

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KDO

Support person present: No

1. My name is KDO but I've been known as KDO quite a while now. My date of birth is 1954. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My father's name is and my mother is . I've got brothers, and . I have two other brothers from my mother's relationship with another man, and . They are both deceased now.
3. I don't suppose it was easy for my mother. My father was a heavy drinker and he only came home late at night. We lived in a few different streets. After we moved to Pollok, my mother and father's relationship got worse. My mother started drinking. My brother, and I just kind of brought ourselves up. We spent a lot of time at my granny's. My brother, is eight years younger than me. He stayed with my granny for most of his life. My mother and father separated when I was eight or nine. After that, I lived with my father and my brother .
4. My mother took up with another man called . She eventually married him and had two more children. It was difficult because he didn't like us being around and he made it perfectly well known.

5. I was out and about a lot. By the time I was eleven or twelve I was sleeping rough. I used to sleep in the bin rooms at the flats. I slept in all sorts of places. Around this time, my brother, [REDACTED] just seemed to disappear. I found out later that he was in St Ninian's Approved School in Stirling.
6. I started off at St Margaret's school in Kinning Park. There was a primary there and then it moved round the corner. When I moved to Pollok and I went to another school. I experienced a catalogue of bullying. I was a very quiet and timid boy. I wouldn't speak up for myself. As a result of the bullying, I started playing truant from school all the time. It was eventually truanting that led to me being sent to an approved school.
7. I moved back to St Margaret's again but I started skipping school all the time. I was warned by the deputy headmaster that if I didn't start going then. I would be sent to an approved school. So I went to school for a while. However, I moved to St Gerard's school in Govan. It was there that I met the guy who would go on to haunt me for a number of years. His name was [REDACTED]. He was an out and out scumbag and I was put into his class. He tormented the life out of me.
8. I lived in a place called [REDACTED], most of my friends were Protestant and I went to St Gerard's which was a Catholic school so that was a problem. It was hard even just getting home from school. My dad tried to get me to go to school, he walked me to school but as soon as I got there, and let go of my jacket because I just ran.
9. School was terrible. The bullying I endured from [REDACTED] and his friends was unbearable. It felt relentless. [REDACTED] would do things like, lift me up and hit me against a door over and over again. There were teachers who gave me hard time. I was beginning to develop a stutter. A teacher called Mr [REDACTED] would make a fool of me and humiliate me which encouraged my antagonist, [REDACTED], to give me an even harder time. As a result, the truanting got worse. The staff would ask me why I was doing it and I wouldn't answer. The last thing I wanted was for any of the bullies to be brought in before the head teacher. I felt like I had nowhere to turn. The bullying stopped from me wanting to get involved in anything out of fear of what [REDACTED] and the others might do. It was such a miserable time in my life.

10. I remember they sent me to child guidance on Copeland Road in Ibrox. I would just keep my head down and say nothing. They would ask me questions and I wouldn't say anything. Eventually they decided I was going to an approved school. I was sent to a juvenile sheriff court. I hadn't done anything or been in trouble. I knew nothing about places like that.
11. They sent me to Larchgrove Remand Home. I was thirteen. It was for about three or four weeks. When you go into these places, nobody takes you aside and explains how things work. You're just thrown in there. There was nobody to talk to.

Larchgrove Remand Home, Glasgow

12. I can't really remember too much about it as it was a short term place. You just went there until they found a place for you. I don't remember anything happening in there. I was scared and frightened.
13. One day a big Glasgow Council limousine picked me up to take me to an approved school. They took me through to Fife to John Bosco. They left me in the car for ages and came out and told me that I was too old to go there. They drove me back to Glasgow and took me to St Mary's in Bishopbriggs.

St Mary's, Bishopbriggs

14. You just arrived and knew nothing about it. There was a kind of class system which was like a pecking order amongst the boys. Everybody seemed to be in there for serious offences, like breaking into lots of houses or serious assault. A lot of them had been in an approved school before so they knew the way it worked. I was only there for missing school so I wasn't very interesting to the other boys. I was right at the bottom of the pecking order as far as the guys were concerned. I had no credibility. Unfortunately for me, the bully, [REDACTED] was in there too. It was the worst thing that could have happened to me. I couldn't believe when I saw him.

