

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KNR

Support person present: No.

1. My name is KNR. My date of birth is 1974. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Weymouth, England and moved up to Scotland shortly before my fifth birthday. I started school in Scotland. We moved to Newtonhill through my dad's employment. He was in the Navy. He became a diver superintendent carrying out offshore work, that's why we moved to Scotland. We had a house built in Newtonhill, Aberdeenshire.
3. My dad's name was . My mum was . She was mainly a housewife looking after me and my little brother . is three years my junior.
4. I went to Newtonhill Primary School and was doing okay there. I did have some fights with other boys but other than that, I didn't have any issues. I was good in my classes and was tipped to do quite well. I was well known and popular with other school pupils and my teachers. I played football and took part in anything that the school was putting on. The fighting with other boys started in primary seven.
5. I was a daddy's boy. He was offshore a lot and my relationship with my mum wasn't too good. I resembled my dad quite a lot. Sometimes he worked two weeks on, two weeks off. Sometimes it was six months on six months off, it just depended on the contract and where he was in the world.

6. It was difficult from time to time, mainly because of my mum. I didn't have a good relationship with her at that point. I did get on fine with my brother.
7. I don't really know why I started fighting at primary school. It was just playground fighting although my mum and dad did get called in to speak to the headmaster about it. I remember sitting outside the headmaster's office. When we went home my mum would deal with it the majority of the time. She would ground me and sometimes use a bit of physical violence on me as well. I was never suspended from primary school. My mum has passed away now.
8. When I moved to Stonehaven Academy, there were lots of kids from different primary schools going there. There was a bit of fighting at the start because reputation follows. It was people getting to know people. I was suspended a couple of times.
9. I completed my first high school year in Stonehaven. I then went to Portlethen Academy when that opened. That was a new school and it was closer to my home. I did part of my second year there before I was taken into care.
10. I remember being involved in a fight at Portlethen. The headmaster and a couple of members of staff broke the fight up. My mum and dad were both called to the school. I was suspended due to that one as well.
11. While I was suspended, I was still playing football for Portlethen School. It was [REDACTED] 1987. My dad came up to watch me. On the way home, he was run over and killed.
12. After my suspension, I went back to school. I was in class when a social worker came to the school. I was called out the classroom and told that I was going to a new school, a residential school in Aberdeen called Oakbank. I wasn't to go back home. That was where I was going to live. That was within a week of my dad's death. I had just turned thirteen. My social worker was Marion Philips. She was from Aberdeenshire social work and was based in Stonehaven.
13. Prior to that, I had never met a social worker. I didn't even know I had a social worker. Prior to my dad dying, there had been a bit of disruption between me and my

mum. She was an alcoholic and wanted me in a residential school. My dad was willing to pay for Gordonstoun or Robert Gordon's in Aberdeen. He was looking at them and I had to pass an exam for one of them. That was the route my dad wanted me to go down. After he was killed, my mum chose the other route. She called in social work and explained our situation and difficulties.

14. When Marion Philips turned up at the school, I was introduced to her for the first time. She explained to me that I wasn't going home anymore, that I was going to this new school in Aberdeen called Oakbank Residential School. I didn't get to go home and I was emotional. I was very upset and was crying in the back of the car all the way to Aberdeen. I was concerned about my dog.

Oakbank Residential School, Aberdeen – first time

15. I met with SNR [REDACTED], Mr HMY [REDACTED], SNR [REDACTED] was LIL [REDACTED]. I met the guy who was going to be my keyworker. I think his name was KNS [REDACTED]. My first impressions of staff was that they were being okay with me. Just showing me around the place, showing me the routine and how it was going to be.
16. There was three different units, Calvin, Lister and Scott. At night-time we all slept in a big dormitory. There were over a hundred boys in there.
17. When I first went in, I was put into a new boy dorm. It had four single beds in a room about ten foot by ten foot. It had partition walls, which were about eight foot high.
18. I spent a week in the new boy dorm before I was assigned to one of the houses. I'm sure I went into Calvin. Whether you liked it or not just depended on who you were in with.
19. There were playing fields in the grounds. There were workshops, a swimming pool and a gym.
20. They used to give awards at the end of the year. I was given an award for best new boy. I was given a little trophy and that led to bullying from other pupils and then the staff.

21. I remember the name of the first guy I had a fight with. That led to a series of situations for me.

Routine at Oakbank Residential School

First day

22. We turned up at the front door to this big school. There were all these members of staff outside. There was a boy on the roof throwing slates at cars. I was taken out the car and ushered into the school. First thing they did was take off my clothes and issue me with their clothing. I didn't have any of my own clothes, just what I was standing in. They showed me around the school, told me where assembly was and some of the school rules. I went through and had something to eat in a big dining room where all the boys were. There was a new boys' table. I sat there with three other kids who were new to the school.
23. A boy came over with a jug of tea. He asked me if I wanted a cup of magic mushroom tea. I didn't drink tea and had never taken anything like that either.
24. The place was a bit erratic and I felt like everybody's eyes were on me. There were 120 boys and most of them were bigger and older than I was. I'd say the ages went up to sixteen years.
25. Marion Philips, the social worker, stayed with me at Oakbank School for half an hour then left.
26. At the side of our beds there was a little bedside cabinet. I didn't have anything to keep in it at that point. All I had were the clothes I was standing in when I walked in the door. That's all I had the whole time I was in Oakbank, especially the first time I was there.
27. All the doors were locked at Oakbank. You couldn't just walk somewhere. Staff had to open doors for you.

Mornings and bedtime

28. At night we would have our tea and then have a communal shower. That was supervised by members of staff. After the shower, we had to put on our pyjamas and slippers and run up the stairs. We would get to watch a film at night. A nightwatchman used to come on duty.
29. The nightwatchman decided when you went to bed. He decided whether you were getting to watch the end of the film and stay up a bit later. It depended on your age and if you fitted in. I hadn't fitted in at that point, I didn't know anybody. I'm from Aberdeenshire and I spoke well. That caused me problems, the "yes please" and "no thank you". Because of that, I got picked on and bullied and had to learn to stand up for myself. That's where my problems started. I had my first confrontation with a nightwatchman over that.
30. Nightwatchmen seemed to be by themselves at night. I never saw any other staff at night unless people were running away. We were able to get up during the night if we needed the toilet.

