

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of:

LUK

Support person present: No

1. My name is LUK. My date of birth is 1974. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. I have already given a statement to the Inquiry on 29 September 2017.

### Background

2. Since I gave my initial statement, and signed it at the subsequent review, I have accessed my records for all of the placements I was in. There were a couple of things that happened that I have since remembered.
3. I was initially placed into Ailsa Children's Home just before I turned fourteen. From there I went to Newfield Assessment Centre before going to Loaningdale Residential School in Biggar. I returned to Newfield and thereafter went back to Loaningdale. I moved to Cardross Assessment Centre before returning to Loaningdale again. I went back to Cardross for a short while and was then placed on remand at Kerelaw Secure Unit. I returned to Cardross for a third time and was meant to go to a place called Redheugh, which was a hostel type place, just prior to my sixteenth birthday. I didn't go there because this was when I realised I had to put a stop to absconding and basically carrying on. So all these moves happened over a two year period. I think the longest I stayed at any one place was the last time at Cardross, which I think was for about four to six months.
4. The best advice I ever got was from a staff member at Cardross called GUF. I think his surname was GUF. This was during my last stint there when he was my key worker. I'd had two previous key workers at Cardross during my earlier stays there,

David McGinlay and a lady called Margaret, I think McGarvey was her surname.

GUF didn't pussy foot around and told me that I was going to end up in jail and ruin my life. I realised he was right and that I had to get myself out of the care system. My life was getting worse. I went to a Children's Panel and it was recommended that I go to Redheugh, which I think was run by the Salvation Army. By this time I had a really good social worker called Lawrence McGarvey and as I said I was getting good support from the staff member GUF at Cardross. GUF believed me when I told him I'd been abused at home by my stepmother. Nobody else had believed me.

5. Any time I ran away from places it was because I was going on home leave at weekends. GUF told me that if I went back home and it didn't work out there were places I could go. He said I could get my own place, a tenancy, that I could get help, but I needed to get out of the care system. That's what I did. I actually walked off the street into the social work department, in Anderson, Glasgow. I called a panel, which you were allowed to do, and I had the supervision order taken off me. I was sixteen years old.

#### **Cardross Assessment Centre**

6. While I was at Cardross Assessment Centre you were put in your pyjamas if you absconded, however you had a choice. They operated a work programme there and if you participated you didn't have to sit all day in your pyjamas. Everyone had their own bedroom in Cardross. There were bedrooms and toilets off the living room. There were three units. A short stay unit, that didn't have a name, as well as Endrick and Froom. I was in Fruin.
7. Cardross was an assessment centre and you were meant to be there for three weeks. Although you would get your assessment in this period, it might say that you had to go to Kibble or the Good Shepherd, places like that, but you had to wait on a space to come up in those places before you could go.
8. If you absconded from Cardross, on your return you were asked to write an essay on why you wanted to run away. There was also a work programme. This would entail

washing dishes or cleaning the showers, things like that. Whatever you did you were rewarded for. You would go to school on your return and when you got back from the school day you would put your pyjamas and slippers on. This was to stop you running away again. One time the whole unit absconded, nine or ten of us. It reached the newspaper because it turned into the worst crime spree ever seen in Helensburgh. When we all went back we were in our pyjamas and slippers. If you chose to do the essay on why you absconded and did the work programme you didn't have to wear your pyjamas. If you didn't agree you wore your pyjamas and went to bed an hour earlier than everybody else. There were other restrictions like getting your pocket money taken from you too, but you were never confined to your room for a long period of time. These restrictions would last for two days. So you had a choice.

