help me because she didn't know how to help. She didn't come from an area where drugs were around so it was a big blow for my mum and she got no help with me.

### **Abuse at Balnacraig School**

#### *Physical Abuse*

49. I had only been at Balnacraig for a few weeks when SGQ [REDACTED] was physical with me for the first time. We were all standing in a line on the front lawn for P.E. and SGQ [REDACTED] SGQ [REDACTED] was making us say "I must, I must improve my bust" while we did an exercise but I was a wee tomboy so I said that I didn't want a bust. He hit me over the back of my head and dragged me up the front lawn and into his study. He had his hand over my face and he was screaming at me and telling me not to disobey him. He was overpowering me and saying that I had to do as he said if I wanted to see my mum at the weekend. He would ask me if I wanted to go home and then hang that over me. I didn't get to go home the weekend after that happened.
50. I can't remember what I did before this happened, but I was just outside the dining room and SGQ [REDACTED] grabbed me. He had big, shovel-like hands and he put one hand over my face so that I couldn't breathe. He was kicking my legs and I was shouting to Miss GHF [REDACTED] "he's fucking kicking me and you're just standing watching" He was trying to bring me to the ground and Miss GHF [REDACTED] was telling me to calm down. I was thirteen or fourteen at the time.
51. SGQ [REDACTED] was fifty years old or more and his wife, [REDACTED], was a lot younger than him. She used to take the art class and she was smelly. All of the girls

were in the class speaking about how smelly she was one day and she caught us and gave us in to trouble. I answered her back and told her that she needed to wash because she was stinking so she marched me straight in to SGQ study and he battered me. He put his hand over my face and I was being swung about by my hair and shouted at.

52. I had bruises after he kicked me which the other staff must have seen but no one ever asked me where they came from. They knew that he hit me.
53. My friend got a tattoo of her boyfriend's name on her breast and they scrubbed it with a wire brush until she was bleeding. SGQ was scrubbing it and trying to remove the tattoo. I saw that and her key worker Mrs Liddle was there telling to stay still and saying that she shouldn't have done that.
54. There was a girl called who SGQ used to grab by the hair and kick. He tried to belittle her because she stuck up for herself. He was violent to a few girls.
55. If you were in trouble for things like running away, swearing or fighting then SGQ decided what your punishment would be and one punishment was that you were sent to the craft room. The craft room was a room at the back of the house with a back door and a stone floor and it was always freezing in there. If SGQ decided that you were to be sent to the craft room then you would be taken there, made to strip down to your underwear and then given a 1970s tracksuits to wear. You would be in there all day and you were meant to do school work so they gave us exercise books but you missed out on actually going to school. We weren't allowed to talk and if we did then they would add another day onto our punishment. A teacher sat in the corner the whole time. You had your meals in there.
56. SGQ was sometimes standing in the door way when you were stripping down to your underwear and he sometimes came in to shout and ball. Sometimes he would come in and say you had been doing ok and you would get out of the craft room soon and other times he came in shouting at someone. He had a powerful voice.

57. One time he came in and he was shouting at a girl called [REDACTED] who had run away. [REDACTED] was young and she was from Dalry. He was screaming and balling at her. He screamed into her face and said "I'm not the one that fucked you". It sticks in my mind that he said to her "I'm not the man that stuck it up you and made you bleed".
58. I was in the craft room when that happened because my friend had decided to run away and I had gone with her. SGQ [REDACTED] shouted at me asking if I thought I was going to be allowed to go to Blackpool. He was shouting in my face and shaking me. I was meant to be leaving to go to Blackpool that weekend. My mum had told the school that we were going to Blackpool for two weeks when we were actually only going for one week but she said that so that I could have an extra week at home. I never got to go to Blackpool. That's how stupid I was really. I think Elspeth, who was one of the key workers in the house, was in the craft room. She was telling us to shut up or we would get another day in there.
59. If you back chatted SGQ [REDACTED] when you were in the craft room then he grabbed you into the toilet. The toilet faced the craft room and that's where he used to hit me. It was a stone toilet with cubicles and old white sinks. He would drag you in there and shout at you, telling you that you had to listen to him if you wanted to go home. I heard that happening to other people and it happened to me. One of the times that he dragged me in there he touched me on the side of my chest.
60. Some of the girls used to spend time in SGQ [REDACTED] study. When I first arrived at Balnacraig and I went into this study one of the girls was sitting on his knee. He used to have male friends sitting in his study. I remember "GZL [REDACTED]" but we used to call him "GZL [REDACTED]" because he smelled and the other one that used to be in there was GZK [REDACTED] "GZK [REDACTED]", he was a [REDACTED] from Dundee. They had nothing to do with the school and it was an all-girls school so they shouldn't have been there. The study was where a lot took place.