Mealtimes/Food

31. The food was terrible. It was a lot like prison food. We would go up to a hotplate to collect our food, then sit at a table with other people to eat it. It was really similar to prison. Some of the pupils would pick on you and want some of your food. There was staff around supervising but they wouldn't take any notice, only if there was fighting.

Washing/bathing

32. There were a lot of sinks and showers in the communal shower room. You had to change your clothes at one side and wash or shower at the other. There were maybe ten or twelve showers in there.

Uniform

33. We were given a pair of '51 states' branded jeans, a checkered shirt and a black pair of Dunlop trainers. All the clothing was second hand and had been worn.

Leisure time

34. I was quite athletic and I loved sport. I used to love going to the swimming pool. They had a twenty-metre pool with a balcony above where people could spectate. My dad had brought me up to be a swimmer and a diver so I could go into the Navy.
35. The swimming pool was supervised and was outwith the school building although it wasn't far. I used to love going into the gym and playing football. They had a trampoline and all different kinds of sporting equipment.
36. There was a PT instructor. I did tell them I was being scouted for [REDACTED] Football Club Select. I was good at football and was a prospect for the club. The staff at Oakbank told me that they had to contact [REDACTED] Football Club regarding the school I was in. For that reason, I was told not to look forward to playing for [REDACTED] due to the school I was in. Because it was a residential school and the name that was attached to it. They said I was to get myself out of there and continue with my football and things might change.

Schooling

37. The education at Oakbank was quite disrupted. The classes were a lot smaller than the classes I was used to in mainstream school. They had a different kind of design, different teachers, different pupils, different quality of education, totally.
38. The education was held in the school itself. They had workshops outwith the school. If you had woodwork, you would need to go out of the school and into a different department. I liked going to the woodwork department.

39. I used to like learning. I was quite clever, quite switched on but the schooling was chaotic and not a lot got done. The pupils I was in a class with weren't quite at the level I was at. That made it quite difficult for me. No one did any qualifications there.
40. We went to school in the morning and did a couple of hours. We would do an hour in the afternoon before going to the gym or doing something like that. The education wasn't anywhere near the standard I was used to. The teachers didn't really teach to the standard of mainstream school. It was more behavioural.
41. I remember a [REDACTED] Physical Training Instructor in there, [REDACTED] was good with me. When I left Oakbank, I heard [REDACTED] went on to run the place for a while. [REDACTED] name was [REDACTED]
42. The woodwork teacher was good with me too. Mr Heard was his name. I remember he had a missing finger. He had put it through the bandsaw.

Healthcare

43. There was never any counselling offered to me after the death of my dad although my dad was buried at sea and I was allowed to go to that. No one at any of the schools I went to spoke to me about my dad and how I was feeling about his death.
44. There wasn't much one-to-one work, although my keyworker, [REDACTED] ^{KNS} did do a little bit with me. He would give me phone calls to my mum but she was abusive a lot of the time and it wasn't good for me or her. She would speak about the death of my dad.
45. Oakbank did have a nurse but I never needed to see her. I had a health check when I first arrived but nothing after that. I never saw a dentist whilst I was there.

Religious instruction

46. There was no religion offered. We didn't get anything like that. When I was a little boy we used to go to Sunday School. I didn't really have a religion and was a bit unsure about it all.

Trips and holidays

47. Staff used to take us out in the minibus. Sometimes we would drop boys off for their weekend leave. We were never taken to the cinema or those types of places.

Work

48. There were work parties. Some boys worked on the grounds, some boys worked in the woodshed. There were painters. I was in the woodshed. We didn't get any pocket money for the work. We were paid in cigarettes.

Birthdays and Christmas

49. I don't think I was ever in Oakbank at Christmas. I'm not sure about birthdays, I don't remember.

Personal possessions

50. I didn't have any possessions at Oakbank. I just had the clothes I was wearing when I arrived there. I remember getting pocket money in Rossie Farm but not in Oakbank. I can't remember anything like that. Maybe there was a tuck shop, I'm not sure.

Bed Wetting

51. I never wet the bed. That's all I can say. I think it was an issue for some people but I wasn't really aware of it.

Visitors

52. My social worker must have visited me in Oakbank but I've no memory of it. She must have come in and told me I was going to the assessment centre in Elgin.
53. I was allowed my first phone call a few days after I arrived at Oakbank. I phoned home. My mum was drunk and was being abusive over the phone. I was trying to describe the place I was in to her. I was basically saying that I was missing home and that I would be getting home leave at some point.

54. My mum came to visit me once. My brother didn't come. I didn't want my brother to see me in a place like that. I don't remember much about that first visit really. She wasn't allowed to take me out of the school.

Review of care/detention

55. I think I went to a children's panel before I went to Elgin. They put me on a compulsory order to go to this assessment centre. I remember there were three people on the children's panel, my social worker, my mum and me. I remember being asked what I was feeling about it. I always said that I wanted to go back home. Sometimes I felt that I was being listened to, other times, not.

Discipline

56. In Oakbank we were allowed to smoke after the age of fourteen.

Running away

57. I didn't run away the first time I was in Oakbank but I did the second and third time I was there.

Abuse at Oakbank Residential School

58. I remember the first time I got battered. I had been at Oakbank for two days. That was in the shower room. I got jumped and battered off a guy called [REDACTED]. He was older than me and he used his fists and his feet, but no weapons. I was injured but the staff never knew about it. I later became friends with him and I asked him about it. He said his peers had told him to batter me, to rough me up basically. It was to do with me refusing to hand over my food at mealtimes.
59. I had my first confrontation with a nightwatchman over being sent to bed. We were watching a film at night. Before the end of the film, he told me to go to bed, so I started giving him a bit of attitude. I got gripped by the throat and screamed at in front of all the pupils. He put one hand round my neck and lifted me off my feet. I was clouted around the head and thrown out of the TV room. It was like a backhanded

slap across the face. I went to my bed and was sitting crying. The nightwatchman was called [ILF]. I didn't know his surname. He was an older guy with a balding head. He used to come in wearing Marlboro tracksuits. He was a smoker. He had quite an attitude and was an Aberdonian.

