

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ERL [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is ERL [REDACTED]. My maiden name was ERL [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1932. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background / Qualifications

2. I married my husband ERM [REDACTED] in 1958. My husband was English and studied teaching at Goldsmiths University in London. He worked as a teacher in a state secondary school for a period. When asked what he taught, I always remember him saying he taught children. His subjects were English, Speech and Drama and Geography, but he very much believed that if children were showing an interest in something, then you grabbed the opportunity to teach them whatever they were interested in.
3. ERM [REDACTED] decided that he would like to go into approved school teaching. He was always interested in kids who were having difficulties. He took up a post at Tennal Approved School in Birmingham around 1961. Tennal was a boys' residential school and it was the largest approved school in England, at the time.
4. We had our own home in Norwich which we sold to move to Birmingham. The intention was that we would get a house at the school, but the new houses were not built on our arrival. On a temporary basis, we had to live in the school building. All we had there

was a bedroom, a sitting room and a bathroom. We didn't have a kitchen or cooking facilities.

5. I had one little girl by then, [REDACTED] who was born in 1959. She was only about a year and a half when we went to Tennal. She was a very good baby and because I didn't have to cook or shop, I found myself with time on my hands. I began drifting into the school sewing room to help out. I was just putting clean clothes in lockers and things like that. However, the matron, as she got to know me, said she was looking for an assistant matron and asked if I would be interested in doing it. I thought that would be fine and would give me something to do. So, I worked at Tennal as assistant matron the rest of the time we were there.
6. I have no formal qualifications and I didn't receive any formal training as assistant matron at Tennal. I worked alongside the matron who was an older, very experienced, woman. I just learned on the job. I didn't have a lot of work directly with the children. To a great extent, my main duties were domestic ones including laundry. I was really just doing what a mum would do in a house, just generally being around. There was always a time first thing in the morning where the matron saw any children who were unwell or any children who were on medication. I was always involved with that, under the direction of the matron.
7. I was actually pregnant with my second child while I was at Tennal. The baby was born in the matron's house at the school. Sadly, she only lived for a few days. I fell pregnant again within three months and had my son, [REDACTED] in 1962. At that time, [REDACTED] ERM applied for a job at Balgowan Approved School in Dundee. He applied to be a teacher which also included residential responsibilities. We moved from Birmingham to Dundee in 1963.

Experiences at Balgowan Approved School, Dundee 1962 - 1971

8. Balgowan was a junior approved school for kids aged around ten years old. The purpose of the school was to make sure that the kids who went there were getting an education. All the children at Balgowan, were either causing problems or experiencing problems at home. They would have been referred to as delinquent children in those days. I would guess there were around one hundred children in total, but I can't be certain as I was not actively involved with the school. SNR [REDACTED] was LIF [REDACTED] when my husband worked there.
9. When my husband and I went to Balgowan, I had a toddler, a child under one and I was pregnant with my son, [REDACTED], who was born in 1963. I was really very busy being a wife and a mother so I didn't work at Balgowan at all and certainly didn't have anything to do with the day to day running of the school. I did meet some of the boys occasionally, but only if one of them came over to play with one of my children in the garden.
10. My husband taught Monday to Friday in the school. In addition to teaching, one day per week he would stay on until around 9:00 pm and once a week he would come home for tea, then go back on duty and work right through to about 10:30 pm. He never worked through the night as I think they had night staff. There were also occasions when he was involved in going on trips with the boys. They had a shooting lodge up in the Angus Glens. They went there for perhaps a week at a time with a group of boys. He spent quite a lot of extra time at the school.
11. I think it's important to say that, during our time at Balgowan, my husband spent a year at Newcastle University doing a postgraduate course designed for people who were going to be involved in teaching children with special needs. He did have quite a lot of experience and he was the one who was the qualified professional person.

Leaving Balgowan Approved School

12. During ERM's postgraduate studies at university, he did various placements which included assessment centres. He felt that this was a vital part of the work that went on in childcare. He saw trying to understand why the children were the way they were, what was going to be the best way of helping them and where that could be done, as very important. He felt that was the way he wanted to go with his career. We were at Balgowan from 1963 to around 1972. Then, we went to Calder House Assessment Centre in Blantyre.

Experiences at Calder House Assessment Centre, Blantyre 1971-1973

The Institution / Culture

13. The year we spent at Calder House was an unhappy year for all of us. There's a big difference between Blantyre and the East Coast. It was a very different atmosphere and a bit of a culture shock. My daughter was just beginning secondary school and that wasn't a particularly enjoyable experience for her. My two boys were at primary school and my daughter was in her first year of primary school. The first thing the boys were asked at school was 'are you a cathy or a prody'. They had to come home and ask because they didn't know what that meant. Although not particularly enjoyable, I think it was a valuable experience for all of us and that was the first place I actually went to work.
14. Calder House was an assessment centre. The children came in, hopefully, on a short-term basis and there was an assessment carried out. That involved trying to ascertain what the problem was, why the problem was and what might be the best way of dealing with it. Whether you were working in an approved school, children's home or remand home, the aim, wherever possible, was to reunite the child with his or her parents or family. That was the long-term aim but was of course sometimes unobtainable.
15. I couldn't say how many children were at Calder house as it was constantly changing, but it wasn't anywhere near as large a number as Balgowan. What I can say is, there

were always about four times as many boys as there were girls. The age of the children varied from anything from ten to sixteen, but the majority were probably thirteen to fifteen. The duration of stay could also vary considerably. There was a fairly quick turnover, but sometimes you would have to wait for a particular vacancy that was felt to be right for a particular child.

Staff structure

16. Mr BHN was SNR of Calder House and his wife was the matron. It was very normal in those days for husband and wife to have joint appointments. My husband was SNR, I think his formal title was SNR, and I was the Deputy Matron. There were also house parents and although I can remember some of the house parents as individuals, I wouldn't be able to tell you their names. HOS was certainly one of them. To be honest, I haven't got a particularly clear image of how the boys' section was run and who was involved as I mostly worked with the girls.

My role and recruitment at Calder House

17. Prior to my appointment as deputy matron, I'm sure I filled in an application form and then there was an interview and reinterview. As it was over fifty years ago, I have no further recollection of the recruitment process.
18. When I started my employment, there was no formal training. BHN-HLP would have spoken to us about how they liked things done and how they liked the place. I think BHN-HLP had actually enjoyed the centre without SNR and perhaps preferred it that way.
19. Again, a lot of my responsibility was on the domestic side, but I did have a lot more contact with the children there, particularly the girls. I only ever worked during the day as there was someone employed full-time on night duty.

Layout and Structure

20. Calder House itself was a modern building. We had a house on [REDACTED] which should have been SNR [REDACTED], but he, his wife and his children preferred to live in [REDACTED].
21. Within the main building, the boys and girls were very separate. There was rarely any contact between them.

Recruitment of staff

22. I was not involved in the recruitment of staff.

Supervision / appraisal / evaluation

23. I was not involved in the supervision, appraisal or evaluation of staff at Calder House

Policy

24. I was not involved in the making or implementation of policy at Calder House.

Strategic Planning

25. I was not involved in strategic planning at Calder House.

Children / Routine at Calder House

26. On a typical day the children would get up, dressed, tidy up, make their beds and have breakfast. The house parents were the ones who were really with the children during the day. In approved schools, the day was very much taken care of by the teachers, but in the assessment centres, the house parents were responsible for supervising what the children were doing and for getting them out for fresh air.

27. The children would have attended regular Children's Panel Hearings, but I wasn't really involved in the panel side of things. BHN-HLP would have gone to Children's Panel hearings.

Mealtimes / Food

28. Calder House have lovely kitchen facilities and good cooks. I remember the food was nice. All the children and staff ate the same food.

Sleeping Arrangements

29. The boys and girls resided in separate units within Calder House.
30. Bed wetting was just a fact of life in the assessment centre. There was a large laundry basket at the bottom of each flight of stairs. When the kids came down in the morning, if they had wet the bed, they just dumped their sheets in there. There was never any question of criticism. What the other kids might have said, I can't say, but as far as the staff were concerned, you just accepted it as these were kids in a traumatic situation. We had a laundry woman who spent all day washing sheets and we had huge dryers. It was just one of these things.

Washing and Bathing

31. I only have vague memories of the washing and bathing facilities at Calder House. From what I do remember the facilities were good. It was a modern building so the children had access to showers and baths. I couldn't say how often the children washed or bathed. I wasn't involved in supervising the girls while they were washing. That was more the responsibility of the house parents.

Trips / Holidays

32. Calder House had quite extensive grounds and the children were taken outside a lot. They were always under supervision outside the building. I wouldn't like to say whether they were taken on any outings beyond the grounds. I was there for such a short time and it was such a long time ago that I can't be certain.