61. I was bullied for a while because I let myself be bullied. If girls had a problem then SGQ would wait until we were in the recreation room, where we had our morning meetings, and he would give you a set of boxing gloves. All the other girls would be sitting round the sides of the room watching and he would make the two girls fight. After a few punches he would ask who was quitting. The other staff weren't around to see that but they must have known what was going on. That happened to and
62. We used to call SGQ's pet but now I think she was being groomed. When I first went into the study she was the one sitting on SGQ's knee cuddling him. She was twelve or thirteen. We used to give her a hard time for it. A girl called came to Balnacraig and she used to sit on his knee as well. I would give her a hard time for that because she was from my scheme but I understood it as well.
63. I used to ask to go home at the weekends and SGQ would ask to feel my "wee Celtic legs" because I was into Celtic. I used to call him a pervert and tell him to fuck off when he asked to touch my "Celtic legs" but I did let him do it. I would sit on the arm of his chair. Then he would tell me to sit next to GZL and I would say no and tell him that GZL was stinking and a pervert. He would laugh at me when I said that.
64. These things happened during the day. We would come back from school at lunchtime and SGQ would ask us to come into the study and those other men would be there. He would say come and sit on my knee or go and sit next to GZL. That happened most days. There would be between two and six girls in there at a time. There were staff about but he would shut the door of the study.
65. SGQ made us play "murder ball" during P.E. He used to play it with us and I thought he was using it as an excuse to touch girls. All the girls had to run from one end of the room to the other and you could do anything and use any physical contact. If you had a disagreement with someone then you could try and resolve it during murder ball. When girls were being physical to each other he would either laugh it off or try and separate it. We wore vests and shorts when we played that game.



66. SGQ [REDACTED] let his son come into the home and he was a lot older than us, maybe nineteen years old. [REDACTED] had a relationship with him and SGQ [REDACTED] allowed that. I don't know if there was anything sexual between them. She used to go walking round the grounds with him and she said that he was her boyfriend in front of staff. The son was living with SGQ [REDACTED] and his wife.
67. SGQ [REDACTED] used to get drunk and we would go to the Isle of Skye Hotel in our house coats to get him and we thought that was fun. I moved into a two-person bedroom room with my friend [REDACTED]. He came home drunk one night and was sitting on the stairs outside the back door, which faced onto our bedroom window, stroking the cat saying to us that he was "clapping the pussy" he meant that as an innuendo. He would say inappropriate things and ask personal questions like asking whether I had a boyfriend yet.
68. Something happened to SGQ-SPO [REDACTED]'s house and they moved into the main building. There was a bedroom at the far end of the corridor that my room was on and they stayed in there for a few months. They didn't have their own bathroom and the bathroom that I used would have been the nearest one to them. At one point he walked in when I was in the shower. I don't know if that was an accident but he was a man in an all-girls school and he shouldn't have been in there. He said sorry but it made me feel a bit small and then afterwards he said he was going to "get me" and I didn't know what he meant by that.
69. I saw SGQ [REDACTED] treating other girls badly and I also saw him having his favourites. I was jealous of the favourites because I wanted to be allowed to go home. Whether there was sexual abuse going on or not I don't really know but they were definitely sitting on his knee, touching knees and cuddling.
70. I grew up on a housing scheme and I was older than my age so I knew that SGQ [REDACTED]'s behaviour was wrong. I was taught not to talk to strangers or let people touch you inappropriately. I knew that the things that were happening shouldn't have

been happening but no one was listening to me because I was just a trouble maker and I would be scared that if I said anything then I wouldn't get to go home.

