

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GQT [REDACTED]

Support person present: YES

1. My name is GQT [REDACTED]. I have always been known by that name. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Glasgow and lived in Pollock with my mum, dad and four siblings. My mum's name was [REDACTED] and my dad's name is [REDACTED]. I have two older sisters, an older brother, and a younger sister. [REDACTED] is five years older than me. [REDACTED] is four years older than me. [REDACTED] is three years older than me and [REDACTED] is five years younger than me.
3. Life at home was pretty violent. My dad was really violent towards my mum and he had a reputation in Glasgow for being a hard man. He was involved in crime and he was always in trouble with the police. As kids, we were protected a bit because of my dad's reputation. No one would touch us if they knew my dad.
4. We lived in Pollock until my mum and dad split up in 1975. After that, my siblings and I moved to Castlemilk with my mum. I was five years old. I started going to St Bartholomew's Primary School, but I never got on well at school. I hated it. I was struggling a lot with my anger after my parents split up. I always felt close to my dad and I idolised him, so the split affected me quite a bit.
5. Life at home with mum was chaotic. She was a drinker and would either not come home for days on end or bring random guys back to the house. She would end up passing out and putting us at risk by leaving the guys to take advantage of me and my

siblings. There were a couple of times I woke up to find guys trying to take my clothes off. My siblings and I would fight them off. Me, my brother and sisters attacked one guy who tried to sexually abuse me. We managed to force him back downstairs and we barricade ourselves at the top of the stairs. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were the oldest so they were at the front of the barricade and the rest of us were giving them missiles to throw at the guy. We ended up smashing one of my mum's windows and she never even woke up.

6. I grew up having to watch men tamper with my mum when she was lying passed out drunk in the house. I remember coming downstairs one night and seeing one guy trying to do something to her and I jumped on his back.
7. When I was ten or eleven years old, I was woken up one night by a guy that used to come over to my mum's house with my auntie. He was called [REDACTED]. I don't know if he's still alive or dead. He had his hand around my throat and he was trying to take my pants off. I told him my dad was a lunatic and if he did anything to me I'd get my dad onto him. He said if I told my dad what happened, he would do in my mum. Even though my mum wasn't maternal, she was still my mum and I didn't want anything to happen to her, so I never told anyone what happened. I was too scared. After that, anything bad that happened to me, I just kept to myself.
8. We all went through some sort of physical or sexual abuse because of my mum. The only one that was protected from it was [REDACTED]. We made sure she was protected because she was just a baby. We never let anyone near her.
9. It was almost like my mum was trying to punish us. That's what it felt like. She worked in pubs in town and on a Friday, we would have to borrow bus fare from a neighbour and go into town to get money from her just so we could feed ourselves. If we couldn't find her, we'd have to steal rolls and milk from our neighbours doorsteps. We knew it was wrong, but it was a case of survival.
10. I started dogging school a lot and my behaviour was quite unruly. That's why social work got involved. I was sent to a psychologist when I was eight years old and I was assigned a social worker called Mr Rollo when I was around nine or ten. I remember

going to a Children's Panel with him and my mum. Before the Panel, he told me that going into care was an option, but not to worry about it, as he wasn't going to ask for that. It was a blatant lie because he went straight into the Panel and asked for me to be sent for a three week assessment. I ran straight out the door, through the security guards legs, but they caught me.

11. I was taken straight from the Children's Panel to Larchgrove Remand Home in a black hackney when I was ten years old. I spent three weeks in Larchgrove in 1980 and then they let me go home to live with my mum. They thought things might be better if they sent me to a different primary school, but there weren't. I ended up back in Larchgrove for six weeks in 1981, when I was eleven.

Larchgrove Remand Home, Glasgow

12. The main building at Larchgrove Remand Home looked like a normal wee school, but it had a big wall around it and bars on the windows. To me, it was horrendous. It was for boys from around ten or eleven years old and up. The boys were divided into three units by age. I was put into the youngest unit called 'Bute'. It was for ten to twelve year olds and I was in that unit both times I went to Larchgrove. I think there were twelve boys in my unit. One of the other two units was called 'Aaron', but I never made in there.
13. The only staff member I remember by name is SNR [REDACTED] Mr GQW [REDACTED]. I remember him [REDACTED] because he took an immediate dislike to me. The other boys used to shout, [REDACTED], as a joke [REDACTED]. One of the times they did this, Mr GQW [REDACTED] punished me when I hadn't done anything wrong. He made me scrub the floors with a toothbrush just because some other kid shouted something stupid.
14. One of the first boys I met at Larchgrove was [REDACTED]. He was getting abused as well, not just by the staff, but by boys from his own scheme. I took to him and he was good to me so we ended up quite paly. He got moved out of Larchgrove after a while, so that was me back on my own. I also remember a boy called [REDACTED]. He was from a different part of Castlemilk so I didn't really get on with him.