Healthcare

33. I assisted the matron in carrying out medical checks of the children in the morning. That was any child who was unwell or taking medication. There was a sick room which was used if any of the kids had anything infectious. One of the major problems at Calder House was that when kids arrived, they had a lot of head lice. It was a major problem there, as it had been at Tennal. Other than that, I don't remember there being anything more than the usual coughs and colds.
34. There was no nurse on site at Calder House. Matron and I saw to most things. I didn't have any medical training, but you would be very quick to take children to accident and emergency if they needed medical attention. The children were all given a medical examination when they arrived. There were a group of doctors employed to come to Calder House to carry out medical checks.

Schooling

35. There was schooling available at Calder House, but it was limited educationally. There would probably have been a couple of teachers there, but the turnover of children was quite quick so you couldn't do a lot of serious education. It was more woodwork and that sort of thing. I was not aware of any of the children going out to school, outside of Calder House.

Chores

36. The children at Calder House helped out with the domestic duties. It was always felt to be a good thing that they learnt to make their beds, keep their rooms tidy and do a bit of cleaning. There was always domestic staff so the children were never responsible for keeping the whole building clean, but they were expected to do a lot of the care of their own accommodation.

Visitors

37. I believe parents and family members did visit children at Calder House but I don't know how that operated.
38. The children also regularly met with social workers. When the social workers came to visit, they would speak to staff, but the children always got the opportunity to speak to their social worker on their own.

Review of Care/placement

39. All the staff at Calder House had an input, to some extent, in the assessment of the children. There would be regular meetings for every child when everyone involved with that child would give their input about how they were finding them. Absolutely anything a staff member could contribute was taken into consideration. The teachers, matron, myself and the house parents would all attend these meetings.
40. There would also be regular case conferences for each child. I was expected to write a report on a girl for a case conference. In that report, I would cover everything that I observed such as how they were as people, how they got along with others, what I believed their problems to be, that sort of thing.

Discipline and Punishment

41. I don't recall being given any formal guidance on punishment at Calder House. Although corporal punishment wasn't controversial, at that time, and belts were used in most schools, there was no corporal punishment at Calder House. I don't remember ever being told that explicitly, but it was my understanding that it just wasn't an option.
42. HLP was very much the boss in so far as the girls' wing was concerned. Rather than punishment, there was an awful lot of talking to kids and trying to say to them that was not a good way of dealing with that. I think one of the things that was probably used, not as punishment, but as encouragement to behave, was getting out on home leave.
43. As the children settled in and their general attitude began to improve, when they saw was acceptable and not, their reward was getting home. First of all for the day, then for an overnight night stay, then a weekend from Friday night to Monday morning. There was little point in giving children other rewards such as pocket money when they were in somewhere like Calder House as there was nowhere for them to spend it.
44. If a child misbehaved during home leave, they would obviously not be going home the next week. If there had been something serious during the week, like children falling out amongst themselves, absconding or an attempt to abscond, a decision might be made that the child was not as ready as we thought to be getting out and having the kind of freedom they would like. I wasn't involved in those kinds of decisions. I would say that would be up to BHN-HLP and probably my husband.
45. There were always attempts to abscond at Calder House. Assessment centres were always locked units because the whole idea of them was that they were offering security to children. These were children who had mostly already been in children's homes where they could get in and out and some of them would have been in approved schools which were not necessarily totally locked. While the assessment

centre itself was secure, it didn't stop children taking the opportunity to abscond if they saw a door left open or if they were on an outing.

Restraint

46. Restraint was used at Calder House, but never by me. That wasn't my role. It would mostly be carried out by those spending the most time with the children such as the house parents or perhaps one of the teachers. In those days, there was no training given on how to safely restrain a child. Of course the staff would have benefited from additional training, but it wasn't as readily available. I know Mrs HLP and some of the teachers had done some sort of course specific to working with children, but not necessarily on how to restrain them.

Concerns about the institution

47. During my time at Calder House I didn't witness anything that I considered abusive or anything that gave me cause for concern. The children were 'coarse' to each other, but nothing more than teenagers generally are.
48. I thought I had a clear understanding of what I would have considered abusive, but nowadays, everything is categorised in a different way. I certainly wouldn't have been happy seeing a staff member saying anything hurtful to a child or hitting a child.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

49. I have no idea if there was a formal complaints procedure at Calder house. I also have no idea who children would or should have spoken to if they did have a complaint. I don't think that people thought in the same way in those days about complaints.

Allegations of Abuse at Calder House

50. I was not aware of any allegations of abuse made while I worked at Calder House.

Child protection arrangements at Calder House

51. I was not aware of any official child protection arrangements being in place at Calder House.

External monitoring at Calder House

52. I don't recall any external monitoring of Calder House while I worked there.

Record-keeping at Calder House

53. There was a file kept on each child at Calder House. Any staff involved with a child, during the day, would be expected to fill in the file at the end of the day. Then, when there was a case conference, the content of the file would be taken into consideration. The report which was prepared for Children's Panel Hearings, by Mr ^{BHN} or my husband, would be based on all the information that had been gathered at our internal case conference. I believe the files were kept in Mr ^{BHN} office.

Leaving Calder House

54. After around nine months at Calder House, my husband became aware of, what was supposed to be, a remand assessment centre being built in Aberdeen. My home was Aberdeen and the idea of moving back to the East Coast, particularly Aberdeen, was very appealing to me. The thought of going somewhere new and being able to bring his own ideas was appealing to my husband. He was very interested and applied for the post of ^{SNR}. Again, it was a joint appointment and we both started working at Brimmond around 1973.

Experiences at Brimmond Assessment Centre, Aberdeen 1973- 1979

The Institution / Culture

55. Brimmond was a modern purpose-built assessment centre for boys and girls. Operationally, it was always an assessment centre, but I don't believe it was ever officially named an assessment centre possibly because they would have had to put us on a higher salary scale.
56. Brimmond had to open slightly ahead of schedule because the children in the remand home, which it was replacing, barricaded themselves in and set fire to the place. So, we had to open promptly, without even curtains hanging up.
57. Officially we were supposed to have twenty boys and five girls. We seldom only had that. Frequently we would be having to put up an emergency bed. I notice in the statements I have been provide with, the kids had varying ideas of how many children there were. We would never have had more than one or two emergency beds in the girls' dorm and no more than five emergency beds in the boys. There was always pressure on us to be taking more children, but we were never overcrowded and I never felt that we weren't functioning as we were meant to.

My role and recruitment at Brimmond

58. I don't particularly remember the application and interview process for Brimmond. It would have been Doug Grant, who was the director of social work, Mr Gammy, who was head of childcare in Aberdeen and FSG who was in the county, who carried out the interviews. I'm sure there would have also been references as they would never have appointed someone without taking up references.
59. I don't think they were as concerned about me as they were about getting the right person for SNR job. One of the things that funnily enough sticks in my

mind, was being asked if I was aware that I would be dropping in salary slightly from what I was on in Calder House. I believe that was due to the fact that they weren't officially calling Brimmond an assessment centre. That didn't bother me as long as it was enough to comfortably live on. I was just happy to be coming home to Aberdeen.

60. At Brimmond, I worked with the boys and the girls. We had a lot of male staff at Brimmond and they were the ones who were the house parents to the boys. We had fewer girls and they were looked after by female staff. It was the responsibility of the house parents to get the children up in the morning, get them off to bed at night and they spent all of the out of school time with the children.
61. Day to day, I did anything and everything that cropped up. I would say my main duties were supervising both the female domestic and house parent staff and going over the menus with the cooks. I also had a lot of contact with social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. I took the children to a lot of their meetings, but it would then be my husband who would discuss the outcome of the meetings with the professionals involved. I also took the children to a lot of doctors and dentist appointments because, despite what some of them say in the statements I have been provided with, they did have regular medical appointments if they needed it, as well as a medical when they came in.

Layout and Structure

62. Brimmond was built just a mile or so outside Bucksburn and stood on its own. It consisted of a main building, [REDACTED] house, SNR [REDACTED] house and large grounds with a football pitch and room for the kids to play netball. Also, a bunch of young soldiers came in at one point and built the kids an assault course which they really enjoyed.
63. The building itself was purpose built, but we had no input whatsoever on how it was designed or what went in it. I think that was one of the mistakes that was made. Perhaps they should have appointed SNR [REDACTED] prior to building it because

there were things about it we would have changed, such as the size of the dormitories which were quite small. Most were three bedded rooms. It was a three-sided building. The boys' unit was in the long leg and the girls' unit was in the short leg, completely cut off from the boys.