71. SGQ [REDACTED] was very derogatory and definitely used his power of authority to belittle you. He would tell me that I was there because no one loved me. He made me feel so little.
72. There was a girl who was embarrassed that she had started her period and was hiding her pants. One of the teachers must have found out about it and told Mr SGQ [REDACTED]. He gathered all of the girls together and pulled out all of the pants to embarrass her and called her a clatty bastard.
73. I ran away and they didn't know that I had gone. I went into town and found the bus station. I was looking for a way to get back to Glasgow. I met a girl and started chatting to her and she said that she wanted a phone box so I said that I would show her one but I stole her handbag. There was nothing in the bag other than fags and shoes so I took the fags, threw the shoes away and went back to Balnacraig. I had given the girl my name and where I stayed so the police came to the door and asked for me but the staff said that I had been in the house. The police spoke to me and I wasn't allowed to go home for two weeks. SGQ [REDACTED] started calling me "muggins."
74. On a Friday there was a meeting to see how school was going and whether you had been behaving. You had to stand up in front of everyone and address SGQ [REDACTED] and ask to go home but if he didn't like your manner then he wouldn't let you go home. He started asking if "muggins deserved to go home" and I hated that so I would fight with him and call him a prick.
75. I thought Miss GHF [REDACTED] was meant to look after me which sometimes she did and sometimes she didn't. She never did anything to me but she witnessed SGQ [REDACTED] hitting me and she didn't stop him.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Balnacraig School**

76. I said to my key worker that SGQ [REDACTED] was hitting me and that I knew that she had seen that but she would reply that I should stop misbehaving. I think staff stayed out of the way when he was hitting us. What he said went with everyone.
77. I remember telling the children's panel that SGQ [REDACTED] was battering me but they didn't really respond because they thought I was just attention seeking.
78. At Christmas time the Board of Governors came and I was sitting at a table with a doctor who was saying what a lovely man SGQ [REDACTED] was so I said that he wasn't and that he hit us all but that was just ignored. I was told to be quiet and the doctor didn't say anything back to me.
79. Sometimes I would try and phone my mum after SGQ [REDACTED] had hit me but they wouldn't let me phone her. I tried to hide it from my mum though and I never told her what he was doing. I told my sister that SGQ [REDACTED] was hitting me but she didn't know what to do. She sat me down and asked me why I was doing drugs and I said that I didn't know. I didn't know what abuse was. I thought that I had done something wrong and that was the punishment.

### **Leaving Balnacraig School**

80. When I was fifteen Miss GHF [REDACTED] took me to the doctor. I didn't know why I was going to the doctor but Miss GHF [REDACTED] must have noticed that my period was late and the doctor told me that I was pregnant. I was so scared. The social worker came to Balnacraig and said that I needed to tell my mother so I asked to go home to tell her. I shouted it at my mum and ran away.
81. No one sat me down and spoke to me about being pregnant at fifteen years old, they only spoke about what I was going to do now. I was told that I was stupid and that I had ruined my life. My mum said that I wasn't to have the baby because I wasn't to waste my life. I ended up having an abortion. My brother stopped talking to me

because he wanted to be a priest, so to him it was the lowest thing I could do. I was too young to make a decision but I carried the guilt.

82. That was when they released me from Balnacraig. I was meant to stay until I was sixteen but I left two months early and went home to have the abortion. It was an easy decision for them to hand me back to my mum and not take responsibility.
83. There was no panel to decide that I was leaving and I don't think the social worker was even there. I kept asking what was happening and Miss <sup>GHF</sup> said I was going home for good and that was it. When I left Balnacraig I felt alone and I was scared. I felt they were just passing me onto my mum and I was scared that she might reject me and then where would I go.
84. The social worker, Anne Johnstone, was involved with me until I had the abortion and then, when I turned sixteen, she washed her hands of me.

#### **Life after being in care**

85. I had no support when I left Balnacraig and I went off the rails. After the abortion I self-harmed to the point that an ambulance was called. I took an overdose and I was taken to the hospital and referred to a psychiatrist but I never went to the appointment. I was scared that they would tell me that I was mad.
86. When I had just turned sixteen my mum broke down and asked me why I was using drugs. She asked me to let her help me but I didn't know why I was doing it. I was still smoking cannabis and I started taking other drugs and shoplifting to fund it. I was taking LSD, Speed and ecstasy and then when I was nineteen I started taking morphine. That was a habit for five years and during that time I started injecting. I moved onto methadone and then I was clean for a while and then, in my twenties, I started using heroin and my life spiralled.