15. I can't remember meeting anyone when I first arrived. I remember being taken up to a big dormitory, there were twenty-odd beds in it and they said "this is yours". It was a real wake-up call for me.
16. On the first morning, the staff took me and another boy down a big, massive corridor and gave us a couple of buckets with soapy water and told us to scrub the floor. I started scrubbing it and I thought to myself "I've got to get out of here". I used to go to bed every night and pray to God to let me out of there.

Layout

17. The layout of St Mary's was as you walked in the door, there was a big corridor, then if you went to the left there were a few offices for the deputy headmaster, the headmaster and the matron too. There was an assembly hall on that side too. If you kept going you came to stairs which led to the dormitories. On the other side of the building was the dining hall. When you went up to the right of the building, there were two dorms. They were called St Patricks and St Andrews. I was in St Patricks. The dormitory through from me was De La Salle. There was a little chapel too. There was a yard outside with various workshops and there was a big building called 'the play barn' which was supposed to have classrooms in it. However, nobody learned anything. Once you went in there, your education was finished.

Staff

18. I had problems with SNR [REDACTED] KDN [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] was LNI [REDACTED]. I didn't see much of him, he left a lot of it to his staff. There was another member of staff called LYT [REDACTED], whose nickname was 'LYT [REDACTED]'. He always carried a big set of keys around with him and if, for example, you were outside in the yard and you didn't get in line quickly enough, he would say "come here you sonny", put his arm around you and hit you on the head with the keys a few times. He had a nasal voice. He always had two older boys who went around with him. I don't know what his role was within the place but people used to say he was the janitor. He seemed to be

involved in more than general janitorial work. He always wore a white boiler suit like a painter. He was just a horrible person.

19. I was put to work in the baker's shop for a while. The guy who ran it was called HPP I burned myself so I was moved to the farm and gardens. The men who worked in the gardens were older, Harry Berriston, Jock Callander, and they were okay.
20. There was a woman who was like a matron. She wore a nurse's type of uniform. The boys used to call her Beatrice. I don't know if that was actually her name. I think she was the person who you were meant to be able to speak to or go to if you had a problem. However, if you did try to go to her, the other boys would all laugh at you and make comments. She was an old battle-axe type. So there was nobody who you could talk to there.

[REDACTED]

21. Things happened in the dormitory with the other guys. The worst thing for was that [REDACTED] was there too. The nasty boys like [REDACTED] were up at the back of the dormitory. You would be lying in bed and things would come flying at you. They would piss in your bed. You would have to explain and then you would get a hard time from the people who ran it.
22. [REDACTED] belittled me at every opportunity and turned the others against me. As a result, I had a lot of problems with the others boys. A lot of them were just quite happy that it wasn't the being picked on. The other boys were all around thirteen or fourteen.

Routine

23. They gave you things to do, everybody had different things, sometimes it would be polishing the floors. I can remember it being such a shock on the first day. I kept looking down the corridor and it seemed never ending. People shouting and bawling at you. You just accepted it after a while.

24. The day started off at around seven o'clock, you did whatever you had to do and then you had breakfast. There was a row of sinks to get washed at in the morning. There was an assembly from 8.30 to nine o'clock. After that we would all go to wherever we had to go, whether it was the bakery or a classroom. There were a couple of classrooms but they were pointless. There was no schooling. I can remember that the art teacher helped me to paint a picture of a greyhound. It was the only teaching I got. We did some things but I wouldn't say that we were learning. We stopped work for lunch.

Mealtimes

25. There were tables in the dining room. I have a vague feeling that you just chose a table. I think there were four boys to each table. I wasn't friendly with anyone. I think I probably just wandered around trying to find a table and people would say "next one" and I'd have to find another one. I didn't like going in there.
26. The food was basic. It was mince and stew, things like that. It was food that I never ate. I was as thin as a rake. Back then, eating wasn't important to me. There would be buns on the table. Some of the other boys often did things to the food so that you wouldn't want to eat it. It was things like picking their noses or sticking their finger in their bottom and then touching the food. The teachers must have known about that because they would have to have been walking around with their eyes closed not to see it going on. There was always a racquet in the dining hall.
27. There could be as many as 100 boys there. There were four dormitories. There were about twenty to 28 in each one. It was just a miserable part of my life.
28. The beds were practically right next to each other in the dormitory. You had no time to yourself.
29. The afternoons were much the same. If, for example, you worked in the bakers then you were in there until tea time. After I burned myself, it put me off working there. I

didn't work in there for long. Everyone wanted to work in the baker's because you got to make bread and rolls and could take some for yourself. The guy who worked in there was okay too. I had wee stints in different places because I was always running away when I came back they'd put you here and there. I was in the joiner's for a while. Other times you could just be cleaning.