64. On the ground floor we had a very large dining room where all the children ate together. There was a big beautiful, very modern, kitchen with a serving hatch. Most of the time, the kids went up and collected their food at the hatch, unless they were having a cold starter, in which case it might be on the tables. The children were always supervised during mealtimes, usually by myself. There was a smaller room opposite the big dining room where staff who were on a break would eat.
65. Other rooms on the ground floor included; my husband's office: a couple of classrooms: a large woodwork room: a room that was used for domestic science and art: store rooms: a TV and common room: a medical room which was used if a kid needed medication or had to see a doctor: a staff room where we held our meetings: and a couple of live in staff rooms. Then, there was a room that the kids called the quiet room where they read books or played cards, chess, scrabble, that sort of thing and a large gym with pool table and table tennis tables.

Staff structure

66. In Brimmond, my husband was SNR [REDACTED] and I was matron. GJO-GJP [REDACTED] were SNR [REDACTED] and deputy matron. Right at the start there would have been GJQ [REDACTED] who came initially as a driver and handyman. There was Harry Barron and Charlie Ogston who came as house parents. I also recall Mr McHatty who was a teacher.
67. In terms of domestic staff, we had two cooks, Mrs Maitland the laundry woman, a lady called KPP [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who was no relation to GJP [REDACTED]. There was also Mrs Tough who was one of the house parents to the girls. Other staff arrived bit by bit and, to be quite honest, I couldn't say who exactly came and when.

Recruitment of staff

68. I was involved in the recruitment of domestic staff. I carried out those interviews and obtained references. You would never have employed anybody without references. I inherited quite a lot of my domestic staff from an old folks' home which was then operating within walking distance of Brimmond. It had been a sanitorium at one time, then it became an old folks' home, but during the first year of Brimmond it closed down because it was going to need a lot of alterations to bring it up to modern day standards. Because a lot of my staff had previously worked there, they were already employed by the social work department so carrying out checks on those staff was made easier.

Supervision / appraisal / evaluation

69. I would not say I was involved in the supervision, appraisal or evaluation of staff in any formal way. I think there was more constant talking about how staff were operating. Once the kids went off to bed in the evening, and before the day staff went off shift, we would sit in the night room and write up our notes for the children's files. That was also an opportunity to talk about the problems staff were encountering and discuss better ways to deal with situations. My husband always made a point of being there at that time.

Policy

70. I was not involved in the making or implementation of policy at Brimmond. I don't recall seeing any written policies, but my husband would have been [REDACTED].

Strategic Planning

71. I was not involved in strategic planning at Brimmond.

Children / Routine at Brimmond

72. The majority of children at Brimmond were around thirteen, fourteen, fifteen. Very occasionally, we would have a primary school child. When that happened, there were always special circumstances. We had a little brother and sister brought in. I can't remember their names, but they came from Muray direction. They were quite young and I don't know why they were ever put to Brimmond. The head teacher we had by that time, George Keith, felt they should have been in an ordinary school. He took them down to Cloverfield Primary School, but they were too upset to be going out to school. Little kiddies like that coming in were very confused and upset. We also had a couple of coloured siblings, one of whom was very young. I think they were maybe Iranian. Why they were in Brimmond, I have no idea. Again I can't remember their names.
73. Children came in at all kinds of crisis points. A lot of them would have gone to a children's hearing and it would have been decided that they should come to Brimmond in the way that one hoped things would happen. However, sometimes the police simply turned up on the doorstep at midnight with girls they picked up down the docks or kids they picked up who were absconders from other children's homes. You would just be asked to take a child in an emergency. We were just the place that everybody turned to when they didn't know what to do with kids. My husband didn't really have a choice in the matter. We were certainly the last resort sometimes and a lot of the children who came to us had already been in children's homes throughout Aberdeen. Other homes could just say 'we've had enough, out you go' and we were the people who had to take them in.
74. When children came in, as soon as possible, we got more background information on them. However, sometimes you were just taking a child in overnight. I remember holding about four girls who had run away from Balgay in Dundee and we had to more or less put them on mattresses on the floor for the night. The next day the deputy matron and I took them back to Balgay. There was quite a lot of that, where you would

have a child overnight and then take them back to where they came from or to a children's panel.

75. The ultimate purpose of children coming to Brimmond was to get as good an understanding as possible of what the problem was with a view to accessing the best place they might then go to. That could be anything from: going back home, going home with a social worker involved, going home and going to a different school, going to a foster home, children's home or a small family group home. Then, there were all sorts of different functions and sizes of children's homes in Aberdeen to consider. Some were small and best suited to younger children whose home situation was not good, but the child itself was not presenting any problems. Another example was Airyhall for instance which specialised particularly in supporting children with learning difficulties or physical problems.
76. Anyone, other than a child who was there as an emergency, was going through a very detailed and continual assessment by all the staff in Brimmond. We also took the children to various appointments with psychiatrists, psychologists or doctors. You were either taking them or, someone was coming in to interview them. There was a huge amount of contact with these people. I spent a lot of my working time taking children to meetings like that.
77. The duration of stay varied depending on the circumstances. It could be anything from an overnight to somebody like GLO who lingered on for years because nobody else could cope with him. GLO would have been the one child who was at Brimmond the longest, by a mile I would have thought. A lot of children came in and an initial recommendation was acted on but it didn't work out. Sometimes children went home but sadly parents wanted rid of them again, within days. Sometimes children went to a children's home you felt would be appropriate, but for whatever reason it just didn't work out. Quite often if a child went to a children's home on a recommendation, and the child was then sent out to school, the school couldn't cope with the child or the child couldn't cope with school. If those situations, the child would be brought back to Brimmond.

Routine / Chores

78. Each day the children would get up, washed, dressed and go for breakfast. After that, some would go to class and those not in class, would be involved in doing chores. In the afternoon, there was always an attempt to get the kids outside.
79. In all the children's homes, list D school and assessment centres, the kids were expected to do quite a lot when it came to chores. It was thought to be good for them and it also filled their time. At Brimmond specifically, the kids would sweep the floor in the dining room or wash and dry the dishes. There was a chore rota and their duties were divided up by the staff.

Mealtimes / Food

80. The children ate together in the large dining room and were always supervised. They sat four to a table with boys and girls sitting separately. The food at Brimmond was absolutely excellent. I don't have any reservations about saying that. It was the kind of thing you would expect kids to enjoy such as, mince and tatties, fish and chips, stewed sausages, homemade soup and rolls and there was always a pudding. The staff ate the same food as the kids, but not in the same room as they were entitled to a break and would eat together in a separate room.
81. In those days, children were expected to eat what they were given. That said, no one was ever forced to eat if they didn't want to or made to sit for hours to finish the food on their plate. I have been asked if the children had to sit in silence at mealtimes. I have been advised that one of the statements disclosed to me refers to the children being hit on the head by a member of staff if they didn't stay silent. That wasn't the case. If they got too noisy then yes, they would be asked to keep it down a bit, but never hit.

Washing and Bathing

82. The boys shower room was located on the ground floor of the boys' unit. It was a large washroom with a big block of showers in open ended cubicles, so the staff could keep an eye on them. I think there would have been five or six children in there at one time.

Clothing

83. Quite often, the clothing that the kids came in with was not fit to be used while they were at Brimmond, so we provided clothing. There was no uniform as such. They all got jeans, jumpers, boots for outside, and sandals as trainers weren't a thing at that point. When a new kid came in, their own clothes would be washed, put away safely and given back to them when they left. If the clothes we had given them were in good condition when they left, they were laundered and reused.

Trips / Holidays

84. We took the children at Brimmond out a lot, mostly at weekends as numbers were lower because some of the children would be getting home leave. The staff were usually quite happy to use their own cars as well as the minibus. Balmedie Beach was a favourite place for the children to go to. They loved doing roly-polies down the sand hills. Something else we did a lot was taking the kids to football. A lot of the boys were very keen and I was always the one who went to evening games or to take them down to Dundee Glasgow or Edinburgh, in the minibus. We also took the kids out on picnics and to a local swimming pool once a week as my husband [ERM] was a qualified swimming instructor. Swimming had always been [ERM]'s sport of choice. He was a very good swimmer and a very good diver. He taught loads of kids to swim, including all of our own, before they went to school.

Healthcare

85. The children at Brimmond had a medical examination when they arrived, carried out by a doctor. They also saw a doctor or dentist whenever necessary. If there were any injuries, we would take the kids to accident and emergency. I remember a few visits to accident and emergency, but it's not something that happened often. There was one boy who punched a glass panel which had mesh in it. He made an awful mess of his hand. Any injury was always recorded in the child's file.

