

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EQF

Support person present: No

1. My name is EQF. As a child in care I was known as EQF. My date of birth is 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in the Gorbals in Glasgow. I lived there with my mother. My mother was called. She worked hard to keep us. She had four or five cleaning jobs.
3. My grandmother lived downstairs. We moved to Bridgeton when I was three and my brother and sister were born a couple of years later. My brother, was born in 1965 and my sister, was born in 1968. My aunt and uncle lived nearby. After that we moved to Carntyne. I was about seven then.
4. I went to Bluevale Primary School and then Whitehill Secondary. I enjoyed school. Home life was good.
5. I never met my dad. He is dead now. His name was. I found this out myself because my mother never talked about him. She said he was dead years ago but I found out that that was not the case. She called herself Mrs but I found out from her records that she wasn't married.

Foster care with [MPN/ MPO], [REDACTED], Glasgow

6. I have discovered from my mother's records that I went into foster care in 1968 when I was eight years old. This was because my mother went into hospital to have my sister. I don't know where my brother went at this time.
7. This was my first time away from home and I just wanted to go back home to my own house.
8. I stayed with a couple called [MPN/ MPO] at [REDACTED], Garthamlock. I stayed there for a couple of weeks.
9. There was a boy and girl there. I think they were their children and I think they were older than me. I can't remember their names.
10. I remember watching television and going to school. Mrs [MPO] told me not to worry about going to school because I was coloured, as one of the teachers was coloured too.
11. I remember Mr [MPN] bathing me and I can remember the boy bathing me separately. This happened on more than one occasion, possibly every night. I think they were touching me down below in my private area.
12. Mrs [MPO] never bathed me. She was in the sitting room in front of the fire. I went in there after I had my bath to get a heat at the fire.
13. I can't remember how long I was there. I returned home after my sister was born.
14. Shortly after my sister was born we got a new house with a bath in it. This was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Carntyne.
15. I used to steal a lot of food and take it home so I could share it with my brother and sister.

16. I think I was caught shoplifting when I was a young teenager and this is why I went into care. We didn't have any social work involvement before I went into care.

Beechwood Assessment Centre, Tollcross Road, Shettleston.

17. I remember going with my mum to the Children's Panel in Bell Street and all of a sudden I was in Beechwood. I was fourteen or fifteen years old. My mum broke her heart when I was taken away after the Children's Panel. I think there was a social worker at the Children's Panel.
18. I was in Beechwood for six weeks. It might have been a short term placement.
19. Beechwood was a big, sandstone house. The original building is still there but it is houses now. I can't remember much about it but I can remember a living room, a small garden and the bedrooms were upstairs. We slept in a shared bedroom.
20. There were ten or twelve children there in total and Beechwood was all girls.
21. The children at Beechwood were aged fourteen to sixteen. My childhood friend, MQW, was there too.
22. I remember going swimming and three other girls held me down and tried to drown me. They were older than me. My friend, MQW, saw this happen. This was at Shettleston swimming baths.
23. I remember we all stood in a line and we were given medication at bedtime by the lady in charge. I don't know what that was for.

Langlands Park, Port Glasgow

24. I went straight to Langlands Park from Beechwood Assessment Centre. I was fourteen years old when I went there in [REDACTED], 1975. Somebody took me in a car. I think it was a social worker. I just had a small case with my clothes in it. I was crying and I wanted to go back to my mum.
25. I didn't have a social worker before I went to the Children's Panel. I can't remember if the same one took me to Langlands Park. They told me I was going to a List D school for two years. They said I was bad because I was shoplifting.
26. Langlands Park was like a museum. It was a big, old-fashioned building. It was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] Mr MSH [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED], Miss Cameron. Mr MSH [REDACTED] didn't come in at weekends. Mr MSH [REDACTED] lived in a house in the grounds. Miss Cameron did the weekends. Sometimes Mrs [REDACTED] who was a teacher in the school, came in at weekends.
27. You went through the front door and down a corridor. Then you came to the headmaster's office and the 'wee lady's' office. Next door was the big sitting room and the shower room. There was a big hall and you went along another corridor which took you to the dining room. Nearby was my bedroom and along the corridor was stairs which took you up to the other bedrooms. They were single bedrooms. There were six or eight in my bedroom.
28. Langlands Park was all girls. They were the same age as me, roughly thirteen to fifteen years old and there were approximately thirty girls there.
29. I didn't smoke or drink until I went to Langlands Park.

Routine at Langlands Park

First day

30. I was met by a 'wee lady' who took me into the sitting room. I can't remember her name. She was older and she had white, permed hair. She showed me my bedroom.
31. I just had a small suitcase with my clothes in it. I was crying and I just wanted back to my mum. The social worker went into the office.
32. I was introduced to the other girls. They were in a sitting room watching television. I sat in a chair which had a big back.
33. I was terrified because I was away from home.