Routine at Larchgrove Remand Home

First day

15. When I arrived at Larchgrove, I was met by a member of staff. They told me what was required of me, what to expect and told me who my allocated worker was. I was given a school uniform. I remember it was grey and the jumper was itchy.

Daily Routine

16. In the morning, we were woken up by staff. It was usually the auxiliaries or cleaners because they were the ones around first thing in the morning. They checked the beds to see if they were wet. Then, we got showered, dressed and went down for breakfast. After breakfast we either went to class, physical training (PT) or we were split up into our work groups. Each member of staff would be allocated maybe four or five boys to take somewhere like a craft room or the gym. I can't remember what all the activities were. The staff didn't make us go to formal classes. I think the only one we had to go to was religious education. When it came to other classes, we got to choose, so I didn't go. I just went to PT most days and played football. When I look back on it, it seems a bit mad because I was sent there for not going to school, but they didn't even try to make me go to school while I was there.
17. At some point during the day we had to do chores like sweeping the corridors or something like that. Then, later on, we could go to the recreation room to watch TV. If you were under twelve you weren't allowed to smoke, but you'd still get a wee fly puff here and there. If you were twelve or older, your family could hand fags in for you or you could use your own money to buy them.

Mealtimes/Food

18. The food was the same old pre-packed steamed or boiled meals for lunch and dinner. It was like prison food. Breakfast was the only meal that was ok. We'd get tea, toast, bacon and maybe fried egg. I think each of the units had staggered mealtimes in the dining room. The boys in each unit ate together, but the staff didn't eat with us. They

just supervised. We weren't made to eat anything we didn't want to, but if you didn't eat what you were given, you went hungry.

Washing/bathing

19. In the evening, before bed, we washed our face and brushed our teeth. In the morning, we went to the communal shower rooms and had a shower. I think each unit went separately. There was no privacy at all. It was all open, no cubicles. There would be a member of staff supervising and it could be either a man or a woman. You can imagine what went on in a shower room full of young boys. It was mental. It always puzzled me why they would let a female supervise all the boys in the shower.

Healthcare

20. I maybe did see a doctor or a nurse when I was in Larchgrove, but I don't remember it.

Bed Wetting

21. I wet the bed a few times at Larchgrove. The staff who woke us up in the morning, which were the auxiliaries or cleaners, would hang the wet sheets over your bed so the whole place knew you'd peed the bed. I remember two women marching me down the corridor to the toilet to get cleaned up. I was naked. The other boys were laughing. I was just a wee boy and it was pure humiliation.

Visitors

22. Mr Rollo, my social worker, came to visit me once the first time I was in Larchgrove, but I refused to see him. I didn't want anything to do with him because he had blatantly lied to me and my mum about me going into care. I didn't see or speak to him again after that and eventually, I was assigned a different social worker, called Cathy Hamill. She was brilliant.

Review of care / detention

23. I don't remember there being any proper review of my care while I was at Larchgrove. I was obviously sent there, the first time, for a three week assessment and then, the second time, for a six week assessment. In all that time, no one ever sat down and spoke to me, so I've not got a clue if they actually did an assessment.

Family contact

24. My mum didn't visit me while I was at Larchgrove, but my sister, [REDACTED] came both times I was in. She actually tried to visit me one night when I had been beaten-up by staff and ran away. The staff tried to tell her she couldn't come in because she wasn't old enough. That was just rubbish because she had been in before and she was fifteen, which is old enough to visit. They were just trying to cover up the fact I'd been beaten-up and ran away. They didn't even tell [REDACTED] I wasn't there.