60. I hadn't seen that side to [ILF] before. It was his attitude and how he went about things. I saw him doing similar things to other boys but he didn't do it to me again.
61. Some nights there was a bit of chaos, a bit of banter, joking and laughing. We would be told to quieten down and to get our heads down. One night, I was lying in my bed and heard shouting and rumbling. I heard a bang, crash and a wallop. The next thing I knew there were members of staff coming in shining torches, doing counts and checking everybody was okay.
62. I remember hearing my pal [REDACTED] crying. The guy in the next dorm to me, [REDACTED], had picked up a bedside locker and threw it over the partition wall and it hit [REDACTED] in the face. [REDACTED] was the same guy that had been on the roof the day I arrived at Oakbank.
63. It was the next day that I saw [REDACTED] with a black eye. I asked him what had happened and he told me. I've no idea if anything happened to [REDACTED] after this. I used to see him going about every day. He had an attitude all the time towards members of staff and pupils. He just had a negative attitude.
64. The staff used to take us out on minibus runs. It depended on what member of staff was taking you. There were a couple of members of staff who took you places that you shouldn't have been going.
65. There was a member of staff called [LJK]. On a minibus run with him we used to sometimes drop boys off for their home leave. I didn't know the Logie area of Aberdeen back then but I know it now. [LJK] sent a young boy from the minibus into a flat to buy cannabis. The boy came back out and the next thing we were smoking joints in the minibus. [LJK] was smoking with us. That was the first time I had smoked cannabis. [LJK] had blonde hair and a blonde beard. He was about thirty-five, forty

years old. I'm not sure what LJK role was at Oakbank. A supervisor or something. I didn't work with him one-to-one. He was just a member of staff to me.

66. Another member of staff who took us out in the minibus was [REDACTED] called KNT. He was an older guy, sixty odd with grey hair and glasses. He used to take us down the harbour. We would watch prostitutes getting picked up in cars. He would follow them in the minibus and we would sit in the minibus behind them. He would watch, then take us back down to the harbour. There would be prostitutes in the street and he would stop the van next to them. We all thought it was funny, a van full of boys. To me now, that was taking us to the wrong kind of places.
67. The doors were locked in Oakbank and you felt trapped in there. I used to wonder how I could get out of the situation I was in. It was fight or flight but there was no flight so you had to fight. Then when you fought you had members of staff on you and it went on from there.
68. I remember being in the assembly room in Oakbank. A boy became aggressive and abusive towards me. He started fighting me and I hit him back. My keyworker ran over and put my arm up my back. He started marching me away and as we walked, my arm was getting sorer and sorer and I was telling him to get off me. He was putting my arm further up my back and I punched him.
69. He threw me into SNR [REDACTED] office. There was a big table with lots of seats round it. In came SNR [REDACTED], Mr HMY and LIL [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED]. They took me by the scruff of the neck and started shouting in my face. They leant me over SNR [REDACTED] table and started smacking me round the head. Then I was belted on my backside a couple of times, on top of my clothes. It was sore and I was crying. I was then thrown upstairs into my dorm and into my bed. I don't remember if they left marks on me. The three of them were in the office throughout. That was the first time I felt abused.
70. My keyworker did speak to me about it afterwards. He asked me if I was okay and if I felt the need to see a nurse. I declined and told him I was okay. He explained that those were the rules in the school and that was how it worked. He said, if I didn't behave, I wouldn't get my home leave.

71. The belt wasn't used on me again but I know they were abusive to a lot of boys. Boys didn't like to speak up about it.
72. I remember boys being restrained. They would be tackled to the floor. The staff would use force and shout and scream at them. That would generally be for fighting although it didn't happen to me.
73. I also got the belt at school, so when they belted me, I didn't realise it was against the law and that they shouldn't have been doing that. I didn't question it.
74. I found that the female members of staff were better. They weren't aggressive towards us. There weren't a lot of female staff, it was mainly men. I didn't see physical violence or aggression from the female staff.
75. I can't remember if there was a cell for punishment at Oakbank. They used to lock us in different rooms. They had rooms all over the school. No matter what room you went into, the door would be locked behind you. Sometimes I would be on my own. When I was brought back after having absconded, I would be locked in a room and have to sit there for a few hours. If I needed the toilet, I would have to kick the door.

Leaving Oakbank Residential School

76. After being at Oakbank for five to eight weeks the first time, I was told I was going to an assessment centre called Andrew Thomson House in Elgin. I'm sure it was Marion that came and got me from Oakbank. She took me up to Elgin in her car.

Andrew Thomson House, Elgin

77. I was told I was going to Andrew Thomson House for a two-to-four-month period. It

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Andrew Thomson House, Elgin

86. I didn't get to visit Sycamore House in Kirkcaldy before I was moved there. It was explained to me that it was a stepping stone and that I was going in the right direction for getting home. I was to go down there and show that I could behave properly, then try to build up a better relationship with my mum, go to a normal school and progress.

Sycamore Children's Home, Kirkcaldy

87. I was taken to Sycamore by car and would have been fourteen year's old at the time. It was an eight-bedroom house. I went in and met a woman called Tanya. I was told she was going to be my keyworker. I was taken through to meet the other boys and girls that were there. There weren't many. I sat in a TV room and was introduced to them. I went through and was shown the kitchen, where the dining room was and the manager's office. I went upstairs and was shown my bedroom. I had to share a bedroom.