Mornings and bedtime

34. I slept in a dormitory with five other girls. I had a bed, a small wardrobe and a chest of drawers.
35. Whoever was on night shift woke us up at 7am. Two ladies did the shifts. They came in, put on the light and told us it was time to get up. We used the toilet, cleaned our teeth and got ready to go to the dining room for breakfast.
36. Mr MSH used to inspect everybody's bedrooms. He would look under the beds and in the wardrobes. He would open up our drawers but I don't know what he was looking for.

Mealtimes / Food

37. We had breakfast at 8am and we all ate together in the dining room. We had porridge or toast and marmalade. The woman that made the breakfast was lovely. It must have been okay. Whoever was on duty came and sat with us.

38. We came over from school and we had lunch in the dining room.

Washing / bathing

39. We showered every night. We were told to do this by the 'wee lady'. She used to come into the showers with us to supervise. We had separate cubicles which closed with a door. We were behind the door when she was supervising us.
40. If you were a bit messy while you had your period you could ask to go and have a shower. Sometimes they would say yes and sometimes they would say no and you would have to wait until night time.

Discipline

41. If anybody misbehaved they were sent to the office and either Mr MSH or Miss Cameron would deal with them. They were usually in the office together. Miss Cameron didn't shout at us but she was quite powerful. Langlands Park was quite strict. The punishments were no television time or cigarettes.

School

42. We went to school in the building next door. Most of the teachers came in from outside but one, Mr LWH stayed in the grounds in a house [REDACTED] Mr MSH's house. Mr LWH's wife taught me too.
43. I liked school because it took me out of the main part of the building. The art teacher was nice and her husband worked there. He was nice too. I remember she told us her daughter was called [REDACTED].
44. We stayed in the same classroom for all our lessons. We never got any homework. It wasn't like a proper school. We did mostly artwork. I think they made us read in front of the class but I didn't like reading in public so I didn't do it.

45. After school we went back to the main building and watched television in the sitting room. There were books in the sitting room. There was always quite a few girls in the sitting room. You could go to your bedroom if you wanted. There was nothing else to do.
46. The 'wee lady's' office was next door to the sitting room and sometimes she would come in and sit with us and watch television. She was quite nice.

Trips / Holidays

47. We didn't go on any trips or holidays.
48. A few months into my stay at Langlands Park, I was allowed to go home every weekend. They gave me money so that I could go home. I got the train from Woodhall station to Central station and then I got the bus home. I did this on a Friday after school until Sunday. My mother, my brother and sister were at home. I loved going home. I couldn't wait until Friday. Quite a lot of the girls went home every weekend.
49. I started drinking at fifteen. I drank every weekend and during the week. I bought alcohol at an off licence next to Woodhall train station before I got on the train to go home. I used it to block out things that had happened in Langlands Park. I didn't smoke or drink until I went to Langlands Park.
50. I asked if I could do meals on wheels. This was delivering food to elderly people and this was voluntary. It was in Greenock and I did it with another girl. We weren't allowed to leave the school grounds except for meals on wheels.

Birthdays and Christmas

51. I have no recollection of birthdays or Christmas at Langlands Park.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

52. My mum, my brother, my sister, my Auntie [REDACTED] and my Uncle [REDACTED] visited. We walked around the gardens outside. We were left alone during the visits.
53. I think a social worker did visit but I can't remember how often. I believe I spoke to her and then she went into the office and spoke to Mr [REDACTED] MSH She came from Glasgow social services. I think this was a different social worker from the one who had been at the Children's Panel. I think she asked me how I had settled in. I maybe just had one visit. I think it was during the summertime, a few months after I had arrived. I believe Mr [REDACTED] MSH and Miss Cameron were present in the office when I spoke to her. I told her everything was okay but that I really wanted to go home. I couldn't tell her about any abuse because Mr [REDACTED] MSH was present.

Healthcare

54. We had to report to the 'wee lady' if we needed tablets or sanitary towels and she marked this down. If you had a sore head, she would give you a paracetamol. She had a big book with days and dates and she recorded when you got a sanitary towel. You had to stand in a queue. I remember seven or eight of us standing in a queue. It felt horrible having to ask for sanitary towels. You were only allowed one at a time and they noted down the time you got it and how many you had had that week.
55. I don't remember going to a dentist.