Discipline

25. The discipline at Larchgrove mainly involved being locked in your room or being made to scrub the floors, sometimes with a toothbrush. We didn't get any pocket money, but family members could hand in money that we called 'canteen'. That's what we used to buy treats or fags. If we misbehaved, the staff would take away some or all of our canteen. [REDACTED] would hand in money for me when she could and I remember having some of it taken off me at least once.

Abuse at Larchgrove Remand Home

26. Larchgrove wasn't a nice place at all, but I don't remember much happening the first time I was there. The second time I was there, I remember getting kicked up the bum by either Mr GQW [REDACTED] or SNR [REDACTED] when I was bent down cleaning the floor. I can't remember SNR [REDACTED] name. I was also slapped by one of the PT instructors for carrying on with another boy. By this point, I didn't take much notice of a slap or a wee kick because it was normal. I was used to it because I got it in the

house anyway. My brother used to give me a bad doings and my mum used to batter me too.

27. I also remember getting knocked about by one of the male staff members who worked in Bute Unit. I was carrying on with another boy and we pulled a blind off one of the windows by accident. I was standing on a chair trying to put it back when this guy pulled me off the chair backwards and laid into me. He slapped and kicked me a couple of times. I managed to get out into the PT area. I climbed up the parallel bars, pushed a window open and climbed out of it. I ran away to my granny's house. I walked all the way to the Gorbals. It took me about seven hours to get there. I knew if I could find my way to Parkhead, I could get to my granny's from there, so that's what I did.
28. I remember seeing my sister, [REDACTED] at my granny's house. She saw the marks on my face from getting beaten-up. I had a mark on my chin. I think the guy who beat me up must have had a ring or something on when he hit me. Larchgrove called the police and some of my family members so they were all out looking for me. One of my family members, I don't remember who, found me the next day, hiding in a hedge in my mum's garden. They phoned Larchgrove and some guy in a taxi was sent to pick me up and take me back. I don't remember getting physically punished when I got back there, but I think I got half my canteen taken off me.
29. I saw other resident boys getting hit by staff when I was there. I can't remember the names of the staff or the boys now though. It was something that happened pretty regularly.

Leaving Larchgrove Remand Home

30. After my first three weeks at Larchgrove, I was allowed to go back to my mum's. The social workers thought things might be better if they put me in a different primary school, so I was sent to St Julie's. It didn't work out. It was in a different part of Castlemilk from where I lived. Castlemilk was just split into gang lines so I started fighting with everyone in that school. I would end up getting pissed off and dog school.

31. I stayed at St Julie's until I went into first year, but I didn't last long after that and I wasn't getting any support at home to go to school. I hardly saw my mum. The only time I'd see her was at night time if she drunk. She come in and say 'who loves you, baby' and give me a kiss and a cuddle. That only ever happened when she was drunk. The rest of the time. It was cups of cold water in your face. That's the kind of lifestyle we had.
32. I had to go back to a Children's Panel and I just knew that I'd end up back in Larchgrove. That's when they sent me in for six weeks. Once I left Larchgrove for the second time, I went back to stay with my mum again. I had a new social worker called Cathy Hamill by this point. I thought she was a cracking woman. I went to St Margaret Mary's Secondary School. I didn't get on well at that school either. I wouldn't do what I was told and I got the belt a lot. I ended up throwing a stool at a science teacher. I had to go back to the Children's Panel for that. Well, that was one of the reasons. That's when they told me I was being sent to St Mary's, Kenmure.

St Mary's, Kenmure, Bishopbriggs

33. I was sent to St Mary's in 1983, when I was thirteen years old. A social worker took me and my mum to visit the school before I went there to stay there. They showed us the dorms, the school and the wee farm block. I felt quite at ease with it and it didn't look bad to me. A few weeks later, my mum took me and dropped me off. I knew some of the boys who went there and straight away, I felt relaxed. All the boys were walking about smoking and it looked like they were just doing what they wanted. I thought 'this is for me'.
34. The main building looked like a mansion. It was better than Larchgrove, but it still had bars on the windows and the doors were locked at night. The boys were divided into three units and each unit had different dorms. I think my unit was called St Andrews and I was in the smallest dorm, with maybe ten boys. I think there were around sixty boys in total at St Mary's.
35. SNR [REDACTED] was called Mr LNI [REDACTED] and he was a big Irish rugby player with huge hands. He didn't take any nonsense at all. SNR [REDACTED] was a Scottish man

called Mr^{MHF}. The other staff I remember are ^{IFT}, who was ok and used to play the guitar to us at night, Bill Franks, who was the chef, ^{GQU}, the baker, a guy we called ^{GQX}, who was a PT instructor and a bit of a head case and a woman called ^{GQV}. There was also a guy called Jim Bannen. He was my personal worker and he was a cracking guy. He actually took me home a couple of times to see my mum for a wee while. The only people I remember were either the worst or really decent.