30. At the weekends or night time, they played five-a-side in the play barn. There was a snooker table but people like me could never get on it. I think they had table tennis. I don't remember much else. There was a TV in the room with the snooker table. I can remember watching Top of the Pops and seeing Rod Stewart for the first time.
31. Bed time was supposed to be at eight o'clock but there was always a lot of carrying on. The staff would take you and then go away somewhere. There would be racquet. The noise would build up and someone would eventually come in. The noise would get louder and louder. After a while, I think the staff came in and put the lights out at ten o'clock.
32. I can remember one time, a member of staff called KDM and the night watchmen came in and they said to us to get out. Half of us were sleeping. They took us out into the corridor and they lined us up. We had to kneel down, put our arms up, he put two books in each hand and we had to keep our arms out and hold the books. If we dropped them he shouted at us.
33. There were different housemasters for each dormitory. I remember KDM was the housemaster for St Andrews dormitory. It was the one facing mine. I can't remember who the housemaster was for St Patrick's.

Bedwetting

34. If I wet the bed, I wouldn't tell anyone, I would just lie in the bed and try to avoid it. I tried to avoid it. There was no supervision and putting all these young guys together is asking for trouble. Bed-wetters would be humiliated by the staff and the other boys. Some of the boys would actually pee into beds, there could be two or three of them

standing peeing in someone's bed while someone was away to the toilet. The staff would shout and bawl and there might be a slap given to the bed-wetters because they were quite good at giving a slap. You were regarded as somebody who pees the bed. It was too much to go to them and tell them that the bed was wet. I can remember turning my mattress. It was a common thing.

35. Things happened in the dormitory with the other guys. The nasty boys like [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were up at the back of the dormitory. You would be lying in bed and things would come flying at you. They would piss in your bed. You would have to explain and then you would get a hard time from the people who ran it.
36. [REDACTED] would walk in and look for me and give me such a hard time. He did it to amuse everybody around about him. The teachers saw these things happening and just turned a blind eye to it. It's unsurprising that I ran away at every opportunity.

Healthcare

37. I can't remember seeing a doctor while I was there. There was only the matron type woman. I was very fit so I'm not sure I would have had the need. There wasn't a routine dental check-up. I didn't become accustomed to that until later in life. You were just in there and you had to get on with it. It was strange because you didn't know why you were there in the first place.

Trips/Holidays

38. Every so often, they would decide to take us out in the bus. We would go to the Campsies or a place they called 'the Black Isle'. Some people would swim in the big loch there. I can't remember going anywhere else.

Clothing

39. I wore the same striped jumper all the time. It was the only thing I had. People used to kid me on because that and a pair of denims were the only things I had. I was at my

granny's once and I was lying on top of the bed. My young brother came running in and said that the police were coming up the street. I jumped up and came flying out the window and landed on the ground. I was wearing a striped jumper at the time. I wore that jumper every day. The jumper was famous. I don't know if I got it off of them but everybody used to talk about it.

Religion

40. One side of my family was Catholic and the other was Protestant. They took us to chapel. I wasn't interested but you did have to go to chapel. I don't think it was big enough for the whole school. There was nothing much although it was a Catholic place.

Birthdays/Christmas

41. Birthdays weren't celebrated. I didn't really start celebrating my birthday until I met my wife. However, by that time, I had no trust in people. I don't really remember ever celebrating birthdays. I can remember one time, everybody was always having parties and I was never invited, for some reason I invited lots of kids to my house because I really wanted a birthday party. I asked my mother on the day and she was angry. My mother was very volatile. When she found out, she went crazy. People were coming to the house and me and brother were hiding I hid in a cupboard to keep put of the way.

Family

42. My mum and dad didn't visit me nobody came near me. My mother's explanation was that she couldn't go near those places. I had an aunt who visited me twice. I was usually left in the home at the weekends. I was kind of forgotten about and trapped there. Mr brother [REDACTED] was in St Ninian's. I don't know what happened to him. He has spoken to me about it. He was given electric shocks there. My other brother [REDACTED] was in St Ninian's and St Mary's. We weren't in at the same time. When I was in St Mary's [REDACTED] was only about six.