88. The staff seemed friendly when I arrived. Life was okay. There were a couple of boys from Aberdeen that I became pally with. They showed me the estate, showed me where the shop was. There were no locked doors at Sycamore and we could go in and out. We had our freedom and it didn't feel like we were being punished on a daily basis.
89. I got on okay with all the staff and they did work with me. I was quite good with my manners and I would speak to everybody openly. I got on with most of the people that were around me.

Routine at Sycamore Children's Home, Kirkcaldy

Mealtimes/Food

90. Food was alright and you were able to make your own stuff. They had their own cook and the food was healthy.

Schooling

91. I started going to mainstream school. I forget the name of it now. I went into second or third year. This is where the problems started. I was given a new school in the middle of Kirkcaldy. I wasn't a local boy and wasn't known but I was coming from a kid's home and that carried a reputation. I had got into smoking from Oakbank. Other boys were challenging me. I had picked up this thing, fight or flight. If I was challenged, I felt like I couldn't get away from it without having to fight. I had a couple of fights and little issues started from there.
92. I eventually got a reputation and started to feel like I wasn't fitting in. I was going off the education totally. I just didn't want to be there. I tried to explain that to my keyworker, Tanya. She told me there were other schools in the area but that I wouldn't be able to go to any of them. I didn't understand that and it was never explained to me. All the guys in the children's home with me went to different schools.

93. I found it difficult at school and being around other guys. I got myself into a couple of situations that had to be dealt with by the headmaster. I got a warning the first time and sent back to the kid's home the second time. The school would report everything to my keyworker at the kid's home. I had some one-to-one work with my keyworker and was taken out and about. They did try.

Trips

94. I don't remember ever actually going on any trips when I was there. They would allow us to go out and do certain things ourselves, things like go to the cinema and walk back to the home. They gave us pocket money so we could do things like that.

Visits

95. My mum used to come down to see me and we would go and do things like go to the shops. Me, my mum and a member of staff would go together. Sometimes she brought our dog down with her. I tried to re-build my relationship with my mum. I got home some weekends. It was good going home and getting out to see some of my pals.

Running away

96. I started to run away from the home and sleep in the woods across from the kid's home. Then we got into sniffing glue. The kid I met from Aberdeen, who was already down there, was already involved in all that. He would source it. It led to us sniffing butane gas. We used to go into the centre and shoplift it.
97. The staff would punish us for running away by sending us to our room.

Review of care/detention

98. I was sent to children's panels because of the solvent abuse. The panel would say I was a danger to the public and a danger to myself so needed secure accommodation. That's why I was put to Rossie.

Discipline

99. We never had to do any chores there.

Abuse at Sycamore Children's Home, Kirkcaldy

100. There was an allegation made against me while I was in there. I had a little girlfriend. A group of us had run away from the home and were all taking butane gas. She had a bad episode with it and ran away from us all. I never saw her again. I went away and did what I was doing while I was on the run for a couple of days. When I got caught, there was an allegation that I had sexually assaulted this girl. I was locked in a room with an American guy called KNU who SNR kid's home. He told me police were coming to take my DNA but wouldn't tell me what I was supposed to have done until I had spoken to the police.
101. I was getting agitated sitting in this room for a few hours with a guy I barely knew. I was in my pyjamas and wasn't allowed footwear. He was a bit physical with me and said that he needed to keep me apprehended. He was trying to restrain me, pinning me down and trying to keep control of me. He said that he felt I was a flight risk. He pinned me down for maybe ten minutes and was a bit nasty. I was finally let up and told to sit on my chair. Shortly after that the police came.
102. They started taking samples from under my fingernails. They asked me questions. The social worker was called the next day and I was put to Rossie Farm because it was secure accommodation. That was on an emergency basis because of this allegation. About a week later, the allegation against me was dropped. Obviously, I had been denying it because it didn't happen. Still to this day, I don't know exactly what the allegation was. That had an impact on my life.
103. I'm all good with Sycamore. They were straight up with me. It was just the end with that allegation against me. Later on, I went back down. I wanted to see this girl, see what her problem was and why she said what she said. I had a little relationship with her and couldn't understand it. I spoke to her and she put it down to the substances she had taken, said that she didn't really know what she was doing, that she had

freaked out. One thing had led to another. She admitted to me that she felt sad and was sorry. She did say sorry to me. That was after I had left care.

104. I think I was in Sycamore for about nine months. I think I was being assessed there.

Rossie Farm Residential School, Montrose – first time

105. Rossie Farm was secure, all the doors were locked and there were bars on the windows and high walls. I was fifteen year's old. I had to learn their regime and attend school. I was kept in a cell overnight. You had to bang on the door if you needed the toilet. Nightwatchmen would come and open your door.
106. I was moved to a unit called Dalhousie. There were three units there, Dalhousie, Tay and Lunan. I spent the first couple of weeks in Lunan, then I went into Dalhousie. I was given a keyworker. They called him Big Humph. He was brilliant with me. The staff were okay in there, a lot better than the staff in Oakbank. I felt safer there. I felt there was no need to runaway or get up to anything like that. I towed the line, behaved and focused on my education and tried to progress in my family life back at home, which didn't go too well, but I did try.
107. I was in Rossie Farm twice. Back then it was three month compulsory orders they used to give you. It was secure accommodation.
108. The first time I went to Rossie, I did a twenty-one-day period then a three-month compulsory order straight after that. That was from Rossie, to the children's panel, then straight back to Rossie. I think I did two or three compulsory orders before I got back home to my mum's.
109. When I was in Rossie there were people coming from the courts. People doing what was called 'HMP' – 'Her Majesties Pleasure'. I was in there with two boys who were in there for murder. I hated one of them. He was an Aberdonian boy and he was in for murdering a baby. There were fights because of that. The staff would have to separate us. I had a couple of issues with him. I got on with everybody there apart from that one boy.