Routine at St Mary's, Kenmure

Daily Routine

36. The daily routine at St Mary's was fairly similar to Larchgrove. We got up in the morning, washed, dressed and went down for breakfast. Then, we were allocated somewhere to go. Most of the time we could pick what we wanted to do. We could go to education classes, art classes or go out to work on the land, which I liked. We weren't forced into formal classes. I didn't learn to read or write until I was in jail.
37. Most days, I'd go out with the farmer on the back of the farm truck. There could be up to ten of us on the truck. We'd take slops from St Mary's to a farm to feed the pigs. Other times, we'd fill the back of the trailer with manure and take it through Bishopbriggs. It was an adventure and I loved it. There were two different guys who worked the farm. One was just a worker, but the other guy was a farmer who lived close by.
38. If you went out to work, you always came back to St Mary's for your meals. There was a role call before each meal because a lot of people used to run away.
39. In the evening, we could get visitors, go to the gym or the rec-room to play pool or table tennis. It was pretty bonkers at times having sixty young boys under the one roof.

Mealtimes/Food

40. The quality of the food at St Mary's was pretty good. Most of it was made in the kitchen by the chefs and the bakers. They never forced you to eat anything you didn't want to.

Washing/bathing

41. All the boys, from twelve to sixteen, would shower together in the big communal shower room. I remember it had huge windows in it.

Clothing/uniform

42. We did have a uniform, but they weren't very strict about it. As long as you had your uniform jumper on, you could get away with wearing your trackies.

Leisure time/Trips and holidays

43. The staff at St Mary's used to take us out places. Sometimes to the Campsie Hills for a hike or to Arran, on a canoeing trip, for three days or so. I enjoyed it. It kept us out of the building.
44. If you were in St Mary's over the weekend, it was much more relaxed. The staff would sometimes take a group of boys swimming or on a trek.

Schooling

45. St Mary's was a List D school and when you went to a proper List D school you got a bigger choice when it came to learning. You could go out to work with the farmer, or the brick layer or something else like that. You didn't have to go and sit in a classroom. They didn't force you to do that. I used to like just going out in the back of the farm truck with the farmer.

Religious instruction

46. Mr LNI and Mr MHF were both Catholic and they used to make us say morning prayers. If you were in over the weekend, you had to go to church on a Sunday.

Birthdays and Christmas

47. I remember spending Christmas at St Mary's. They did try to make it festive by putting up lights and stuff. I remember they played bingo with us and I think we even got some presents. There were always a few boys there over Christmas because they had nowhere else to go.

Bed Wetting

48. I didn't wet the bed at all at St Mary's, but I know it was dealt with totally differently to how it was in Larchgrove. The staff just took the sheets off the beds and took the kid away to get washed up. That was it. They didn't make a fuss about it or try to humiliate anyone.

Visitors

49. I don't remember getting any social work visits while I was in St Mary's. I just had my support worker, Jim Brannen, who was a staff member there. He was brand new, but I didn't talk to him about all the bad stuff that was going on. It was so hard to tell someone.

Family contact

50. When I first arrived at St Mary's, my sister came to visit me. I think my mum came to see me once. You could get a visit every night if people wanted to come and they could just turn up. I started getting home leave after I'd been at St Mary's for about six weeks. It was every weekend from Friday until Monday morning. The staff would give you a pouch that they called 'sustenance'. It was money to keep you going over the weekend and a bus ticket. Eventually, I ended up being made a day boy. I was back living with my mum and I was just going to St Mary's for school from Monday to Friday and getting home at night.

Review of care / detention

51. I do remember having some sort of review after I had been at St Mary's for about three months. I had to go into one of the offices. I can't really remember what happened or who was there, but that's how I ended up being made a day boy.