Abuse

43. There were always beatings. An English guy started working there, I don't know if he was maybe a student. I don't think he was a permanent member of staff. He wanted to take me places and would tell me to go with him. Sometimes he would take me over to the play barn. It was empty most of the time.
44. One time, it started off as though he was trying to carry on with me, like wrestling. You would see people carrying on through the school. I wasn't physically close to anyone there so I certainly didn't want to be close to him. The next thing I knew he grabbed me and put me down on the ground, he was holding me in a grip then he put his hand down the back of my trousers. He was stroking my backside. He didn't do anything else.
45. He would try and get me to go places with him, I didn't want to go. I tried to stay out of his way after that. He was a big strange character. At the time, I thought that he thought he was just carrying on. I didn't like that part of it. I saw him acting the same way towards other boys as he did to me. I thought at first that he wanted to be my friend. When you're in there and you don't have a friend, you appreciate someone showing you a bit of kindness.
46. I couldn't talk to anyone in there. If you spoke to anyone about anything, it would get you into more trouble and your life could be even worse. In fact, if you said anything, you would be more than likely to be humiliated. It was so easy for people to humiliate you. It wouldn't just be a passing comment, the treatment would last for days. There was no one at home I could talk to either. My granny would get all upset and nervous if I started to tell her anything about what was going on in there. She worried sick about me, she was the only one who did. I didn't see a social worker the whole time I was there. I probably saw one in the lead up to going in there.
47. There was a lot of suggestive behaviour but there were no other sexual incidents. I heard some stories from the other boys. A lot of boys would say things like, "KDN [REDACTED] will take you in there and do this and that to you". It was a common thing

for people to say. There were people who had a name for messing about with people. You knew that you had to keep away from certain people. I can't remember any more names. There are things that I have shut out but you can't dwell on it. It messed up our lives for a long time.

48. I had a few situations with [REDACTED]. He was always trying to humiliate me and call me names. He wanted me to touch him when we were in the assembly room. We were sitting in rows at the time. He became embarrassed.
49. One day, [REDACTED] found me in the play barn. There were three of them there. They made me strip off all of my clothes. [REDACTED] completely humiliated me.
50. I was physically abused lots of times. It's easy for people like that to take their temper out on you. There were a few who were okay but there were a few who gave me a really hard time. LYT [REDACTED] did all sorts of things. He was just a horrible man. I don't know how he got away with some of it. A lot of the staff hit you on the head with the set of keys. It was really hard. LYT [REDACTED] sometimes took us out to places in this old ramshackle bus. It had broken windows. The gear stick didn't stay in place so one of the boys would have to lie down and hold it in place. If it jumped out again, you got the blame of it. I saw him hitting others with the keys. It left you feeling dazed.
51. I had lots of different punishments, for example, the belt over the backside or I had to take my trousers down. KDM [REDACTED] would give a slap. You didn't have to do much to get a belt, a punch or a slap from the staff in St Mary's. There were a few who were quite handy with their hands, for example, Mr KDN [REDACTED] was one who used their hands a lot. LYT [REDACTED] was another. KDM [REDACTED] was okay but he would give you a slap across the head for anything. A lot of the staff were unpredictable. You wouldn't know what you had done wrong. It seemed to just be part of the job. I became used to living in fear.
52. I witnessed lots of abuse to different people on a daily basis. The staff took out their anger and spite on you or somebody round about you. Most of it was physical abuse, like battering people and verbal abuse. You kind of knew it was coming and it was

almost accepted back then. I can't remember anybody sitting down and speaking to me. The staff knew a lot of what went on and didn't do anything about it. They seemed to have a good rapport with some of the boys who were carrying out the abuse.

Running away

53. I ran away all the time. I would go to stay at my granny's quite often. Sometimes the police would come to get me in the middle of the night and take me to Govan Police Station. One time I ran away, I was away for quite a while, about nine months.
54. I would run away any time the opportunity arose. The staff were getting fed up with it. One time, they took me into the office, KDN [REDACTED], was shouting and bawling at me. He decided he was going to give me six of the belt over my backside. I had to take my trousers down. I tried to run out of the door squealing and he finished it off with his hand. He got a big pair of boots which were a size fourteen with no laces, a pair of shorts and an old t-shirt and made me wear them. I had to go and stand on the stank in the yard so they could see me all the time. I was like a circus clown. By that time, I had been moved to a different dormitory. I was in De La Salle. I'd had enough and decided I had to get out of there.
55. One night, I ran away, I lay in bed waiting and didn't go to sleep. I got out of bed and sneaked up to someone else's bed and stole their clothes. I can remember it was raining heavily. I climbed out the window, down the drainpipe and past the headmaster's office to get out. It was then that I was away for about nine months.
56. I stayed in different places, sometimes I would go to my granny's but I knew there was the possibility that the police would find me there. I slept in lots of different places, one of my favourite places was the high flats in the Wine Alley. I would stack up lots of doormats in the bin shelter and sleep on them. Sometimes I would lie there thinking, what am I doing this for, at least in St Mary's I'd be getting my dinner. I think I must have been caught.