110. When I first went to Rossie a guy walked into the dining room in a suit. I thought it was a member of staff. He said he was in there with me and had just come from court. He was there on 'HMP' with a fifteen-year tariff. His name was [REDACTED] and he was from Edinburgh. I formed a relationship with him. He was good with me. He was into his sports and I was into my sports. I got on fine with him.
111. It was just difficult to wrap your head round why people were coming from court for murder and living in the same environment as me. What had I really done that was so bad? They were using the fact that I was taking substances. I was sniffing glue and absconding, doing stuff that I shouldn't have been doing.
112. We mixed with the girls in Rossie. There weren't a lot of them, a couple in every unit, self-harmers there for their own protection.

Routine at Rossie Farm Residential School, Montrose

Mealtimes/Food

113. The food was brilliant in Rossie. They had a little older wifey. She used to make banging meals for the boys. She was good with us all and was a bit like a granny. She would basically cook you up anything you wanted.

Schooling

114. They had small classes for four or five of us and a teacher. You could sit and do your work or you could sit and play a little game on the computer. It was okay, it was just that you didn't learn a lot. It wasn't anything like a school I had been in before.

Leisure

115. We used to play members of staff at games of pool and table tennis. If I won, I'd be asking for an extra smoke and they would give me it. We used to get pocket money in Rossie and we used to save up for clothes. The staff would take us into Montrose shopping. My gran was good to me. She supported me a lot, bought me things I was needing and gave me money for this and that.

Trips

116. We were taken out of Rossie on day trips, taken shopping. They took us hillwalking. They did quite a lot with us, sometimes as a group, other times one-on one. When you first went to Rossie, you had to behave to get your gym, swim and walk. You had to behave to get to the gym, then to the swimming pool and then to walk out with the school. That was how they got you to behave.

Discipline

117. If you didn't behave, you were restrained and put into your bedroom, which was like a cell with a locked door. I was never restrained at Rossie but I did see it happen. Two members of staff would pin a resident to the ground and shout at them to calm down. Then they would be put to their room. I didn't see any physical abuse though, it was necessary restraint.

Abuse at Rossie Farm Residential School, Montrose

118. I was locked in a cell overnight. If I needed the toilet I would have to bang on the door and the nightwatchman would come and let me out.
119. One day, when coming back from the gym, I asked for an extra smoke but they wouldn't give me one. I said that I would take two of the belt for an extra smoke. I was taken through to the manager's office and they took out the belt. The unit manager gave me two belts to the hand. It wasn't as hard as I'd had in the past but hard enough. It got me an extra fag. That was the only time I got the belt at Rossie. I wasn't aware of anyone else getting the belt there.

Leaving Rossie Farm Residential School, Montrose

120. After I finished my compulsory order, I went back to my mum's for [REDACTED].

Oakbank Residential School, Aberdeen – second time

121. Once back at my mum's, I was told I was going to be a day pupil at Oakbank School after [REDACTED]. For whatever reason though, they decided to put me to Oakbank over [REDACTED] holidays. By the time the holidays were over, they had decided to keep me there as a residential pupil and not a day pupil. I was at Oakbank for a few months after [REDACTED].

Running Away

122. I remember running away in my pyjamas and slippers. Being chased by staff in the minibus into Aberdeen City Centre. The pyjamas I was wearing were shocking. They were brown flowery pyjamas that you wouldn't want to be seen in. They were issued to us by Oakbank.
123. I remember getting away from them. I was with another guy who came with me. We ended up in Aberdeen having to live off the street. I didn't know anybody. The only people I knew in Aberdeen were the people I was in the school with. The other boy took me places where we could stay but sometimes we had to sleep rough. I would have been fourteen or fifteen. We would do this until we got caught and we ran away more than once. I used to run away all the time. I didn't like Oakbank and didn't feel safe there.
124. Either the staff or the police would find us, mainly the police. The police would take us to Queen Street or Bucksburn Police Station. They would phone the social worker and sometimes Marion, the social worker, came and took me back to Oakbank. I used to say to her that I just wanted to go home.
125. I felt like I was being punished when I got back to Oakbank. I would be told I wasn't getting to swim, not getting to the gym. I had to remain in pyjamas and slippers. That's why I ran away in pyjamas and slippers the second time. I couldn't get my own clothes but I wasn't staying there and was off.
126. When I was up in the woodwork shop, I would take flight. I would wait for someone to leave the work shed and take the opportunity to run when the door was open.

Sometimes I would smash a window to get out. You just did what you had to do to get away.

127. The second and third time I was at Oakbank, I had grown up a bit. I was a bit more aware of who a lot of the people were. I didn't feel like I got as much of a hard time off the pupils. I was allowed to smoke and that made me a little bit happier. It was something to look forward to.

Abuse at Oakbank Residential School, Aberdeen

128. When I was getting into trouble during my second and third time at Oakbank, I used to get gripped and slapped. I didn't get the belt again but there was a lot of physical violence from time to time. It wasn't just on me. I used to see it happen a lot to other people.
129. LIL [REDACTED] was bad for that. There was another man, Mr ILG [REDACTED] We used to call him "ILG [REDACTED]" He was aggressive and in your face. He used to grip you and clout you on the ear. That's what my mum used to call it. I was brought up with that, so I didn't really question it.
130. I remember being locked in a room for a few hours as a punishment after running away or during school time.

Rossie Farm Residential School, Montrose – second time

131. I was then put back to Rossie Farm and I know I was there for a good few months. I would have been fourteen or fifteen by this time.

Schooling

132. I was at Rossie the second time when my exams came around. They were due to start on the Monday. One thing I do regret is not sitting them. They had disrupted my home leave over the weekend. On the Monday morning, they opened my cell door and asked me if I wanted to go to school that day. I hadn't got my home leave so I wasn't going to any school. I was told it was for my 'O' level but I said I didn't care,

and for them just to shut the door. I was upset. I never got another chance to sit an exam. Later in life, I realise the importance of these exams and I regret it.