Schooling

86. There was always meant to be a bit of schooling in an assessment centre. The place was designed with, two classrooms, woodwork room and an arts and crafts and cookery room. We had two full time teachers who came in during the day and were qualified teachers. Their only job was to teach and they didn't get involved in the care of the children. However, most of the kids at Brimmond weren't there long enough to get any worthwhile schooling.
87. Mr McHatty was the teacher there when Brimmond opened. Then, there was George Keith who was probably there for the longest time and later on, we had a female teacher called Daphne Archibald. At times we had temporary teachers as, to be quite honest, it wasn't really a place that a lot of teachers wanted to stay. I think teachers found it a very difficult place to teach. There were children of all ages and a huge variation in academic ability.
88. When children came to Brimmond, there was some sort of assessment carried out by a teacher as to their ability. There was a culture of encouraging children more towards practical things such as woodwork. That was because most of the children were far more interested in that. We did have one or two children who came in who were quite obviously more academically able. The children who would enjoy and benefit from teaching did receive more teaching. A few went to an outside school. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are a few I remember who went to outside schools.

In situations like that, we discussed it very fully with the school, education department and social work.

89. I have been asked if attempts were made to get GLO into school, given he was at Brimmond for a number of years. The answer is yes, attempts were made frequently, but none were successful. Brimmond was not somewhere where children were meant to stay long term and I do agree that, for those who did stay long term, the education was inadequate.

90. GLO really was a one off. GLO arrived with us as a very young boy, but he had already been to Coblehaugh Children's home. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later He wasn't a particularly delinquent boy and because he was with us for a long time, he was eventually allowed to go down to the local youth club at the local sports centre. They phoned us one night to ask if we were aware that he was trying to phone New York to speak to Kojak. I spent considerable time taking GLO to the child psychiatrist, Dr Chisolm. GLO really did live in a world of make-believe.

Religion

91. The children at Brimmond had the opportunity to go to church on a Sunday, but only if they wanted to. They were never forced. I think some of them liked to go because they would get to wear their own clothes to church.

Christmas

92. I noticed in the statements that have been disclosed to me, the kids talk a bit about Christmas time and how there were no decorations up in Brimmond. We didn't have decorations, but I put that down to there being an awful lot of confusion about what Brimmond was meant to be. It was never designed to be a children's home with a homely kind of feel to it. It was always intended to be anything from three weeks to

three month stays for an assessment. I think that's why the homely touches were not as they should have been.

93. Christmas was a very relaxed time in Brimmond and we had a skeleton staff working. Quite deliberately, any kids that could go home at Christmas, got to go home. We never forced any kid to go home, but the majority wanted to. All we ever had over Christmas was a handful of kids. Christmas lunch was always my family, my parents and occasionally my brother and his kids came. We all ate lunch together in the main dining room in Brimmond, including the kids from Brimmond. Each kid got a Christmas present, although the ones who stayed over Christmas usually got a bit more. The kids would make things in practical classes that were then sold to family during visits. Some of the money made was used towards buying the kids Christmas presents, the rest was used when we took the kids on outings.
94. New year was a different story. The kids didn't get home leave at New Year because of the drinking at home. It was safer for them to be in Brimmond. Instead of home leave, we had a disco. Children who had already left Brimmond could come back for the disco and I remember my husband going about in the minibus picking kids up and dropping them off.

Visitors

95. Visitors to Brimmond were always very welcome. I think family visited one night during the week and on a Sunday. Visits didn't need to be arranged and there were never any rules about how many visitors a kid could have. Sometimes the mum and grannies came with all the cousins. They could sit down, have a cup of tea or coffee and home bakes.
96. Family visits mostly took place in the dining room, but visitors could take children for a walk around the grounds if they wanted to. That would eventually reach a stage where families could pick a kid up and take them out for a few hours, then they would

work up to an overnight stay. Social work of course had a lot of say in who could and could not visit the children and when or if home leave was appropriate.

97. Staff would try to give families space during visits, but I was always made a point of being available if parents wanted to see or speak to me. We always knew who the visitors were, even if extended family were visiting. We knew who was coming and going from the building.

Review of Care/placement

98. We held a weekly internal case conference at Brimmond in relation to children who were at a priority stage in their assessment. Then we might go to a case conference at Woodhill House where there would be senior members of the social work department and possibly a school representative, psychologist or psychiatrist. Eventually, a recommendation would go to a children's hearing and they would most often make the final decision. I'm sure there were occasions where the children's panel weren't involved and it would be more of a social work decision, but it was never our decision. It was only ever our recommendation.

Discipline and Punishment

99. There was no emphasis on punishment at Brimmond and certainly no corporal punishment. If a child was unsettled, we would wait until they were calm and try to talk to them about their behaviour. There was a greater emphasis on encouraging good behaviour rather than punishing bad behaviour. If some form of punishment was necessary, it might be missing an outing or, if necessary, home leave. Any staff member could suggest a form of punishment but the ultimate decision on how a kid was punished would be made by my husband.
100. Some of the statements disclosed to me mention kids being made to scrub the back stairs. My only recollection of any kid scrubbing the back stairs would be if a kid was feeling out of sorts or falling out with everybody. One of our domestic staff, KPP

would say to them 'come on and give me a hand, I could do with some help'. They would go off quietly and chat away. Chores were never used as a punishment as it is described in the statements.

Restraint

101. Restraint was something that was used when necessary. If, for example, a fight broke out between the kids, restraint would be used, but only until the kid could be put in the isolation room to calm down. Any restraint used was always recorded in the child's notes on their file. I honestly couldn't say how often restraint was used in Brimmond. It would vary because some groups of children were more volatile than others. Most of the kids that went through, would never need to be restrained or ever see the inside of the isolation room. It really was just the standout kids.

Concerns about the institution / staff

102. I don't recall a situation where I had any concerns about Brimmond, or the staff who worked there, while I was there. To be honest, we were a happy crowd. That said, now that I've read the statements which have been disclosed to me, I have concerns about what I might have missed with regards to KEF [REDACTED].

Reporting of complaints/concerns

103. I don't recall any formal complaints procedure, but I believe if a staff member had a complaint or concern, they would have automatically gone to have a word with my husband. He was a very approachable person and he was not shut away. He was always around.
104. If a parent had a concern, they would speak to the person they saw the most, which was probably me. I don't recall any parents having any specific concerns. If anything, they complained about the kids and the fact that when they came home for the

weekend they didn't pick up their clothes when they were told, trivial things that all teenagers don't do.

105. There was simply not the same formal complaints process and procedures as there are nowadays. As I look back, we were all flying by the seat of our pants. We were all learning as the years went by.

Trusted adult/confidante

106. There was no permanent social worker in Brimmond, but social workers regularly visited and we all saw ourselves as social workers of sorts. The kids weren't appointed a particular keyworker. The idea of keyworkers was something that developed as Brimmond was developing. That's said, if the kids needed to talk to someone, they were encouraged to go to whoever they felt most comfortable with. In Brimmond, the person most of the kids chatted to was KPP one of the domestic staff. She was somebody the kids felt close to.

Allegations of Abuse at Brimmond

107. I was not aware of any allegations of abuse while I worked at Brimmond.

Child protection arrangements at Brimmond

108. I don't recall any specific child protection arrangements being in place at Brimmond. It's something that didn't really exist then.

External monitoring at Brimmond

109. I don't think there was any external monitoring as such. There were heads of social work in and out all the time, but I have no recollection of any official inspection. That's not to say it didn't happen, but I have no memory of it.

110. If ERM or I found us needing more support, we could go to Mr Gammy or John Butler who were in charge of children's services. They were in and out of Brimmond all the time. We had a good relationship with them and were able to communicate with them.

Observations about Brimmond

111. When I look back at my time at Brimmond, and now that I have been forced to think a lot about it, it wasn't able to function in the way it was intended to. That became worse and worse as the years went by. We began getting more children who were there for longer periods because people were at their wits end trying to figure out where to place them.
112. The type of kid that was coming to Brimmond also changed. In the early days, the children were little tearaways. They were nicking bikes when they were little and then cars by the time they were fourteen or fifteen. However, latterly, the children that came were more and more disturbed. We also had more inappropriate children, in a way. By that, I mean children I don't necessarily believe should have been at Brimmond and were being dumped there because people didn't know what else to do with them. I remember one little girl who came in who had been sexually abused by her father. I remember thinking at the time 'why is this poor lassie here, why is her father not locked up'.
113. Throughout most of my time there, proper training was not readily available for staff. That did change as the years went by and by the time my husband came to leave, there were staff going off to do the CSS course which was a certificate in social studies. That would qualify them to be a residential care social worker.

Leaving Brimmond

114. I left Brimmond in the late seventies, probably around 1979, because of a relationship I had with a staff member called KEF. Our relationship had come to the

attention of the authorities in social work. I've no idea how. We were interviewed separately by the acting director of social work at the time, Archie Robb. It was felt that it would be better for everyone concerned if we were in a different place. In a way it was a slight demotion for both of us. I was aware the children had been talking, but they were very prone to exaggeration. It was never made clear to us what the concern was, we were just asked if we had been in a relationship, but as I said, the relationship was over by that time. I was asked to move to Airyhall which I did quite willingly.