9. If you absconded and were caught by the police and taken to a police station, it wasn't the staff that came to pick you up. This was done by the stand-by social work. When you returned you had to put your pyjamas and slippers on. This was so that you wouldn't abscond again. This was on the first night. Then you were given the choice of either writing the essay and doing the work programme or staying in your pyjamas over the next two nights. I didn't run away during my last stay at Cardross.
10. Your bedroom doors were left open but one member of staff wasn't allowed to come in on their own, there had to be two of them. They were very strict on that policy. There were bars on the window, so you could only open them a bit, not enough that you could climb out of them.
11. Another restriction was that those who smoked didn't get their cigarettes if they didn't agree to the work programme. I didn't smoke, but those that did would go off their head if they didn't get them. Sometimes they would physically attack the staff, who would have to restrain them. I never saw restraint used as a punishment. It was used when the staff were attacked by residents.
12. When we got home from school we would go for a walk, they called it a ramble. They would take us swimming or we would go to the marina at Helensburgh or they would



take us to play badminton, things like that. I was quite an outdoor person. If you had absconded and didn't do the work programme you wouldn't be able to do any of these activities after school. You would have to put your pyjamas on. If you agreed to the work programme you could take part in them.

13. I don't remember any of the staff living at Cardross. I think the senior management would do overnights sometimes, but no staff lived in the grounds of Cardross.
14. GUF [REDACTED] the staff member, was an ex-soldier. He wasn't strict he was just quite matter of fact. He explained things simply and told me how my life would turn out if I didn't change, that I'd go to jail and ruin my life if I didn't, "cut the shit". That's how he put it. When I left Cardross him and my social worker got me a job. It was a job in a nursing home, I think it was called a CV Volunteer or something like that, but I was getting paid for it. He didn't have to do that but if he saw something in you he would help.
15. After all the coming and going I had initially, when I went to Cardross they believed me that I had been abused within my house by my stepmum. I got counselling, which was the first time I'd had anything like that. It was the first time I'd received any help. It was a very positive experience, especially the last time I was there.

### **Loaningdale Residential School, Biggar**

16. As I said, I was at Loaningdale over three periods in two years. There was a member of the care staff there called GYF [REDACTED] he was known as GYF [REDACTED]. He was quite a trendy guy, I liked the way he dressed. He was quite fashionable. He stayed in separate living quarters [REDACTED]. It was like a tower, a white block. It had a main door, but you could enter it at the end of an internal corridor.
17. I remember one day there was a football game going to be played. It was a European cup or a World cup game, and some of us wanted to make flags, an arts and crafts sort of things. I had never been in GYF [REDACTED] flat. There was no reason to go in. On this day, the school was short staffed and a few of us were at him, telling him we

wanted to make these flags. He took us along the corridor and told us to wait outside his door until he went in and got the equipment for us to make them. We didn't wait and sneaked into his flat. There was a room with a cupboard in it. I was with another girl who used to buzz things, aerosols and things like that. We stole pens, the type you can buzz, and scissors from the cupboard and put them in our waistbands. GYF caught us red handed and took the stuff from us. That's all that happened during that incident. He had told us to wait in the corridor but we sneaked in and stole stuff. This incident happened the first time I was at Loaningdale. I would have been fourteen years old.

18. Nobody else stayed at that part [REDACTED]. The headmaster stayed in the school building as well as Liz McCutcheon, the English teacher, who stayed there with her husband and three kids. There were houses down in the town as well that staff stayed in.
19. Around this time Loaningdale had a lot more boys than girls and there weren't a lot of female members of staff. Sometimes a male member of staff might have been upstairs supervising when the girls were in their rooms. That's just the way it was because they were short staffed. There was nothing sinister in it.
20. If you didn't go home at weekends from Loaningdale there wasn't a lot to do. The school didn't have a lot of money. The teaching staff were really good and did activity things with us. They would pay for things for us to do out of their own pockets. At weekends, the teaching staff became the care staff. They were really good. The PE teacher took us to watch his wife play hockey and we would get to play with the hockey sticks. I know it doesn't sound like much but it was to us. We did a lot of outdoor stuff. We went on a trip to the Lake District as well.
21. I saw from records that Loaningdale got quarter of a million pounds from Strathclyde Regional Council for taking us in. That was a lot of money back then. They were meant to buy us clothes. We got reject Levi jeans and Slazenger shoes. That was our school uniform. I had to contact the social work department to get a clothing grant to get me clothes, but Loaningdale should have been buying them for me. That

money wasn't getting spent on us. Girls had to share a razor. I stopped shaving my legs because it was so unhygienic. It wasn't down to the care staff or the teachers. That was down to the management board.