Home leave

133. I'd get home leave providing my mum wasn't phoning up blazing drunk, causing issues. A lot of times I was told that my mum had phoned but I wasn't allowed to speak to her that day. That was because sometimes I was going on the phone and just getting abuse from her. They would sit and listen to my mum giving me abuse down the phone and they didn't think it was right. That's what happened that weekend before my exam.
134. All going well with weekend leave, the staff would take me up in the staff car. They would pick me up again on the Sunday night. Whether it lasted all weekend was a different thing. A lot of the time social workers were called to take me back. My mum was drunk and couldn't hack me being at home. It just became very disruptive. Staff would just turn up and drive me back to Rossie. I didn't like it, I was being taken away from my pals and my little brother. It was upsetting for him as well. I loved my dog. Once I was home I wanted to stay there.
135. I liked my home leave and would look forward to it all week. It got to the Friday and staff would say I wasn't going. They would say they would speak to me again on the Saturday. Saturday would come and they would say, "*No, your not going home.*" I think they were thinking if my mum's attitude was different and she was sober, I could get home. It was upsetting.

Discipline

136. They could stop the home leave as a punishment too. They could stop it at any point. Anytime they stopped it with me, it felt like a punishment.

Oakbank Residential School, Aberdeen – third time

137. I was then put back to Oakbank again. It just felt like proper punishment every time I was sent back there. I hated the place and didn't feel like I could settle there one bit.

138. The last time I went to Oakbank they were starting to let girls in. They were in a different unit to the boys. They were in a unit halfway up to where the painter's and joiner's sheds were. There was maybe up to ten girls there at the time. I'm not sure because I didn't meet many of them.

Leaving Oakbank Residential School, Aberdeen

139. From there I ended up in Danestone Children's Home in Bridge of Don, Aberdeen. I'm not sure why I was sent there. I think just to get me out of Oakbank and try to re-settle me.

Danestone Children's Home, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen

140. I was in Danestone Children's Home at Bridge of Don for a few weeks. Secondary Institutions

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

141.

142.

Leaving Danestone Children's Home, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen

143. I remember being in Bucksburn Police Station Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Seconda The hatch came down and they said my social worker was coming in to see

me. They said that they had been asked to ask me a question and whether I wanted to go to St Mary's in Glasgow or back to Rossie Farm. I said to put me back to Rossie. He said, *"You've got the short straw this time, you're going to Glasgow,"* and slammed the hatch closed.

- 144. Two social workers I had never met before picked me up from the police station. They told me they were escorting me down to Glasgow and that they would tell me about the place while we were travelling down.
- 145. I complied and was no problem to them but on the way they said that it was a no smoking facility. They said that they would buy me a packet of fags before they took me in.

St Mary's (Kenmure) School, Bishopbriggs

- 146. I went into St Mary's and introduced myself as an Aberdonian. I think I was fifteen by this time. They were all Glaswegian but seemed to be fine to start with. They told me it was a Catholic run regime, Catholic school and that there were sixty-two residents. I was the only boy who wasn't from Glasgow.
- 147. I'm sure it was just boys in there but I started mixing okay. I was going to football everyday, going to my education and was doing fine.
- 148. The bedrooms were a bit like the rooms in Rossie but I had more of my own things in Rossie. I didn't have anything down there.
- 149. I was in the secure unit in St Mary's. There were big fences round the units. I never got out of there until I had a supervised home visit with a member of staff.
- 150. Apart from SNR, the staff I worked with at St Mary's were alright with me.

Routine at St. Mary's (Kenmure) School, Bishopbriggs

Schooling

151. There was schooling at St Mary's. The classes were small but there was this stigma about the football there all the time. I just didn't fit in and felt uneasy the whole time. I couldn't focus and do much schoolwork. The only positive thing I did down there was the gym. I was burning my energy in there at nighttime.

Religion

152. I didn't get offered any religion. I was brought up to go to Sunday School. Before we had our Sunday dinner at home as a young boy our family would say a prayer. I just never got the chance to go to church or anything like that in care. That was the same at St Mary's.

Trips

153. I never went on any outside trips when I was at St Mary's.

Visits

154. My mum had visited me a couple of times at St Mary's. Things were going okay with my mum. She had a new boyfriend and that was why she had come down. He introduced himself to me. That was a bit of an icebreaker for me to meet him. He seemed okay and my mum was getting on a bit better.
155. Marion Philips was my social worker the whole time I was in care. I don't think she ever visited me at St Mary's. I did contact her when I saw myself in the newspaper when I was on the run.

Running Away

156. One day, my keyworker came to me and said that I had a supervised home visit. He said that he was taking me up to my mum's in Newtonhill. We left that same day. As

soon as we arrived at my mum's, I made an excuse. I left the table, walked through to the living room, opened the window and ran away. I saw my mum in my keyworker's car driving around and shouting for me. I didn't come out, I was too scared and there was no way I was going back to St Mary's. I'd probably been at St Mary's for four or five weeks by this time.

Discipline

157. I remember we were all in the TV area watching the news. A wee woman, Mary-Jo was her name, came and sat down. She had just had her hair permed. There was a thing on the TV about Strangeways riots. The prisoners were all on the rooftops. A boy walked out the room, [REDACTED] was his name. He came back in and emptied a tube of glue on Mary's hair. She ran out screaming and crying. The next thing the boys started barricading the door up and having a carry on. This was within a few weeks of me arriving.
158. Staff were outside the room door. These Glasgow boys started putting pillowcases over their faces, looking like the rioters that were on the TV. Boys started smoking fags and just ignoring the staff. The headmaster was called, he was fuming. They ended up having to crash the door down and restrain us all. They took us out of the area, up the stairs to these cells. They just had a mattress on the floor.