57. When I went to back to St Mary's, I decided I was a different person. I wasn't a quiet, meek and mild person anymore. When I returned most of the guys were gone so I fitted in better. I was the new guy who had come back after nine months on the run. I was promised that there was only about six weeks to go.

Life after care

58. I left in [REDACTED] 1970, I was there for almost two years. All I had when I left was a jumper that I had won in a race at the sports day. They didn't give me any preparation for life on the outside. The school had told me that if I found a job when I was out on leave they would let me out so I got a job in a furniture shop in Govan. I worked there for about two weeks. I was living with my granny. She died in the [REDACTED]. After the [REDACTED] died, I continued to live in her house with her my granny's sister and my brother.
59. I got involved in something stupid and ended up being in court in the [REDACTED]. I had only been home for about four months. The sheriff called for a social work background report before sentencing me and I went on remand to Longriggend for three weeks. A probation officer came to see me there and had a long conversation with me. After the probation officer left, I thought things were going to be okay. However, I was recommended for two years borstal training.

Polmont Young Offenders Institute, Polmont

60. In the end, I was sent to Polmont Young Offenders Institute. I was sixteen. Before going to Polmont, they sent you to 'C' Hall. It's a holding cell in Barlinnie prison. They put me in a cell with all the old guys that was an absolute pigsty. I was there for a full week because the bus to Polmont only came once a week.
61. When you first went into Polmont, you were put in an 'allocation centre'. It was run like an army training camp. There was lots of physical exercise. You would be in there for eight weeks. I had only been in there for a few days when another inmate attacked me with a handful of teapots in the dining room. The next thing, I was bundled out and put in solitary confinement for a few days.

62. The staff used to beat me for anything at all. They just did it whenever they felt like it. The only specific thing there was the beatings from the staff. I had quite a few of them. It could be for anything at all. It was a horrible experience. The staff got away with all sorts in there. If I said anything out of turn they would come into your cell and set about you. In borstal, it was like the television programme *Time*. It brought back so many memories. Anything could happen. The first period of time was very violent. Fights and violence could start over anything. The officers were ready to just jump in with fists flying. You could be minding your own business and be dragged straight into it. It was a terrible place. If you got punched about before, you certainly got punched in there. Again, it could happen for anything at all.
63. They allocated you to a wing, either East or West wing. I was sent to West wing. It wasn't as violent there. When I walked in, [REDACTED] was there, in the same wing. By that time, I was a bit different. I had changed. He didn't really bother with me.
64. It was just like prison. It wasn't an open place. It was cells. We were allowed out for recreation for an hour or two. You could go into a room and listen to records. There was a snooker table and there might have been newspapers.
65. There was a general workshop. I had to polish metal bins. It was soul destroying. Sometimes they moved me through to another part to make pallets. We were allowed to walk around the yard at lunch time and then be taken back to your cell. At the weekend, everyone was in their cell from four o'clock in the afternoon. You would have a couple of sandwiches to eat. I just thought it was a part of life.
66. Towards the end of my sentence, I was working on building Cornton Vale prison. We got a bus there every day. One day, I decided I'd had enough so I tried to run away. I was caught within a couple of hours and taken back to Polmont. One of the staff, a [REDACTED] instructor called [REDACTED] jumped on my back. I didn't think about running away again. It added another two or three months onto my sentence.