22. I had a lot of reviews while I was at Loaningdale as I was always up to things. SNR  
SNR Bill Whiteside would hold the reviews but he would always invite my family to them. Nobody realised that I was running away when I was getting home leave, and that's where my problems stemmed from. I was one of the kids who stayed at the school at weekends. I actually wrote to the head of social work when I was at the school. His name was Fred, I can't remember his surname. I asked for a weekend placement as I didn't want to go home. I got a placement at a hostel in West Princes Street in Glasgow.
23. Every time Loaningdale couldn't cope with me they would send me to Newfield or Cardross, then I'd go back. I was more naïve than most of the kids in these places, but you had to conform. You had to start acting like these people. On one occasion I ran away from Loaningdale with another girl and we stole alcohol from somewhere, broke into a caravan and stole period pain tablets. We had to get our stomachs pumped in the little, local hospital. I'm sure the other girl's name was SNR She was actually in Newfield with me too.
24. There was an incident that happened while I was at Loaningdale. I think everyone was rioting and I put my head through two windows. Everyone was smashing windows and it was chaos in the place. There were two members of care staff upstairs, Stevie and Angela. It happened not long before I left the school. They had been trying to get me to go home at weekends but I was having nothing to do with my family at that point. Pressure was being put on me and it was making me angry. My grandparents stayed in Australia and they had been willing to take me to live there but as I was in the care system and my parents didn't want me to go they stopped me from moving. So, I was going off my head and Stevie restrained me. I had the cut to my head superglued by a doctor. The place was really bad by the end and it was eventually shut down in 1991.



25. When Loaningdale was due to close all the kids rioted and smashed all the windows. Riot police were there to try to calm the situation. When it did close I was sent back to Cardross.

### **Leaving**

26. When I was leaving Cardross, GUF said to me that I had to get myself out of care. I didn't know where I would go. He told me I could go to the council and get a furnished flat. I ended up going there as I didn't want to stay at home very long because that was a toxic environment as well.

### **Records**

27. I have acquired my records since I last spoke to the Inquiry. They are from every place I have ever been in care. I have read them all. There are records from Children's Panels, review meetings, social work, medical and education records. There is a record from the review meeting when I went from a voluntary order to a place of safety order. Everything is there from Newfield, Loaningdale and Cardross as well as the remand order from Dumfries Sheriff Court that sent me to Kerelaw. There is nothing from Kerelaw but nothing happened to me there. I saw a lot of kids getting battered there but nothing happened to me. That's probably because my dad was a policeman and he came to see me every day. I was on remand there for about four weeks before returning to Cardross. It was after leaving Kerelaw that I thought I had to get out the care system.
28. I got my records from the Mitchell Library, some from the NHS and some from Glasgow City Council as well as my GP. I even got in touch with Loaningdale, they had an office in Lanark. I contacted them twice, once through a recorded delivery letter, asking for any data they had about me. They didn't respond. I got a solicitor firm to contact them on my behalf with a strongly worded letter and they still didn't respond. I also emailed them but heard nothing. I have the records from Loaningdale because everywhere I went my dad got a copy of the records at that time. He wanted a weekly update on what was happening with me. They were going to the social

work office. I contacted them and sent my dad's death certificate. I got a lot of my records that had been sent there on his behalf. I have scanned them and have them on a hard drive.

**Other information**

29. 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. LUK .....

Dated.....29.10.24.....