Abuse at St Mary's (Kenmure) School, Bishopbriggs

159. The day after the TV room incident, I was in the toilet having a fly smoke, when [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] came in. He said, "*Have I not fucking warned you about smoking in school?*" He gripped me by the throat and lifted me off the floor, screaming in my face. He proper intimidated me. I don't remember his name but he was [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] of the school. He was a big guy with a beard, dark hair.
160. All this banter started happening over the football. I was the only boy that wasn't from Glasgow. Back in 1990, Aberdeen met Celtic in the cup final. St Mary's was a Catholic run regime, all the staff were Celtic fans, all the boys were Celtic fans. It was just my luck that Aberdeen were playing Celtic in the final that year. They said to

me that if Aberdeen beat Celtic, I would be getting this and getting that. I was lying in my bed thinking about it and it started playing on my mind. I thought that I had to get out of there. I didn't know how though. It was a secure facility.

Leaving St Mary's (Kenmure) School, Bishopbriggs

161. After jumping out my mum's window that day, I ended up on the streets of Aberdeen for a little while. I bumped into a couple of people I knew from Oakbank and went back and stayed with one of them. I watched the cup final and when Aberdeen beat Celtic on penalties, I made up my mind that I wasn't going back to St Mary's.
162. I phoned my mum and said I was sorry for running away but that I just wasn't going to settle in that school. I told her why and she agreed and saw my side of things. She said that she would help me and to phone her back the following day. She paid for me to go down to Weymouth.
163. I went back down to Weymouth where my mum had friends and family. My Godparents were down there. They said they would take me for a few weeks. That turned into eight weeks. I was fifteen and a half. While I was on the run, I saw myself on the news and in the papers. I phoned Marion Philips just to let her know I was okay. I said to her that I knew she would be concerned about me so I was letting her know that I was alive and well, I just wasn't telling her where I was.
164. She told me that there had been a children's panel called for me the previous day because my compulsory order was about to expire. She said given that my sixteenth birthday was approaching, they had decided to release me from any kind of supervision. She said that I was free to do whatever I wanted and go wherever I wanted. I asked her where I should go and she told me that it was entirely my choice. She said that I wouldn't be hearing anymore from social work and that the police were not looking for me.

Life After Being in Care - first time

165. My Godparents didn't know I was on the run. They were old people and I kept that from them. I made my excuses and headed back up the road to my mum.
166. There was no leaving care grant or any support from the social work. I'd never been given any aftercare advice or training.
167. I went back to my mum's for a few weeks. On my sixteenth birthday, she kicked me out. I went through to Aberdeen and started living on the streets. I couldn't get much help because I had no supervision level because of my age and it became apparent life was going to be difficult.
168. The only people I knew were the people I had been in care with. I knew a guy I used to buy a bit of hash from. He told me he had a spare flat, it was completely empty but he said I could have a key for it. There was no furniture, just an empty flat. There was no electricity, no heating, nothing. I really didn't know what to do, I was confused. I felt that nobody wanted anything to do with me and I had nowhere to turn.
169. I began stealing whatever I could to survive. Two days after my sixteenth birthday, I had to go to court and was given an £80 fine. Two weeks later the CID detained me for various thefts. I didn't say anything and they had to release me after six hours but that was the start of them being on my case for the things I was having to do to survive.
170. I was starting to pick up charges left, right and centre. The first time I was in custody after I was sixteen, I shouted on the Chief Constable of police, Mike Tucker. I had been best mates with his son in Newtonhill. He came to see me and asked me what I was doing in custody. I told him and asked him to get me out and he did. He said that he would give me one chance and that I wasn't to come back, that I was better than that. He said that he understood and that his heart went out to me.
171. He got me out that one time. After that I felt that I was on my own again. I didn't have the neck to shout on him again. I felt like I had let him down.

172. I was going into social work and asking them for help but they said I had no supervision levels. I was in Aberdeen but was from Aberdeenshire, they couldn't do anything.
173. That was until I picked up lots of charges, was put on probation and got community service. Then they thought they better do something to help me and got me into temporary accommodation. I was sixteen, seventeen at the time. They put me into a hostel that was full of older drunk guys, mental health cases and females as well.
174. I started being picked on by older drunk guys so I asked the social work to get me out of there. I ended up in a stopover place in Aberdeen. It was a bit like a kid's home but the kids were a little older. They let me stay there, fed us and tried to do what they could for us. I started mixing with different people from different backgrounds and getting into trouble here and there. I was in there for a couple of months and was getting £80 a month.

Craiginchies Prison, Aberdeen

175. I had lots of court appearances and ended up getting three months in jail. That was 1991, I was seventeen. I walked into Craiginchies Prison as a young offender.
176. I was put in a cell with two single beds, both available. There was nothing else in the cell. I was put in the adult population. It was pretty hardcore in there.
177. I remember meeting my wee pal [REDACTED] from Banff in there. He was also a young offender so they put him in a cell with me. After a few days, staff came to me and told me I was going down to Polmont.

Abuse at Craiginchies Prison, Aberdeen

178. I remember being manipulated into a cell by two older prisoners and given Temgesics, which is a painkiller drug. It was the first time I had taken hardcore drugs in my life. I went back down to my cell and crashed out.

Polmont Young Offenders, Polmont

179. It was a relief to be going to Polmont until I got there. I was there for six or seven weeks.

Abuse at Polmont Young Offenders, Polmont

180. When I went into Craiginches, I was told to call the staff 'boss.' When I arrived at Polmont, the staff member asked me for my name and number. I couldn't remember my number but told him my name. I said "boss" and he stopped me and had an attitude. He said, *"Listen wee man, I ain't your fucken boss, you'll call me sir."* I said, *"When were you knighted?"* He grabbed me by the hair, dragged me into reception, along the reception hallway and opened up a little room. As he spun me round, he punched me to the mouth. I told him that he wasn't allowed to hit me and he said, *"You're in Polmont now, we do what we do down here."* I remember he sounded Glaswegian and had a bald head. That was my introduction to Polmont.
181. The next thing, the passmen came along asking what our sizes were. I said medium this and medium that, size twenty-eight waste. I was given size thirty-four waist, extra small t-shirt and size six shoes. Nothing fitted me. When the door opened to the hall, I was standing there like a little punter and everyone burst out laughing at me.
182. I went up stairs and had to start learning the rules. The staff told me I had to make bed blocks in the morning. I wasn't allowed to lie or sleep on my bed until 9:00 pm. I wasn't allowed to lie on the floor either. On my first morning, I shouted on the passman and asked him to help me make the bed blocks, I had no idea what I was doing. He said he would show me once.
183. During my first two weeks at Polmont, I did nothing. I was in my cell apart from mealtimes, when you went downstairs, grabbed your meal and sat at a table. After that, you went back upstairs and into your cell.