Discipline

52. The staff at St Mary's had a few ways they liked to discipline the boys. One was to stop your home leave. That happened to me loads of times. Once it was for smashing a window with a pool ball. It wasn't even me who did it, but because I laughed, I got the blame for it. The only other thing they would do was take your canteen money away from you.

Running away

53. I ran away from St Mary's quite a few times. Sometimes I'd be picked up by the police and taken back and that was usually after the police gave me a doing for it. They used to drive me to the Campsie Hills and say 'it's either jail or a few slaps' so I took a few slaps.
54. I ended up in England and Irvine a couple of times. I went on the run to England with a boy called [REDACTED]. He was a bag thief from Priesthill and he was fourteen, the same age as me. If you ended up getting caught in England, a social worker would be sent to get you. I got caught and had to get the train back with a social worker. When [REDACTED] got caught, a social worker was sent to bring him back. He murdered her [REDACTED]. He got done for that and he's still in jail now.
55. If you ran away, you were punished when you got back. I don't remember being punished physically for running away. They usually just took away your home leave.

Abuse at St Mary's, Kenmure

56. There was a lot of stuff going on at St Mary's. Once, I was giving Mr [REDACTED] LNI cheek and that Mr [REDACTED] MHF grabbed me by the collar. Mr [REDACTED] LNI stood up and slapped me on the back

of the head so hard my feet actually came clean off the floor. Then, Mr^{MHF} kicked me in the arse straight out into the corridor and told me to get back to class. You just had to take it. You couldn't expect any staff members to stick up for you. They would just laugh it off. They would laugh off sexual predators too.

57. The night shift workers were some of the worst. There was one who would slap you about a bit, but wouldn't try anything sexual. The other night shift worker used to put a wet mat outside the dorm door and connect two bare wires to it. If you came out at night and stood on it, you got an electric shock. I didn't know why he did that until I managed to sneak out one night. I saw two guys, the night shift worker and one of the older resident boys, sitting in the staff rec-room. They were both watching porn and masturbating. I can't remember either of their names, but that night shift worker always smelt of drink. He wasn't particularly tall, but he looked strong and he was well built. The same guy tried to drag me into the toilet a couple of times.
58. The first time he tried to drag me into the toilet, he tried to gag my mouth with his hand so I bit him and he let me go. The second time, he managed to get me right to the door of the toilet, but one of the older resident boys called [REDACTED], came out and asked what he was doing. He tried to make up some excuse, but I told [REDACTED] he was trying to drag me into the toilet. [REDACTED] chased him. Some of the older guys were good at looking out for us. In St Mary's, [REDACTED] was one of the better boys you could go to for advice, but he turned out to be a nasty guy. Years later I read a lot of stuff about him. He ended up getting about twenty-five years inside for sex crimes against women.
59. I saw and heard that night shift guy try to do the same to other boys. The boys all used to talk about him because he was a monster. As far as I'm concerned, he was clearly a paedophile. It was always pre-pubescent boys he went for. We had to start going to the toilet in twos through the night. If you needed to go, you would wake another boy to go with you.
60. Bill Franks, the chef, was another paedophile. There was a wee guy from [REDACTED] in St Mary's. I can't remember his name. If you were from Glasgow, you got called by your nickname. If you were from out of town, you were called by the place you were from, so he was just known as [REDACTED]. I'll never forget that wee guy. He wasn't there for being unruly. He was just there for care and protection. Bill Franks was taking him