115. My husband continued to work at Brimmond until around 1981. I think **ERM** became increasingly disillusioned with what we could and couldn't do and eventually resigned. He went on to work in a unit for disabled adults in Aberdeen. I can't recall the name of it. Sometime after, he had a heart attack and retired early.

After Brimmond

116. After leaving my employment at Brimmond, I went to work briefly at Airyhall, Seafield, then Cordyce Children's Home. I worked at Airyhall Children's Home and Seafield Children's Home for around nine months each. I was assistant officer in charge in both children's homes. I then went to Cordyce and worked there as a house parent for the last ten years of my career. A lot of the staff at Brimmond went on to work at Cordyce as it was very different. It was a residential school, but it was run by the education department instead of the council. It was on a different salary scale, so the pay was better and you got all the school and public holidays.
117. At Brimmond children were put there whether they liked it or not and we had to take them whether we liked it or not. The main difference with Cordyce, was that all of the children there were there by agreement of the child and their parents. The school also had control, if for example a child was not functioning well there and could suspend a child or remove them from the school.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

118. I have not had any personal involvement in investigations into abuse at either Calder House or Brimmond.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

119. I have not been involved in reports of abuse or civil claims.

Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

120. I was interviewed by police in relation to GLO at the time he made accusations about me and a complaint about being sexually abused at Brimmond by a befriender. I gave a statement to the police but did not hear anything further about it. I did not give evidence in any court proceedings. I am aware that the man GLO accused of sexually abusing him was found guilty at court.

Specific alleged abusers - Balgowan

LSB

121. I don't remember anyone called LSB.

LOF

122. I don't remember anyone called LOF.

LUP

123. I remember the name Mr LUP but I don't remember a thing about him.

[REDACTED]

124. I don't remember anyone by the name of [REDACTED] but I do remember an [REDACTED] LID [REDACTED] LID I only remember him because we had a rat under our shed and he came over and shot it. I don't know what his particular role was.

Mr [REDACTED] LKX

125. I don't remember any Mr [REDACTED] LKX from Balgowan. There was a [REDACTED] HQS who was a house parent at Calder House. He actually came to work [REDACTED] at Brimmond as a house parent after we went there.

Mr [REDACTED] HLG

126. I don't remember anyone by the name of Mr [REDACTED] HLG. There was a man called [REDACTED] LSB [REDACTED] LSB He was [REDACTED] SNR and a great guy. He died quite a young man.

Mr [REDACTED] IDH

127. I don't remember Mr [REDACTED] IDH.

[REDACTED] ILX

128. I don't remember [REDACTED] ILX

[REDACTED] GNB

129. [REDACTED] GNB seems a familiar name, but I have no recollection of him as a person.

[REDACTED] IQE

130. I don't remember [REDACTED] IQE

IPR

131. I don't remember IPR

IPS

132. I don't remember IPS

Specific alleged abusers – Calder House

BHN

133. BHN was SNR at Calder House. He was SNR and his wife was the matron. They were around all the time and I don't remember anything particularly noteworthy about BHN. I didn't see him discipline any of the children and I did not see him abuse any of the children.

Mrs zHLP

134. I don't remember any staff member called Mrs zHLP.

Mr HWE

135. The name, HWE, doesn't ring a bell.

Specific alleged abusers – Brimmond

ERM

136. ERM was of course my husband. At no time, at Brimmond or anywhere else, did I see him use corporal punishment, hit or act in any way inappropriately towards a child. I did see him assist in restraining a child at Brimmond who was kicking off and the staff had shouted for a bit of extra help. Restraint is not something that happened regularly. I couldn't say exactly, because we had spells when we had a more unsettled group than others, but it certainly wasn't happening every day or even many times a week or anything like that.

LMH

137. I don't remember anybody that worked at Brimmond called LMH. The name doesn't ring a bell for me, but Brimmond was used a lot for student placement. It is possible I just didn't know her.

FFI

138. I knew FFI well as he married my daughter and became my son-in-law. They met when FFI worked at Brimmond. FFI was fostered and adopted as a child. As an adult, he was still good friends with Mrs FSG who was the in our county and had placed him in his foster home. I think FFI had been down in London, working as a chef, and also volunteering at hostels for young people who were homeless. When FFI came back to Scotland, he went to Ms FSG and said that he would like to get into working in childcare. Mrs FSG asked us if we would be willing to take him for a month to see what we thought. At the end of his first week, FFI came to me and said that he would never want to do anything else again. He just felt he was where he was meant to be. We felt the same at the end of the month. Once he had decided that he wanted to formally work at Brimmond, he went through the normal procedure and was interviewed by the heads of social work.

139. FFI only worked with us at Brimmond for a relatively short time before he moved on to work at Seafeld. He went from Seafeld to work at the closed wing at Rossie Farm. He married my daughter when he worked at Rossie. He then came back to Aberdeen and worked at Cordyce School as SNR. During that time, he completed his CSS childcare training so that he was fully qualified, as well as having a very wide range of experience. He was then made the SNR of Scalloway Park in Fraserburgh and ended up doing a lot of work with the training team on the CSS course. He was somebody that climbed the ladder very quickly because he was very capable.
140. I frequently observed FFI with the children at Brimmond. He was wonderful with them. If I had to start a children's home of my own, FFI would have been the first member of staff I would have appointed. He could relate to the children so well because he had gone through so much himself yet he was a clear authority figure. Okay, he was my son-in-law, but that's not why I thought he was great. I absolutely never observed him behaving in any way which would give me cause for concern.

Mr zIFH

141. I don't recall anyone by the name of Mr zIFH.

KEE

142. KEE was one of the house parents at Brimmond for a number of years. He was a gentle, laid back, quiet chap. He was fairly young when he came to work with us in the early years of Brimmond. I would say he would have been in his twenties. I couldn't tell you exactly how many years he worked there. I worked with KEE again, after my time at Brimmond, when I moved to Cordyce Children's Home. I did not see or hear of KEE disciplining or abusing any child at Brimmond.

KEF

143. KEF worked at Brimmond towards the end of my time there. I never witnessed him behaving in a way which I thought was abusive towards the children. I do recall the children used to speak about him going around with a baseball bat, which he did, but it was only used for playing rounders, as far as I know.
144. A lot of the time he was very popular with the children. There was a bit of hero worship went on. The story that he told, whether it was true or not, was that he had been in the SAS. They saw him as a tough guy and there was a bit of idolisation. He was probably a stricter disciplinarian than others would be, but only in that he expected the kids to do as they were told. I have read some of the stories that the kids have told in the statements that have been disclosed to me. They talk about being beaten black and blue or lying bleeding on the floor, there's no way I saw that kind of thing. However, I can't say it didn't happen because I wasn't everywhere, all the time.

145. I have been advised that people have also referred to [REDACTED] in their statements. I don't know of anyone by that name who worked at Brimmond. I believe they would be referring to KEF.

GJO-GJP

146. GJO and GJP had worked at the old remand home which Brimmond replaced. They were appointed to their roles in Brimmond before my husband and I, so they were there from the beginning. GJO was SNR [REDACTED] and GJP was the deputy matron. They were never house parents.
147. I would say GJO and GJP were around the same age as my husband and I. GJO was actually a joiner to trade. He didn't have any formal qualifications. They worked at Brimmond for around seven or eight years and then GJO just decided he'd had enough and wanted to retire. During their time at Brimmond, they had a house which

they had built up in [REDACTED] and wherever they were off duty at the weekend, they were off to [REDACTED] and right away from the place. The rest of the time, they lived [REDACTED].

148. GJO [REDACTED] and GJP [REDACTED] were both good with the children. GJO [REDACTED] was a little old school and quite strict, but not in an abusive way. I never knew of any of the kids not being comfortable with him and I had no concerns. GJP [REDACTED] was a gentle woman. She was lovely with the girls, very sweet. They didn't have children of their own and GJO [REDACTED] just wasn't the fatherly figure that some of the other staff were to the children. I never saw either of them discipline or abuse a child.