87. I became pregnant when I was twenty and that was the first time that I was referred to addiction services. My first daughter was born when I was twenty one. I had a partner at the time but it was a co-dependant, violent relationship. When we were together I used to go out shoplifting every day and when I came back we would both sell the stuff, he would get the drugs and then give me mine. We had a child so we stayed together but when she was eighteen months I left him and she ended up staying with him. He fought me along with all of his family but I continued to try and have contact with her. I had access until she was eight years old and the court stepped in. He was a drug user but at that point he was calling me a junkie and all the names under the sun.
88. When I left him I moved to Fife and my drug use became worse. I had periods when I was clean and then I used again. I met my son's dad and I got clean but then my son's dad was murdered and I started using drugs again.
89. I am now clean and I've been clean for ten years. I have an eight year old daughter, [REDACTED], who lives with me. She is a handful and has complex global needs but I don't get any help with her. There was social work involvement because of her dad, not because of me. I told the social workers that they are a trigger for me. I hate them. I told them that I had been abused and that they hadn't listened to me. I have had a meeting in the school and they are shutting the case. I think that they were waiting around to see if I would fail and I didn't. We all wing it as parents but as long as I show my lassie that she's loved and cared for and my boy is happy then I'm happy.
90. Five of us went back to Balnacraig for a reunion about six or seven years ago. It was so strange and so different. We arranged to go ourselves and my friends asked me to go. We sat and spoke about our experiences with the staff that were there. They thought that what had happened to us was terrible and they said that it was changed days.

## Impact



91. I just wish there had been some adults that understood me and listened to me. The sexual innuendos got to me because I grew up in a scheme and I knew what a pervert was. I was taken away from my mum for things to then happen to me that wouldn't have happened in my own house. My mum gave me a clout sometimes but it was the eighties so that was normal. My mum used to blame herself and it wasn't her fault that I went it was my own actions. It took me a long time to understand why I went there. I get angry that I put myself there.
92. People always want to blame the parents but I made my own choices. I was the only one in my family that was in care and that was because of the choices that I made. The family broke down because my mum lost her husband and was working from six in the morning until six at night to try and provide for us. She thought the older ones were looking out for me but they were doing their own thing and I grew up in a different area from my brothers and sisters.
93. I just don't understand how they can treat children the way that they did in Balnacraig and that's why I hate the word "care". It shouldn't be called care because there was no care. We're not statistics we were children in care but we didn't really get a childhood and I think I missed out on a lot of mine. They took children away from their parents for the carers to abuse them. I think it made me different with my children.
94. I wasn't ready for my first daughter and she stayed with her dad. I never knew how to be a mum and I wasn't ready for it but that's eaten away at me as well. Instead of talking about what happened in Balnacraig, I lost myself to addiction and my eldest daughter was my biggest loss to addiction. I lost myself in addiction as well and it took me a long time to try and get out of it.
95. Looking back at my roots and why I started using drugs, I think I was lonely and grieving for my dad but nothing was ever explained. Being at Balnacraig was a battle of being abused and being angry. No one listened to me and that made me become an angry person for years. I used to get so angry that I blanked out and that was scary. Anger was the only emotion that I understood and it took me a long time to learn to

love. Now I understand love and even if my daughter or son just go away to the toilet then I say I love you.

96. Once I was clean I accessed help and treatment because I wasn't pushing everyone away anymore. I started seeing a psychiatrist and I was diagnosed with PTSD. I then saw a second psychiatrist in relation to a benefits claim who said that he thought that I had PTSD from childhood. My own psychiatrist then said that he was diagnosing me with complex PTSD.
97. Other people see me as a strong person and I am for them but for myself I'm not. I self-sabotage a lot and I hibernate and have days when I'm no use to anyone because I'm in my own head.
98. I still think back to Balnacraig and I have flashbacks. It could be a smell, a touch or someone's voice and I just go into my own head and I have to remove myself. I can't say that it doesn't affect me. SGQ often put his hand over my face so now I struggle going to the dentist. I can't have people too close to me and I don't like people near my face.
99. I saw a psychologist and then did the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, CBT, course. I stopped seeing the psychologist and was seeing a psychiatrist who put me on anti-psychotic medication. I can't take it through the week because I need to be alert for my wee lassie during the week and they make me feel like a zombie. She's been through a lot with her dad and its only me and her but I've done well.
100. When I was working with the National Confidential Forum they mentioned the Anchor program which does trauma counselling and I decided that I would do that but they said no to me. They said I could do the CBT course and then if I wanted to do the anchor course after that then that would be an option. I wanted to know why it wasn't an option to me but it's the usual, people in authority. I completed the CBT and I did learn a lot about myself, my mental health and my behaviours so I found it helpful but I felt as if I could still have done with the trauma counselling.