Leisure

184. They would open your door for an hour and a half for recreation in the evening. I found the recreation room intimidating. I was well spoken and not from the local area, it was hard for me to fit in. You could watch TV, play table tennis or games of pool.

Schooling

185. There was no education at Polmont and they did nothing to prepare me for my release other than give me a train ticket back to Aberdeen. I was seventeen when I was released from Polmont.

Life after being in care – second time

186. I'm forty-nine years old now. Over my life, I have been sentenced to thirty years in prison. I've done twenty-four years so far.

Impact

187. My brother won't have anything to do with social work. They came and took his brother away when he was a kid. He's proper institutionalised because of it and angry about it. He's my brother but it's not the way it used to be. He's now got two kids of his own. I've got a niece and a nephew. I've had to stay out of their lives because of my way of life. My brother has had to make choices and part of that was to give up his relationship with me.
188. The biggest thing that has affected me out of having been in the care system is the way my life has panned out. The way lives of others who have gone through the care system have panned out. I've met them all again in the prison system.
189. When social work got involved in my kid's life, they used the fact I had been in the care system against me. They said that they weren't saying I was going to be a danger to my bairn because everything they had been told about me and my bairn

was brilliant, it was just the fact that I had been in the care system. I couldn't wrap my head around it.

190. It's had a big impact on my relationships with everybody. It's hard for me to build that trust in a working relationship let alone a personal one.
191. Substance abuse has been a big problem and has had a huge impact on my life. It started in the care system and got worse over my time in the care system. There are knock on effects to that. It spills onto the streets and gets chaotic if you don't have stability.
192. I've had three little jobs in my life, all round Portlethen. I worked at Asda, I worked at [REDACTED] and at [REDACTED] I was given the job at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] after being caught in the back looking to steal from them. I said I was looking for a job and a staff member said she would speak to the manager. I ended up in the manager's office being interviewed there and then. After the interview, the manager stood up and said, "Welcome to [REDACTED]" and gave me the job.
193. I've been to the job centre but when it comes to having to explain that you have no education, no qualifications, no skills, no stability and nowhere to stay, what chance do you have? When I look back, I think, "*Cheers for that Marion.*"
194. I've got no trust in people, especially with authority. I feel like I've been let down in a big way. To think that's now happening to my own son on the back of that, isn't right.
195. I one hundred percent link my adult offending to my time in care. When I see my pals here in prison, it gives me a bitter feeling about authority.
196. There could have been a lot more done with my education. If they had gone about things in a better way, I wouldn't be sitting here in prison today.
197. I think about my time in care now and then, but I try not to. I get flashbacks sometimes.
198. I was sentenced on [REDACTED] 2022 and my first release date is [REDACTED] 2027. I have a parole date on [REDACTED] 2025. My hope is that I can get out of Aberdeen. I

keep getting put back to Aberdeen City Council and I can't get away from it. I can't behave in Aberdeen and feel I'm stuck in a bad environment. I feel there is nothing positive for me in Aberdeen apart from my family and my kids, who mean the world to me. I want away from Aberdeen to better myself and better my life. I want to be a better dad to my kids.

Treatment/support

199. Both my kids have ADHD. When I read up on adult ADHD, I thought I had it. My kids got it through me. Possibly their mum as well. I identified with everything I read about it with me and their mum.
200. One of the teachers in the prison education centre said she had a 'do it' system and asked me to take the test. She said it would help her understand me better. I did the test and it clearly showed that I had ADHD. It's on their system now. Why has no one ever done that before for me?
201. I'm going to start getting psychological help. They're going to give me trauma bereavement counselling. Linda Todd is the psychologist who wrote to me. She's attached to the prison. This will be the first time I've spoken to anybody about anything. I need it because I have a lot of emotional problems because I've held everything in. I'm on a waiting list but hopefully it's sooner rather than later.

Reporting of Abuse

202. Recently a social worker came to me and asked me if I had been in the care system. I think they wondered what had gone on in my life and why I behave the way I do, why I had the attitude. I spoke to her about redress. I just sat for a couple of days and wrote it all out from the top of my head. That was the first time I really looked back at it or thought about it. I applied for redress last year, August 2023.
203. I was on the phone to one of my pals and he said that he had known me for years and that I needed to speak to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. He said that he had

taken the steps to do it. He said that it isn't easy but that it would get a lot off my chest and that I would benefit from it. He texted me the number and I took his advice.

204. I would give a statement to the police if it was part of a bigger thing. If it was going to shine a light on the places I've been. I'm just a little part of that. God knows what other people have been through.

Records

205. I wouldn't really be interested in accessing my records. I just feel so let down by the care system. If I did, it would just be to answer a couple of questions in my head. Like how the social work can justify releasing me from a secure unit where I was deemed a risk to the public and a risk to myself, to being homeless, with no education and no prospects. As a profession, is that right?

Lessons to be learned

206. My time in care was a lot different to nowadays. My son is in the care system. When I read his reports, I see what's available for him now. I wrote him a few letters when he went into care. I thought the wee guy was going to go through what I went through. I didn't realise the staff would read the letters. I spoke about all the bullying and things I thought he would go through. The staff didn't release the letters to him. He was fourteen at the time. His mum died six years ago. He's seventeen now and just been put back to secure. Back then that would never have happened at that age. They have trauma units and lots of support for my son, whilst he's in care and when he leaves care.
207. I just hope the system is now better for kids in care. The support they are offering me now would have been good thirty years ago when I needed it. They could have helped me when my dad died.

Other information

208. 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 ^{KNR} 

Dated 9.7.24