GJQ [REDACTED]

149. I certainly remember GJQ [REDACTED] because he was a dear friend. GJQ [REDACTED] originally came to us as our driver and handyman. He had worked for the city council from the time he was fourteen when he had been a little tram messenger boy. Then, he became a tram driver and a bus driver. He had also worked at the remand home which Brimmond replaced.
150. Over the years at Brimmond, GJQ [REDACTED] became more and more involved with the children until eventually, he applied to be a house parent. GJQ [REDACTED] worked with us right from the beginning and he got the job of house parent maybe two or three years after Brimmond Opened.
151. GJQ [REDACTED] was a family man. He had four kids of his own. He had worked at the remand home so he was under no illusion when he came to Brimmond about the type of work. He was very good with the children. I never saw or heard of GJQ [REDACTED] disciplining or abusing any child. I never worried about anything to do with GJQ [REDACTED]. He progressed to become SNR [REDACTED] at another children's home and then latterly, [REDACTED] the working boys' hostel at Dyce. Like FFI [REDACTED], GJQ [REDACTED] was somebody who worked their way up the ladder having started at Brimmond.

GJR

152. GJR was another house parent. He was around the same age as GJQ and had also been a tram messenger boy from a young age with the city council. He had a family of his own, some of whom came to work in childcare in later years. GJR came to Brimmond shortly after we opened and worked with us until Cordyce opened. GJR was just somebody who liked the kids and got on with him. I never had any concerns about him at all.

GJU

153. GJU was a house parent at Brimmond, but I don't think he was with us as long as some of the others. I don't remember much about him other than he was a fine young man and I had no concerns.

GJV

154. I don't recall anyone by the name of GJV working at Brimmond while I was there. That's not to say he didn't work there. Some of the staff didn't last very long as it wasn't everybody's cup of tea working at Brimmond.

Mr HQS

155. HQS was a house parent. I believe he came to work with us a year or two after Brimmond opened. We knew HQS from working together in Calder House. He taught the boys a bit of boxing which was quite a common thing with kids in those days.
156. HQS was somebody that we were quite friendly with. He seemed to get on well with the kids and they seemed to like him. He was around my age. I was very comfortable with how he was with the children. I saw him disciplining the children verbally and appropriately, but never anything that gave me cause for concern.

However, **HQS** left under a bit of a cloud because he was developing a bit of a drink problem. I think it was a case of go before you're pushed. I don't know any more details about that.

Mr **IEJ**

157. Mr **IEJ** was another one who came right at the beginning. He too had worked at the remand home. He was a nice, older man, who had experience of working with children and was a house parent at Brimmond. He had to take early retirement because of his eyesight deteriorating to the point where he was no longer able to work. I never saw or heard of him abusing anyone.

IFH

158. **IFH** was a house parent. He had been one of the part-time workers at the old remand home which Brimmond replaced. We actually had two Mr **IFH** and his brother, **IFH** was our night man. He worked each night from about 10:00 pm to 8:00 am. They were both very nice, mature, men and came from a big, warm family. They were great with the kids and very well liked. I did not see or hear of either men disciplining or abusing any child.
159. **IFH** and **IFH** came to Brimmond early on, after it opened. **IFH** worked there until he retired, but I can't remember exactly when that was. **IFH**'s wife, **GJX**, also came eventually to work with us.

Specific allegations that have been made to the Inquiry

HWF

160. **HWF** has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraphs 35 and 36 he has said *"I was brought up by my grandmother not to strip off clothes in front of anybody,*

so that was seen by me as being wrong. The wifey ^{ERL} and Mr [redacted] took me into this changing area where the showers were, on that first night. They told me to take off my clothes and I told them to leave as I wasn't stripping off in front of anyone. [Redacted] and [redacted] took a hold of me and ripped every bit of clothing I had on off of me. I started to panic and I went off my head and went for the two of them. They left me where I was a chucked me some pyjamas. They could have just given me the pyjamas in the first place and then left me. The two of them were a problem for me from then on."

161. I remember ^{HWF} well, but I don't remember any such incident. All the children referred to me as the wifey ^{ERL}. That's what kids in Aberdeenshire will say 'the manny this or the wifey that'. I would have never ripped clothes off anybody. When someone came in, one of the house parents would normally take the kid along to the showers and give them clothes to put on. Their own clothes were then washed and put away safely. I wouldn't have been in the boys' unit when they were getting showered or dressed.

162. ^{HWF} goes on to say the following at paragraph 49 of his statement. "You could apply for schooling and some people did put down for it but nobody ever got any. I don't think they had a classroom and the one teacher they had didn't come in and start at Brimmond until about 1974 or 1975." That's not the case. I'm sure Mr McHatty was there when we started. I don't recall anyone having to put down for schooling if they wanted it, but I would be the first to acknowledge that the education could have been better.

163. ^{HWF} goes on to say the following at paragraph 91 of his statement. "Mrs ^{ERL} who we called ^{ERL}, also came into the bedrooms every night. She would start touching your fore brow and telling you to be good and all that and then she would kiss you on the lips. She kissed every boy on the lips and she did that when she was by herself."

That didn't happen. I'm quite prepared to say that there may have been the odd occasion when a very young kid came in, quite obviously home sick, I might have

given a wee cuddle and said that things would feel better in the morning. That couldn't have happened more than three times in ten years. I certainly didn't go in the boys' bedrooms at night, after they were in bed.

164. HWF [REDACTED] goes on to say the following at paragraph 92 of his statement. *"Another thing she did was to come into the showers when the boys were showering, she would be with Mr [redacted]. She would tell boys that they needed to wash themselves properly then she get the soap and start washing you. She would wash your backside and your front and tell you it was important to wash all over that area. She did that all the time, when we only really needed to be told one but she would always wash us in that same area. We all got used to it and let her do that but you're a bairn you don't realise that what's being done is wrong."*

That is absolute rubbish. There is no truth in that whatsoever. There was no need for me to be in the shower room. There were always two or three male staff in there with them. If something like that did happen, I would of course consider that to be wrong.

165. HWF [REDACTED] goes on to say the following at paragraphs 93 and 94 of his statement. *"Another thing she did quite often was to get all the boys to line up in the front corridor outside the surgery. The wifey ERL [REDACTED] would be inside and she would get all the boys to go in one by one. Sometimes Mr [redacted] would be there but Mr [redacted] was always there. She would tell us there was an infest of beasties and they needed to medicate us all to stop it spreading.*

Mrs ERL [REDACTED] would then take us into the surgery one by one, tell us to strip off and rub this cream all over our private parts and the rest of the body then tell you to put your clothes back on. It was always her that did that, never [redacted] but he would always be there watching. There was no need for that and I didn't like it, even as a bairn I didn't strip off in front of my grandmother. I was a shy kid and that really stuck with me."

There was one occasion in ten years when there was an outbreak of scabies in the boys' unit. There was never any infest of beasties. I called the doctor and he provided a medication and told me to administer it to the boys as soon as possible. I was there, but it wasn't just me, the other male staff who were on duty were also present. I couldn't

tell you who specifically was on duty. I felt I had to be there to show the male staff how to administer the ointment as I was the matron and the doctor had given me instructions. I showed the men and the team of us went through the boys like a conveyor belt. It was done publicly and quickly. It was one application and that was it.

166. HWF [REDACTED] goes on to say the following at paragraph 107 of his statement. *"Before going to Geilsland and in Brimmond for the last time, I remember I was going out to the car and the wifey ERL [REDACTED] to me that Mr [redacted] wanted to see me. She said he was in the house and to go and see him. I went in their house and I heard him say 'I'm in here' from up the stairs. I went up and he was in the bathroom standing there shaving and he didn't have a stich on. He turned to me and I said he was out of order or something like that and I went back down the stairs. It was like he was getting his last kick or something and I was beginning to see what was happening."*

I have absolutely no recollection of an incident like this. The only thing that I can even imagine is that he was going early in the morning because he had a long journey and I said, 'stick your head in the door so Mr ERM [REDACTED] can shout cheerio'. My husband wasn't in the habit of standing about naked even if there was nobody in the house. The kids from Brimmond never went inside our house.

167. HWF [REDACTED] was just a wild, very out of control, boy. He had been utterly spoilt by his granny. She visited him a lot and just doted on him and I think let him away with a lot. Like so many of the children at Brimmond, he was a damaged child. We used to often say 'what hope do we have of doing anything' as the kids were ruined before they got to Brimmond.

HHU [REDACTED]

168. HHU [REDACTED] has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 53 of his statement, he has said *"You couldn't go to Mrs ERL [REDACTED] to report anything. I think she was having a relationship with [redacted]. His room was in the middle of the hall where we were and I used to see her going in at night. I slept quite close to it at one point and I could hear them together."* I do remember HHU [REDACTED], but I don't remember much about him.