Running away

56. My friend, [REDACTED] MQW, ran away once and I ran after her to get her. I managed to get her back. Mr [REDACTED] MSH must have seen us coming back. He ran and grabbed me by the shoulders and he flung me across the room into the corner. He sat on top of me and he ripped the earring out of my ear. This was in the office and Miss Cameron was present. [REDACTED] MQW came in and saw him do this. He said 'I am ripping out your Paki

earrings'. My ear was torn and pouring with blood. Mr MSH's face was pure red and he was spitting on me. I thought he was going to kill me.

57. After he did this he sent me to the 'wee lady's' office and she cleaned my ear with antiseptic. I told her what had happened. She never said or did anything. He made the hole in my ear bigger.
58. I ran away a few times to the shop and bought alcohol. This was to blot out everything that was happening to me in Langlands Park. My mother gave me money when I went home at the weekends. It is in my records that I told somebody that I was drinking a lot of alcohol although my records say Mr MSH never witnessed me drinking alcohol.

Bed Wetting

59. I started wetting the bed when I was at Langlands Park. I had never done this before. I felt terrible. It was a horrible feeling. I told one of the female members of staff. She told me to strip the bed, get it cleaned and get new bedclothes to make it up again.
60. She must have told Mr MSH. He came out of his office when I was walking past. He grabbed my hair and slammed my face into a wall. My nose started bleeding. Then he pulled me back around and spat into my face. He called me a Paki bastard. He had never done that before so I think it was because I had wet the bed. This happened in the corridor. I went into the toilet and cleaned myself up.
61. I wet the bed for a couple of months and then it stopped. I didn't do it every night. I used to go and tell a member of staff when I had wet the bed.
62. The other girls laughed at me and called me names. There were some nice girls in Langlands Park but there were bad ones as well.

Abuse at Langlands Park

63. After a couple of weeks at Langlands Park, Mr MSH told me to scrub the gym hall with a toothbrush. This was after dinner. This was not a form of punishment because I was well behaved as I wanted to go home at the weekends.
64. I used to do it alone or with another girl. I was down on my hands and knees with a bucket of water and a toothbrush. I had to do this every night until it was time to go to bed. I sometimes had other jobs too which I had to do until bedtime. This happened throughout my time at Langlands Park. I think I was there for a year. Mr MSH behaviour was the same until the day I left.
65. Mr MSH would come along and tell me to stop cleaning the gym floor. He would punch me, hit me, call me names and spit on me. He would put his face into my face. He once did this in front of Miss Cameron and she didn't do anything. He grabbed my long hair and pulled me. He did this every time he saw me. It was usually done in private in the corridor at the side bit of the door.
66. Mr MSH would stare at me and looked at me with that face. He was a big, fat man with a red face and beady eyes. He had a big, massive belly. He looked like a monster. He was maybe around forty.
67. He didn't hit me every time he saw me but it happened a lot of times a week. Sometimes he just called me names or pushed me into the walls. He would spit in my face. The spit landed on my face. He made that noise to get it out. I never saw him hit anybody else.
68. Mr MSH called me a 'Paki bastard.' He used to say, 'there are no Pakis here'. I think he called me this because my skin was dark. I am mixed race. I think my skin tone was darker when I was younger. He called me this in front of my friend, MQW. I think he didn't like me because of my coloured skin.

69. I stayed with other girls in the sitting room or the bedroom so that I wasn't on my own and Mr MSH couldn't come and get me. I didn't go to the gym with the others because I would have had to go past Mr MSH office to get there.

Reporting of abuse at Langlands Park

70. I told the 'wee lady' about the other assaults by Mr MSH. His behaviour didn't change afterwards. It was the same until the day I left.
71. The only other person that knew was MQW. She was in Beechwood and Langlands Park at the same time as me.
72. I couldn't tell my mum at the time because it would have upset her and it would have broken her heart. Mr MSH might have said I was telling lies and that would have got me into more trouble.
73. I was too scared to tell anyone because I thought they would speak to him and he would do something worse to me.

Leaving Langlands Park

74. I left Langlands Park because I had spent my allotted time there. Either Mr MSH or Miss Cameron told me that. I left later on that week. I was jumping with joy and crying because I just couldn't believe I was getting out of there. I was going to get away from Mr MSH and back to my own home.