- home to his house at the weekends and raping him. How that was allowed to happen, I don't know. I think other staff took boys home with them too.
61. Bill Franks would regularly grope boys. He had a big soft chair he sat on in the kitchen. If you walked past, he would grab you, give you a big bear hug, rub his beard in your face and put his hand down your trousers. He did it to me twice when I was in the kitchen. It happened once in front of GQV, who was a female staff member. I said to her 'did you see what he just did to me'. She just laughed and said he was just messing around. At that point, Bill said he was just wanted to see if my balls had dropped. The second time he did it, there was hardly anyone about. Bill was big guy with a beard.
62. There was also talk about the baker, GQU. He used to disappear for ages with some of the boys. He'd take them into a room or a cupboard and lock the door. Other staff members would just shrug these things off.
63. The woman, GQV, used to come in and watch when the boys were showering. You can imagine what some of the boys were doing in the showers and she would just stand there and watch. She would make comments about the size of your manhood and she would laugh at the smaller boys. There was also a staff member called Nancy who sometimes came in to watch the boys in the showers. It was just really weird to me. GQV ended up marrying and having a baby with one of the boys who went to St Mary's at the same time as me. His name was [REDACTED]. I know that because I was in the West End one day, years after I left St Mary's. I saw her coming out of a close with a pram and [REDACTED] was behind her. [REDACTED] told me that he was sleeping with her when he was at St Mary's.
64. The PT instructor, GQX, battered me a couple of times. He didn't really need a reason, it could just be for anything like being late. He was mad. He would slap you, flip your legs away from you or sit on top of you and press on your nose. He used to always say 'you'll behave when you're in my class'. If you had an argument with someone GQX would make you put the boxing gloves on and put the two of you in the ring to bash each other about. I didn't mind that so much, but I did mind when it was him bashing me about.

65. I was once knocked out cold by the big burly maths teacher at St Mary's. He actually knocked two of us out that day. For some reason, me and a boy called [REDACTED] decided to go to a math's class that day. We were just messing about. I can't remember exactly what happened, but we were carrying on with a boy from Stirling. His seat got flung back and he banged his head on a desk. The teacher blamed me straight away. He grabbed me by the collar and I slipped through my jumper trying to get away from him. He punched me on the side of the face and knocked me out cold. Then, the teacher hit [REDACTED] and knocked him out for trying to help me. Nothing ever happened about that.
66. There were quite a few times I had injuries from being hit by the staff at St Mary's. I would have bruises and welts on my body. I remember having a big welt across my back because the farmer I worked for wacked me with a thick wet rope. I think it was for flipping a bin over. I don't think he was employed by St Mary's, he just worked with some of the boys from there.

Reporting of abuse at St Mary's, Kenmure

67. I tried to tell staff members a few times when I was beaten-up, but they would just laugh it off and say 'you must have been up to no good'. No one ever took it seriously and nothing was ever done about it. It's not until later in life, when you look back, that you realise how chaotic that whole system was.

Leaving St Mary's, Kenmure

68. After about eighteen months, I was told that I would be leaving St Mary's and going back to live with my mum. I think I was fifteen years old when I left. Cathy Hamill was still my social worker and she used to come to visit me and my mum. I was told that I also had to go back to St Margaret Mary's Secondary School to finish fourth year. I didn't even get put into a class, I was sat outside the headmaster's office with a desk and a chair.

Life after being in care – prior to turning 18

69. I lived at home with my mum until I got done for assault. I got remanded for the first time when I was sixteen years old. That's when all the social work involvement stopped. I was remanded to Longriggend for reports, but I was taken to Barlinnie Young Offenders first for processing. I was in and out of Barlinnie and Longriggend about four times before I turned eighteen. I also spent some time at Polmont Young Offenders for an unpaid court fine. That place was rough. I was put in allocation alley, or as we called it 'Ally Cally'. It was wild, but I wasn't in long because my dad found out I was there and paid my fine for me.
70. As far as I'm concerned, my time in Larchgrove and St Mary's was my time in care. Everything that came after that was just prison life and if I told you everything about my prison life, I may as well write a book.

Barlinnie Young Offenders

71. Barlinnie was a stop gap before you went on to Longriggend, but they would sometimes keep you there from Friday until Monday before you moved on. It's the worst jail in the world and it was certainly an eye opener. It was six to a cell, with mattresses on the floor, and the prison officers weren't slow to batter wee boys. You were locked in your cell pretty much the whole day. The only time we got out was for two slop outs and a bit of exercise. They wouldn't let us out in the yards with the older prisoners. The YO's had to exercise on one of the landings inside.
72. The prison officers would allow the older prisoners to rob you. They would open the cell door for the older prisoners to come in and take your trainers. The only reason I never got robbed is because some of the older ones knew me. The place was nuts and I ended up with an opiate habit from being in there at sixteen.

Longriggend Young Offenders

73. Longriggend was just one of these places where staff weren't interested. I watched loads of people get assaulted by staff and other prisoners. Each time I was in, I was assigned to A Hall. It was a wee bit quitter than the rest, but it was still crazy at times. There were loads of big grown men and I was just a wee guy. You thought you were tough enough, but you weren't. I only ever spent between six and nine weeks there for reports.