169. With regard to what he says about not being able to report anything to me, as far as I'm concerned, he could have come to me. In so far as what he says about me having a relationship with another member of staff, he is referring to KEF [REDACTED]. I'm glad this has come up as I want to clear the air about this. I did have a brief relationship with him, which I deeply regret. If there is one thing in my life I could change, it would be that. I was briefly infatuated. He was a charismatic person, but it did not go on in the way that the boys saw it. I can however understand how they would view it.
170. KEF [REDACTED] for some of the time he was there, was assistant officer in charge. By that time, I was no longer officially matron, I was senior assistant officer in charge. It meant that we were not on a shift working as house parents, we were the people free to take kids to the dentist, to appointments, to children's hearings. My husband's job was very much in the office writing the reports. KEF [REDACTED] was much more out in the open, as I was. He was somebody who liked being on duty and would be there at all hours of the day, like me. It is quite clear that the kids would see us as being together a lot. We were together a lot and that's probably part of why a relationship developed.
171. I couldn't tell you how long the relationship lasted, but it wasn't long lived. By the time the relationship became apparent, I had ended it. KEF [REDACTED] and I were both moved to other establishments. I went to work at Airyhall and KEF [REDACTED] went to work at Dylan Brae in Dufftown. I couldn't be sure of the number of years KEF [REDACTED] worked at Brimmond. I would be guessing if I have to put a figure on it, but it was towards the end of my time there.
172. HHU [REDACTED] goes on to say the following at paragraph 56 of his statement. "Mrs ERL [REDACTED] used to come into the showers and offer to put shampoo in the boys' hair. That wasn't right. It was ok for me as I was only young, but the other boys were much older than me. I was told stories that she'd slept with some of the fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds, but I don't know if it's true. They also talked about having put their tongues in her mouth when giving her a goodnight kiss. No one tried to touch me inappropriately."
- That is absolute rubbish. That's the kind of thing that horrified me when I read it. I actually imagined that I had a good relationship with the kids at Brimmond. I've had so many kids and parents come and tell me, over the years, that they appreciated what I

did. I'm horrified that to think that any child would see it like that, but when you think about what teenage boys are like, with their hormones all over the place, that's the kind of thing you could see them imagine or boast about, but it certainly never happened.

ERI

173. ERI has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraphs 126 and 127 of her statement, she has said *"If you did something at Brimmond that merited getting punished Mrs ERL would make you scrub the back stairs, shower room and outside and inside the toilet with your own toothbrush and a bucket of water. There were various reasons she would make you do it, something like giving back chat. She would wake you up in the middle of the night and you did it in your nightclothes. There were often two or three girls doing it each time. When you scrubbed the toilet this included scrubbing under the rim of the toilet. At the end she made you brush your teeth with the dirty toothbrush before you got back into bed still wearing your soaking wet nightclothes.*

We usually started scrubbing around eleven pm and would get back to beds about two in the morning. If one of the girls was sick when they brushed their teeth Mrs ERL would make them clean it up then we all had to start cleaning all the floors and the toilet from the beginning again. If someone was sick we would be up twice as long. If I was sick in my mouth I always swallowed it. I remember that some girls were still cleaning the toilets when I got up in the morning and they were crying. They had been cleaning all night so never got to their bed at all because someone kept being sick. I think everyone would have done this cleaning at some point when they were at Brimmond and I saw it happening at least once a fortnight."

That is absolute downright lies. Goodness gracious I remember ERI. She was in and out of Brimmond a few times. She was thirteen going on thirty and very sexually aware. She was someone who had been through a lot of inappropriate experiences, god bless her.

174. This is another of these stories 'you better behave yourself or they'll make you scrub the toilet with a toothbrush'. It was the kind of thing kids said when a new kid came in.

There was an awful lot of this kind of thing. Never ever in my life have I asked other children, or my own, to scrub anywhere with a toothbrush, but it is the kind of thing I heard kids say to each other. I didn't ever work the nightshift. I never heard of this practice ever being imposed by any member of staff at Brimmond.

175. ERI goes on to say the following at paragraph 128 of her statement. *"When I ran away and [redacted] caught me. I was taken back and I kicked off. Mrs ERL hauled me upstairs by the hair, banging my head off the stairs. I started kicking out at her because my feet were free. She shouted on Mr [redacted] who came running up the stairs. He lifted me off the ground like a rag doll and threw me into a cell. The cell was like a single bedroom with a metal bed and a potty. There was a spy hole on the wall and a buzzer for when you needed something. I continually pressed the buzzer because I wanted out of there. I did it so much that they switched the buzzer off. I had bruising to my body and I remember being upset and crying for a while."*

I don't remember any such incident. There was a secure room, not a cell, and I don't remember ERI being put in there.

176. The Kids referred to the secure room as 'the cell'. It was actually just like a single bedroom, but instead of their being a bed which you could move about, it had a built in bed. Apart from that, it was exactly like every other room. It wasn't a punishment cell. It wasn't used like that. It was a secure room for kids who were totally out of control. It was simpler and safer for them to be put in there long enough to calm down, rather than them being restrained for a period. Yes, sometimes kids were in there overnight, but never for days at a time. I know that there's lots of stories about it in the statements that have been disclosed to me, but that's not how it was used.

177. ERI goes on to say the following at paragraph 129 of her statement. *"I was left in there for nearly three days. I wasn't given any food, water and there was only the potty for the toilet...They forgot about me. Mrs GJP opened the door on the third day and immediately started apologising saying I shouldn't have been in there for as long."*

As I said, a child wouldn't have been left in there for three days. I'm also surprised at what she says about a potty being in there. Unless I've completely lost my memory, there was a flushing toilet attached to the room. All that was in the room was the bed, nothing else, but there was, as far as I remember a toilet.

178. There was only one secure room at Brimmond. The place was built with a secure room. It was designed by the people who planned the place and it was designed with the purpose of their being somewhere safe and secure. In that room, they could not hurt themselves, they could not hurt other people and they had the opportunity to calm down. I think any of us who have seen restraint being used know that the longer you try to restrain, the more the child will try to kick against it. The whole idea of using the secure room was to avoid the use of restraint.

179. ERI [REDACTED] goes on to say the following at paragraph 131 of her statement. *"[Redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] had a hard time at Brimmond. I saw [redacted] one time after Mrs ERL [REDACTED] had beaten her. [Redacted] was crying and she was bruised. I never saw it but she told me Mrs ERL [REDACTED] had beaten her. I heard that quite a few girls and some of the boys were beaten by Mrs ERL [REDACTED]. I saw some of the boys crying. Mrs ERL [REDACTED] was cruel. If you did something wrong she punished you. I was punished and sometimes I didn't know what I was being punished for. If Mrs ERL [REDACTED] hadn't been there Brimmond would have been okay."*

Absolutely not. As I said, corporal punishment wasn't used at Brimmond. I think, if anything, I was seen as being a bit of a soft touch by most of the kids.

180. ERI [REDACTED] goes on to say the following at paragraph 136 of her statement. *"The second time I was at Brimmond they took us to Balmedie Beach. Mrs ERL [REDACTED] and a new house father KEF [REDACTED] took us. I can't remember his last name. When we got there they sent us off to play on the sand dunes. When we were playing we caught Mrs ERL [REDACTED] and KEF [REDACTED] having sex. When we got back Mrs ERL [REDACTED] knew that I knew because I was shouting it out of the window to the boys below. Mrs ERL [REDACTED] bent over backwards to keep me quiet after that. She gave me cigarettes left right and centre."*

There in no way on gods earth that I would be having sex on a beach. I can assure you I did not have sex on Balmedie beach. With regard to bending over backwards to keep her quiet and giving her cigarettes, I actually didn't approve, at all, of the fact that children got cigarettes at Brimmond.

181. I don't know why **ERI** was having such a go at me. I don't particularly remember having a bad time with her.

Edna Booth

182. Edna Booth has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 21 of her statement, she has said "*The **ERL-ERM** were [redacted]. They lived in a flat...The matron, Mrs **ERL** was having an affair with a man who worked there called [redacted]. Boys in Brimmond were saying they were being abused by [redacted]. I wasn't.*"
I have been told that the man Edna is referring to is not **KEF**, so I have no idea who or what she is talking about.

183. I remember Edna well. The girls at Brimmond were often even more memorable than the boys. She was another very manipulative, sexually aware, girl. Again, she was in and out of Brimmond. I would have said she was around thirteen or fourteen when she came to Brimmond as most of the girls were about that age.

Peter Kelbie

184. Peter Kelbie has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 53 of his statement, he has said "*[Redacted] gave me constant beatings with sticks. I was raped twice by [redacted] during the day when the others were at school but this wasn't unusual as it had happened before when I was with the [redacted]. I was locked in my room and couldn't do anything. [Redacted] and [redacted] had a key to my room. I couldn't talk or express my feelings. You did what you were told or you were beaten. I suffered from migraines as a result of the beatings. I don't recall being hit by Mrs **ERL** but I witnessed her being violent towards other children.*"

I don't have any memory of a boy called Peter Kelbie being at Brimmond, but of course, some of these kids were known by different names in different situations. I wasn't violent towards anybody.