Life after being in care

75. I was glad to be home. I had left school by the time I returned home. I can't remember if I got a job.

76. After I left Langlands Park I met my daughter's father. I was sixteen years old. This was my first relationship. I think I was looking for somebody to be kind to me and show me attention.
77. Everything was alright until I told him about what had happened to me at Langlands Park. All of a sudden, he changed. Then he started battering me, punching me and locking me in the house. He constantly raped me when I refused to have sex with him. He called me names. He made me go into the street, pick up cigarette butts and smoke them.
78. He made me get a job as a cleaner. I got £8.62. He would take me to my work and wait for me. Then when I got my money on a Friday, he took it off me.
79. When I was pregnant he booted my in the stomach to try and make me lose the baby because he said it wasn't his. I had my daughter when I was eighteen.
80. He locked me in the house so I couldn't get out to go to the shops or post office. He wouldn't let me see my family. He did the same stuff to me as Mr MSH but worse. I wasn't drinking as much at this time because he wouldn't let me. It was just at weekends.
81. I managed to get out one day and I ran round to my mother's house. He came after me. My mother had a glass panel in her door. He smashed it and jumped through it. He battered me in front of my mum. He pulled my daughter out of my granny's arms. My granny died two weeks later of a heart attack.
82. I left him about two months after my daughter was born because he took her off me and put her in a dustbin.
83. I didn't report him to the police because I was terrified of him. He used to say if I told anybody he would kill my mother and my grandmother. I told one of my mother's brothers what was happening to me and he went up to the house and got all my

stuff. My daughter's father kept coming down every week and smashing my mum's windows. That went on for a few months.

84. My uncle knew a couple of boys in the area and they had a word with him. Then he left me alone.
85. I think I reported him to the police and got an interdict.
86. His name was [REDACTED]. He was about six years older than me. I think he lives in England now but I don't know if he is still alive.
87. I have worked most of my life until recently. I have worked as a cleaner, a kitchen assistant, in amusements, as a support worker and as a carer. I loved working. I liked helping people. One year, I worked a full six months without a day off.
88. I suffer from fibromyalgia and it has caused me to stop working. I have pains all over my whole body. I was diagnosed two years ago. Not working has affected me mentally and financially.
89. I do voluntary work now. I do befriending on a Friday [REDACTED]

Impact

90. I have a son from another relationship. I messed that relationship up myself. This is because I was abused in care. I started drinking heavily again after my son's father left me. He left when my son was six years old. I became abusive to my second husband and my third husband. I was bad to people who were good to me.
91. My third husband has stuck with me for thirty years and I don't know why. My son's dad was kind to me and so is my husband. My husband knows what happened to me when I was in care. He is the kindest man I have ever met. He has given me everything all my life. I am not as bad now. I have calmed down in the last ten years.

92. My son stabbed himself when he was about fourteen years old. He was drinking heavily from the age of thirteen. I came in from work one day and he was lying on his bed. He had stabbed himself. He said, "I'm sorry about what happened to you when you were young but you are my mother and you need to stop drinking and arguing with my dad." My daughter has taken overdoses. I think this was as a result of finding out about her father and about my abuse in care.
93. I think the abuse affected my relationship with my children. They witnessed me constantly drinking and arguing with my partner.
94. I am still smoking and I have COPD. Smoking has caused the COPD. I was diagnosed with this two years ago. None of my family smoke so I probably wouldn't have started smoking if I hadn't gone to Langlands Park.
95. I told [REDACTED] and my husband about the abuse. I have told my children. My children deserved a better childhood than what I have given them.
96. I can still see Mr MSH [REDACTED] face. I wake up sweating. I can see his red face and his beady eyes. It doesn't happen a lot now but it still happens.
97. I feel a lot of anger towards Mr MSH [REDACTED] If he is still alive, I hope he goes to prison.
98. The abuse has affected my whole life. I don't know how my husband, [REDACTED] has stayed with me. He is my main source of support.
99. When I stopped work I felt like killing myself. I got enjoyment from helping people out. Since I have stopped work I think more about my time in Langlands Park because I have nothing to do. I think all the stress has brought on my fibromyalgia. It started about two and a half years ago after I saw news reports on the television about the Inquiry.
100. I am on medication for depression.

101. I hate marmalade and porridge now because that is what we got in Langlands Park. The thought of eating them would make me sick.

Records

102. Future Pathways put me in touch with Birthlink. I went to Birthlink to recover my records and they didn't give me much but they gave me my records and my mother's records as well. These records contained a lot of personal information regarding my mother when she was in her twenties. They said about how she had struggled and what had happened to me. If my mother was still alive, she would have been mortified. I received this information in January 2019.
103. It says in my records that Mr MSH gave me the option of going home and attending Langlands Park school as a day school and that I had refused this. That was a lie. If he had given me the opportunity, I would have been home in a minute.

Lessons to be Learned

104. Nobody protected me while I was in Langlands Park. I hope that people who are in homes now are being protected. Mr MSH was a law unto himself. He was SNR SNR.

Other information

105. My friend, MQW, told me recently that she reported my abuse. I don't know who she reported it to. She says she has statements from fifteen years ago. I have never reported my abuse to the police.
106. I have never had counselling.

107. 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.....EQF.....

Dated.....27. 09. 2019.....