Life after care

67. I spent eleven months in Polmont. I got out when I was seventeen. I was released with three other guys. They were all buying alcohol so I joined them and ended up drunk. I hadn't really drank before that. I think that was my initiation into drinking. I started then and didn't stop.
68. I went to stay with my auntie and brother, [REDACTED]. My mother stayed around the corner from her, it was a two minute walk. However, she stayed away. She said being around my brothers and me made her anxious.
69. From then, my life spiralled out of control. In those days, I was a 'skinhead' and I went around with some weird and wonderful people. I was different from the boy who went into the approved school. In that period, I ended up in Barlinnie prison for seven months and Low Moss for four months.
70. I decided when I came out that I wasn't going back. Up until that point the longest job I'd had was for five months.
71. When I was eighteen I got involved with an older woman. Before I knew it she was pregnant and I got railroaded into marrying her. We stayed with her mother. The marriage lasted two days. We shouldn't have got married. It took us five years to get divorced.
72. I spent a lot of time in a pub in Ibrox. I would be in there all the time. I would go in at 11 am and do the full shift until 11 at night. I got married in [REDACTED] 1980 by that time my drinking was bad. I had to do something about it.
73. My father had died in 1979. Before he died, he got himself sober. He was an alcoholic too. I met his sponsor at Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and when my dad died I had various items of his belongings, I found his diary and the sponsor's name was in the diary. I decided to contact him to help me stop drinking. He took me to different

meetings and helped me get myself sober. The meetings at first brought out a lot of stuff that had happened to me. There were a lot of good people I could speak to. Gradually I started to get better, I've only had a set-back once. I haven't had a drink since. I've managed to overcome a lot of things because I've been sober.

74. I used to volunteer doing the AA phone line to try to help people. The stories I heard from some of those people were awful. It was hard to sit listening to people talking about what was happening in their lives.
75. I got a job in Cowglen hospital in Pollok. I learned how to work and get on with people in a normal work environment. I ended up there for nearly five years. I saw an opportunity as I used to see people advertising cleaning carpets. I researched it and rented a machine. I was working from early in the morning until midnight. From then on I was self-employed.
76. I borrowed some money and bought an old car. I started a television rental business. My mind has always been really active and I think, it's helped take my mind off of things that happened to me. I've got a son and daughter with my wife. I have another son and daughter from my younger days. I don't have a relationship with my two older kids.

Reporting of abuse at St Mary's

77. The first time I spoke any of the abuse was to a psychologist about two or three years ago because I find it embarrassing. I had spoken about it in some detail to my wife. I realised at an early age that I just had to get on with my life.
78. I haven't reported any abuse to the police. I don't know what could be done now because if any of these people are still alive, they'll be very old.

Impact

79. My time in care screwed up a lot of my life. For a long time, I used to put the memories out of my head. I've had happier times but I always have a feeling something bad is going to happen. I can still be tense and on edge waiting on something to happen.
80. I've had lots of times where I have experienced mood swings and dreams. I've recently started seeing faces but can't put a name to them. The faces give me shivers. These things don't just go but you've got just get on with your life. Sometimes it's not that easy. St Mary's haunted me for years after I left.
81. I couldn't trust anyone. I always thought people had a motive. I remember going into people's houses when I was working and they would be acting nicely to each other. I couldn't believe it, I thought that they were acting because I was there. I hadn't known a life like that. St Mary's did that to me. It took me a long time, even now, I still find it difficult to trust people. There is something in me that does that to me.

Treatment/support

82. I had a breakdown about three years ago. I wanted to die. I couldn't work out what was wrong with me but I managed to come through it. I started seeing a psychologist about two or three years ago. She dragged a lot of stuff out of me. I'm hoping I'm getting over it. I'm still in contact with a psychologist on the phone. I have a telephone appointment soon.

Records

83. I haven't considered getting my records from my time in care. I didn't know that I would be able to get them. The part of St Mary's that I was in no longer exists.

Lessons to be Learned

84. I think that there should be someone for each child to speak to. If the child doesn't speak up they have to find a way of getting to the bottom of the problem. It must have been obvious to the people at the child guidance that there was a reason why I wasn't going to school. I think people in these roles should look into a child's background and see what is going in their lives. In my case, they would have seen an approved school was not the right place to send me. My life was in turmoil and when they put me in there it made it ten times worse.
85. There wasn't an opportunity to move on from the approved school. There should have been a pathway for me out of it. I left care with a jumper I had just won in a race at the sports day. I didn't know anything about life. I hadn't been prepared for leaving. I should have been treated differently for truanting from school.
86. If you weren't involved in any criminal behaviour before going in there then you would be by the time you left. There was a packing order in St Mary's and a gang culture. There should be someone there for children to go to without bullies finding out. If you haven't got a mother or a father to speak to then you have to have someone to be able to speak to and trust. It created a fear and secrecy in me. I contacted the Inquiry to make people aware of what happened in the past. I hope that the things that happened to me don't happen again.

Other information

87. 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. KDO

Dated. 19-8-21