185. Peter Kelbie goes on to say the following at paragraph 54 of his statement. *"You were stripped of your dignity at Brimmond. They said we were trouble young boys and girls. [Redacted] hit me with snooker cues from the billiard room. There was always pieces of wood lying around from broken chairs. They were broken by [ERM] hitting us with them. I saw a girl's blouse being pulled off by [ERM] in the dining room. I saw him pick people up by the hair and throw them across the room. I was often bruised around the neck by [redacted] and [redacted]. I was abused on a daily basis. I had dislocated bones but I wasn't sent to hospital. I had no treatment."* That doesn't accord with anything I remember. If anyone had dislocated or broken bones of course they would be sent to hospital. There is no way my husband would have pulled a girls blouse off or would have thrown chairs. That simply wasn't the kind of man [ERM] was.
186. The statement of Peter Kelbie puzzles me because there is a lot of chat about [FFI] [FFI], of course, married my daughter and became my son-in-law. He died many years ago in his forties. He spent the first couple of years of his life in Arnhall Children's Home, then he was fostered and adopted. When I read in Peter's statement that [FFI] was his foster brother, I had no idea. I knew [FFI] had sisters who again, were all adopted children. I didn't tell my daughter anything about what I had read in Peter's statement, but I asked her if [FFI] had any brothers. She only knew of [FFI] having a brother called [REDACTED] who she said had really extreme mental health problems and was considered dangerous. I didn't ask her for any more details. [FFI] certainly never mentioned Peter to me.
187. The whole of Peter Kelbie's statement, in relation to Brimmond, just doesn't ring true at all. Even his description of the layout of the building isn't right. He also says at some point that [FFI] was sacked from Brimmond which simply wasn't the case.

188. HID has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 53 of his statement, he has said *"If you weren't academic, you got work. I was quite happy with that. I had no schooling at all. We used to make things to sell, to make a profit for Mr and Mrs ERL-ERM. If you were interested in school, you got to go to school, but nine times out of ten they'd try to get you to make things so they could sell them."* As I've said, there was a tendency to encourage practical subjects if children weren't interested in academic learning. Trying to force academic schooling on some of the children was just adding stress to what was an already stressful situation for them.
189. The children were never encouraged to make things over academic school. However, if a kid was happier in a practical subject, but they did make a lot of things to pass the time, whether that was in woodwork or sometimes the girls would take bars of soap and make them look pretty. These things were never sold for us. When family members visited, there would be a stall set up and the things the kids made were available for family members to buy. The money was used to pay for things like ice creams, if we were on an outing. It was never ever used for anything other than the kids.
190. HID goes on to say the following at paragraph 66 of his statement. *"The ERL-ERM really didn't know much about what was going on. It was well known amongst us that Mrs ERL was having an affair with [redacted], one of the members of staff. He got away with murder. He was the one that you kept away from. I could stand up for myself but when [redacted] came at you, he came at you with a baseball bat."*
- I never saw the baseball bat being use for anything other than hitting a ball.
191. HID goes on to say the following at paragraph 70 of his statement. *"They took all my clothes off me and I was in a padded cell. There was a girl in the cell called [redacted]. The first thing I did was cover my privates."*

Kids were never stripped naked and put in a padded cell. There was no padded cell, it was a secure bedroom and there is no way he would have been put in there with a girl. The sole purpose of the secure room was to isolate them, so they didn't have an audience to show off to. To my knowledge there was never more than one person put in the secure room at one time and they were only ever put in there with their normal clothes on.

192. HID goes on to say the following at paragraph 80 of his statement.

"He could get away with anything he wanted because of his affair with Mrs ERL Mrs ERL didn't know what was going on, but she was management so the buck should have stopped with her." I can't say that some of what is said about KEF isn't true, but I certainly didn't see it. It wasn't the case that I was turning a blind eye to something that I was aware of.

193. HID goes on to say the following at paragraph 84 of his statement.

"Towards the end of my time, a coloured boy arrived at Brimmond. There was an uproar with the social workers next to the dining room. I remember the ERL-ERM saying "We're not having a nigger in this institution. "The social workers told them to give it a try, He was about fifteen. [redacted] started using him to do his beatings and punishments."

I would never have used the expression that is used there. My husband and I met because our fathers worked together in West Africa for twenty-five years. We were not brought up to speak in that way about people of colour. The only coloured children that I remember at Brimmond was a very little boy and his big brother. I think the only reason they came to Brimmond because they were refugees and nobody knew where to put them.

194. I was interviewed by a solicitor, who said he was acting on behalf of Aberdeen City Council, in relation to HID. I think that was back before lockdown. When the solicitor spoke about HID, it didn't click initially, but then I remembered that he was known as HID in Brimmond. HID came in as a lost wee boy and he just went through the system going from bad to worse.

GLO

195. GLO has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 96 of his statement, he has said *"The boys would shower about once a week. If it was summer and we had been out playing, we could have a shower when we asked for one. There was a shower in a communal shower area. There would be five or six boys in the row of showers at the time. Mrs ERL would often come down when all the boys were undressed. If we were coming out of the shower, she would offer to rub your back. She would then take your towel and rub your back and between your legs. It was very uncomfortable, especially for a teenage boy. She did this to me and to other boys. She was only about five foot, two inches tall."*
- I didn't do that. I've already said, I didn't go into the boys' showers.

196. As I said earlier, I was interviewed by the police in relation to GLO when he made a complaint about being sexually abused by a befriender. I have been asked if I recall the befriender. At the time, there was a big drive for people to become befrienders to children who were stuck in care homes and didn't have anybody visiting them. My recollection is that a befriender couldn't visit or take a child out without it being approved by a higher authority than us. If somebody turned up at Brimmond wanting to be a befriender, they would have been told to get in touch with the social work department, albeit there was no disclosure Scotland in those days. I remember GLO having a befriender, but I don't remember any more specific details about how that was set up. My husband would have dealt with that. I had no contact with GLO befriender, Robert Hannah, at all. I understand that Robert Hanna was found guilty of sexually abusing GLO at court and was sentenced.

IEI

197. IEI has given a statement to the Inquiry. At paragraph 36 of his statement, he has said *"There was a nurse at Brimmond, but I never saw her. I didn't get any proper healthcare or dental care while I was there. I do remember boys having toothache and I think they went to the dentist, but I didn't. I was checked for lice once*

by staff and at some point here was an outbreak of scabies. Mrs ERL painted each boy's genital, hands and feet two or three times with a silver ointment. She used a brush and I remember there were male members of staff standing watching while she did it. I found it really embarrassing and I don't think that was right. I think I was fourteen when that happened."

There was no nurse. As I say, if I was worried about a child's health, I got the doctor in. That's exactly what I did when we had the outbreak of scabies and I was doing exactly what the doctor had told me told.

198. If you think I enjoyed being on my hands and knees, slapping this stuff on teenage boys, I can assure you I didn't. I felt it was my job as matron to say, 'this is what the doctor says has got to be done, so let's get on with it and do it'. I couldn't say for certain if I had to put it on the boy's hands and feet, but the doctors' instructions were definitely to put it on their genitals.

Convictions

199. I don't have any convictions.

Helping the Inquiry

200. I struggle to comprehend how the abuse described in the statements which have been disclosed to me could have taken place. There were always so many people about. The people who chose to work in somewhere like Brimmond, did it because they were interested in and cared for the kids. It wasn't an easy job. If kids had visible injuries, someone would have noticed.
201. In my view, the sooner we can intervene when a child is being neglected, the better. By the time kids are fourteen or fifteen, I think many of them are damaged beyond repair. There are also lots of kids who went through the system who went on to have

good jobs and happy marriages. It's been very depressing having to concentrate on the negatives because I still think there was an awful lot of good work done or attempted, even if it was not always successful.

202. I have had the statements of about eight kids disclosed to me. There must have been eight hundred, or maybe ever twice that, went through Brimmond. I'm sure not every child would see it like these eight do. I believed in what we were trying to do. I didn't always feel that we were successful, but we were very aware that these children had been everywhere else and nowhere was finding them manageable. We were often the last stop.

203. I'm really sorry that any kid would genuinely feel as unhappy as they sound in these statements. That's not the memory I have of Brimmond at all. The hardest thing for me about this process is that, the image I had of being a good person doing a hard job, to the best of my ability and actually being appreciated by an awful lot of people, took a hell of a beating. I have got over that because there are dozens more people that have given me positive stokes over the years than have kicked me in the guts. Even though I have found this process very, very hard, out of all the places I worked, Brimmond is still the place I loved and I'm very proud of the work we tried to do there.

Other information

204. 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.....
ERL

Dated.....*20th February, 2024*.....