Life after being in care – after turning 18

74. Once I turned eighteen, my life was just as chaotic as ever. I was running about with my dad a lot and doing things for him. He had a garage and I spent a lot of time there. I passed my driving test at eighteen and I had my own flat, but my life was all over the place because of drugs.
75. When I was twenty-one, I got a five year sentence which was split between Shotts Prison and Perth Prison. At twenty-six, I got a life sentence which I did in Barlinnie. I ended up getting a heroin habit in Barlinnie. If it wasn't for the drugs though, there's a pretty good chance I would have committed suicide. I used them to numb everything that was going on around me. My sentence tariff was thirteen years and I got out of Barlinnie in 2010. I then went to Low Moss in 2015 for a six year sentence and I've had three spells at Castle Huntly. So, it's safe to say that most of my adult life has been spent in jail. I think it adds up to about twenty-six years in custody.
76. There really wasn't much difference between the jails I was in before turning eighteen and the ones I was in after. They were all violent. I've still got injuries from being restrained by prison officers in all the jails I've ever been in. We called getting restrained being 'carted'. My neck is sore from having pressure put on my head. My wrists and feet are still sore to this day. I suffer from Raynaud's Syndrome which is a condition which affects your blood circulation. I'm not sure if that was caused by all the pressure put on my wrists and feet from being carted, but it is something I've suffered with for years.

77. I met a lassie when I got out of Barlinnie after my life sentence and we had a child together. I'm not in a relationship with her now. I have a daughter who is twenty-six, but I don't see her. I also have my wee boy, to another woman, who I do see. He is ten and he's changed my life. I'm on a life licence so I'm back in touch with social work. I really struggled for a long time to build a good relationship with my social worker, because of my experience with social work when I was a kid. I'd say I do have a good relationship with her now and she is a decent social worker.

Impact

78. I spent years blaming my mum for everything I went through. I had a conversation with her before she died and I told her that I blamed her. That is how I felt at the time, but I don't anymore. I do have issues with authority though. I feel a lot of anger towards people in authority and I find it really difficult to talk to them or trust them. That includes social workers, civil servants, police and prison officers. It's because I've been lied to so many times, so it's learned behaviour.
79. I think about what happened to me in care every day and I think about how life could have been different. If I had been encouraged to get an education at Larchgrove and St Mary's, things would have been very different.
80. I suffer from really bad anxiety. I've got enemies. I struggle to go on busses and if I do, I've got to sit right at the back so no one can come for me from behind. My physical health has suffered as well. I think everyone thinks that when you're in care and in jail, the healthcare you get is the same as the NHS. It's not. My hands are all broken from fighting. That's another learned behaviour from my childhood. Fight or flight. I always used to fight, but I've got to learn to use flight now because of my wee boy. If I get in trouble again, I won't get to see him.
81. I didn't talk to anyone about what happened to me in care until recently and I've never reported anything to the police. No matter what was going on at home, I would still have rather been in the house than in an institution. I grew up away from my family and it did affect my relationship with them. I just wish that I had enough trust in

someone back then, for me to open up to them and tell them what was going on, but I was too scared.

Treatment/support

82. In 2017 or 2018 I started seeing a clinical psychologist called Louise Burton. She said from the get go that she would be open and honest with me and she was, so I was open and honest with her. I spoke to her about blaming my mum and I told her about my mum's lifestyle. Louise helped me to see that, what happened to me, wasn't my mum's fault.

Lessons to be Learned

83. I honestly think if I had a decent social worker when I was a kid, one who could have opened my eyes to what would happen if I didn't change my behaviour, things would have been very different. If my social worker could have been bothered to build a relationship with me and take the time to explain the possible outcomes to me, there's a good chance I wouldn't have behaved the way I did. I mean, what ten year old wants to be taken away from their family and locked up somewhere? Instead, I had Mr Rollo who lied to me and my mum from the get go.
84. I know things have changed since I was in care, but it's important that issues aren't brushed under the carpet. Also, there has to be strict checks carried out on the people these institutions are employing. The people working in the institutions I was in, certainly weren't doing the job because they wanted to help and protect kids.

Other information

85. 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.. .....

Dated... 4/10/2022