101. My own psychiatrist just asks me how I am every few months and alters my medication. I don't think that they have any time for you. They know you're coming in to talk about the same thing so they just want to put your medication up or down but not get to the core about it. He doesn't go into it with him and I want to tell him how I really feel. They did mention once about hypnotherapy at the hospital where the doctor is based.
102. Sometimes I still want to self-harm and sometimes I do wee scratches but I have to think about the ramification for my daughter and I would never want her in the system so that's what stops me.
103. I can't take compliments and if someone wants to do something for me then I become suspicious that they must want something. I don't trust people and I think that's why I've had relationships breakdown. I push people away and I don't want to get too close to them. I link that back to Balnacraig.
104. For years I didn't think I was worth anything and I was like that right up until I became clean ten years ago. I felt like nothing because <sup>SGQ</sup> [REDACTED] told me that I would amount to nothing. I have had to work really hard on myself just to even like myself. It took me a few relapses to learn about addiction and grasp recovery. I've worked on myself the last ten years and I'm proud of myself. I've had to do classes to learn about myself.
105. I used to think I was stupid until my thirties when I did courses, challenged myself and realised that I wasn't stupid. I haven't been able to work. One day I'm ok and the next I can hardly get out of bed. I take my daughter to school and then come home and shut the curtains, shut the world out. I go from one extreme to another.
106. For years I hated men and if a man shouted then I used to panic. I was scared of men and if they got too close then I thought that they wanted something sexually. There was no sex education at Balnacraig and the girls used to talk about sleeping with people so I grew up fast but I was learning the wrong things.

107. I don't want to shut up about what's happened anymore. I've done a few survivor campaigns up and down the country and that's helped me. I'm a member of Empower the Empowerment. It was an online thing that I started and I met other people and then I did a thing in Hyde Park at speaker's corner. I went to a march at Rochdale and another one at Nottingham and I stood outside the archdiocese. It made me feel stronger to be speaking up for survivor's and I did a [REDACTED] in Manchester for professionals to understand what goes on in a survivor's mind.
108. I'm not a victim anymore I'm a survivor and I should never have let myself be a victim but I was a child and adults were using their power and authority over me. I'm just sorry for people that I have hurt along the way with my anger but I didn't mean half of it. I don't have my anger under control yet and I have days of it but I've calmed down a lot since I started learning about myself. Now I try and occupy my mind when I am becoming angry. I'm trying mindfulness and I go to a class every Tuesday. I try and keep myself busy so I'm not in my head. At night time if I'm not busy when my daughter goes to her bed then that's when I think. I'm lucky if I sleep two hours a night but I don't take sleeping tablets. I've been like that a while now.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

109. In my thirties I spoke to a drug worker about Balnacraig and she told me that what I had experienced was abuse. Newlands Addiction Service flagged it up to the police so two Perth police came to my house and I gave them a statement but then I was told there would be no further action. I was told that <sup>SGQ</sup> [REDACTED] had been lifted, questioned and then let go. I can't remember how long it was from the report to finding out that there would be no case to answer. I think that the police said that he had been involved in something else with someone else. When I heard it was no case to answer I took lots of drugs so that I wouldn't feel anything. I was hurt but I buried it until it was time for me to deal with it.

110. I re-reported it a few years later because a lawyer told me to. I went to Stewart Street Police station in Glasgow and I walked up to the desk and said that I wanted to report a crime in the care system. They asked me when it had happened and I said it was in the eighties. The person behind the desk replied that that was a long time ago at which point I put a wall up and walked back out and was sick.
111. When I spoke to the National Confidential Forum in 2019 they said that they needed to report stuff to a specialist unit in the police. They investigated what I had reported and then phoned me and said that there would be no further action because SGQ SGQ died two years ago. I'm angry because I know that he won't face justice
112. Another lawyer from Thompsons, that deals with historical abuse cases, reached out to me and I didn't want to go ahead with it because I had the news that SGQ was dead but they said that didn't matter. They want to go after the school. The lawyer told me that the school was private run rather than the council. They have been trying to get me to go with them for a year and I have been putting them off but the lawyer thinks that I have a good case.

### **Records**

113. The lawyer at Thompsons has my social work files but I don't want to see them.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

114. I hope that people realise the extent of what happened and that other people feel empowered to come forward. I hope they find some peace.
115. Listen to children and believe what they say. If they have pain then it might have taken them time to come and tell you what has happened to them and you need to believe them because they might have been through years of people not believing them.



**Other information**

116. I think some of the other girls from Balnacraig have reported what happened. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are doing this. [REDACTED] was going to do it but her  
granddaughter has just died so I think she will do it after a while.
117. 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.

GZC

Signed.....

Dated..... 28/11/19 .....