

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GCW

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GCW. My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Edinburgh and before I went into care I lived there with my mum and dad and my siblings. I have two sisters, who was born in 1964 and who was born in 1969. I also have one brother called and he was born in 1968. My parents' names are and. My dad died three and a half years ago and my mum is alive and living in Edinburgh.
3. When I was a young boy my family lived in the Gilmerton area of Edinburgh. My dad worked in the coal mines, but he also liked to drink. He spent his wages on alcohol and we had nothing in the house. My mum took care of the family and money was very tight. Home life was ok, but hard and I felt loved by my family. I was struggling with school so I stopped going and played truant instead. I'm dyslexic and the school teachers just assumed I was stupid. My brother and sisters went to school and it was just me that didn't. My dad decided I would be better off being sent away to care, and to a place that would give me an education.

Balgowan, Dundee

4. Because I wasn't going to school, social work got involved as I was stealing and shoplifting. I can't remember the names of the social workers at that time, but I remember there was one good one called Alistair. He was based in a social work office in Gilmerton Dykes Street. A Children's Panel decided I should be sent to Balgowan residential school when I was aged twelve. It was just me and my dad at the Panel. I don't know why I was sent away to Dundee when there must have been a children's home in Edinburgh. I ran away to my home after the Panel made their decision and I was taken into care from my home address. A social worker called Janet picked me up with two male colleagues and I was driven away by them. I had just a few minutes to say goodbye to my family before being taken to Dundee.
5. At Balgowan there were big gates and a big fence. There was one big building, that was like an old mansion set in large grounds. There was a section behind the big house with a big exercise yard and this was in a contained area, surrounded by high fences. There were four different wings in the house and they were named after Scottish mountains. When you entered the main building you could get to the dining room, kitchens, the dorms and TV room. There were four dorms and over one hundred boys living there.
6. Balgowan was run by Dundee City Council and it was not a religious institution. It was for boys only. I was one of the youngest there at the age of twelve and some boys went up to the ages of sixteen and seventeen. The children divided themselves into groups depending on where they came from, so there'd be a group of Glasgow boys and a group of Aberdeen boys and so on depending on the city.
7. The staff were hard people. With regard to staff, apart from the headmaster, I just remember a guy known as LAQ [REDACTED]. He was aged in his sixties. He was violent, I still have scars on my back from being caned by him. There wasn't one person in charge of each of the wings and there wasn't only one person who was responsible for my welfare on any given day. There were different staff members on duty on

different days. The atmosphere between the staff members seemed ok and they clearly knew each other and got on ok.

8. I can't remember any good staff or receiving any praise from anyone. I was just basically bullied all the time. The staff were all male, even the teachers. There may have been some female staff members in the kitchen, but I didn't see them.

Routine at Balgowan, Dundee.

First day

9. I don't remember much about my first day, but I was probably introduced to the headmaster and shown my bed. I was put into a dormitory with other boys. Once they had shown me where my bed was I had to find out everything else by myself. I was allowed to go to the TV room, but I wasn't shown around properly.

Mornings and bedtime

10. We were up in the mornings between 7 am and 7:30 am before going to the dining room for breakfast. Supper was at 8:30 and that was just a slice of plain bread and margarine. I was getting bullied by the older boys and they took the bread off me. One young guy from Glasgow spoke to the bullies, because I was a young boy, and he told them to leave me alone. The bullies would rip up letters and pictures that came from my family. There was five or six boys who did that. They'd put soap bars inside pillow cases and hit me with them. This happened a lot at first, every night. They'd giggle and laugh at me a lot. They were fifteen or sixteen and I was only twelve. We had to be really quiet at bedtime in the dorm and no talking was allowed.

Mealtimes / Food

11. Breakfast was porridge. The food was basically slops and was terrible. We came back from school for our lunch. We got a slice of bread and marge for supper and we had

fish and chips on Fridays. If somebody didn't eat the food, they'd get reprimanded. I ate the food because I was too scared not to eat it. The vibe of the place was that you'd get in trouble if you didn't eat the food or generally do what they told you to do. People who didn't eat the food or took too long would be cuffed about the ears by LAQ LAQ We weren't allowed to talk in the dining room and that sort of thing happened every day.

Washing / bathing

12. Two or three times a week we'd get up in the morning to get a shower. The water was usually cold.

Clothing / uniform

13. We wore a uniform of jeans, black plimsolls and a jersey during the week. On a Sunday we wore a black flannel top, a white shirt and tie and a maroon jacket for going to church.

School

14. There was a school within Balgowan in the bottom part of the building. The teachers in the day time were in charge of us. If you talked or whispered in class or didn't get the right mark in a test you would get caned by the teacher, in front of the class. I can't remember the names of the teachers who caned us.
15. At lunch-time we'd go back to the Balgowan canteen to eat. Every day, education was the focus of the place. The head teacher was focused on us getting an education. I was quite bad at school and I struggled with writing. We learned geography and general knowledge. I didn't learn how to spell and I struggled to read anything. The children were all treated the same at school and I wasn't given any extra help. The atmosphere was quiet and you could hear a pin drop in school. There was fear throughout the school. I know I was scared I'd get the cane.

16. I was caned at school and I have scars on my back from it. The teachers used a long thin cane like the one from the Pink Floyd album cover. I would be walking through the classroom to the toilet and the teacher would hit me as I walked for getting my sums wrong or being cheeky. I was caned over my clothes, on my bum and the base of my back. I remember there would be a whipping noise.
17. I was there to get an education, but because of what was happening to me at the time I couldn't concentrate on school work. I have no qualifications, but I'm not stupid. School was hard for me, there was no-one to help me with school work. There was no one who was approachable. At the time it was very painful and I have welts from the cane. I saw other boys punished by getting the cane too, it was not just me.

Chores/work

18. We had to do things like mopping the floors and tidying the dorms. Some boys would be picked to do this every day. I think there was a rota of chores.

Religious instruction

19. Religion was a big thing at Balgowan, but not overdone like it was in religious homes. We had to go to church, and I remember walking through the town in a big group and local people would point at us and say we were the bad boys from the bad school. We walked about one mile to the church and back to Balgowan. It was just us in the church. We said prayers in the home too and said grace before meals.

Trips / Holidays

20. We weren't allowed to go on many trips. Once I went away for the weekend hill walking up north near Glencoe.

Leisure time

21. After school we'd go back to the wings. There was a vegetable garden where you'd do some work before tea-time. After tea, we had our own time, I could write a letter to my mum. The grounds were securely fenced. The only time to play in the grounds was on sports day. Otherwise, we had to make do with playing inside the exercise yard that was fenced. The sports day was the only time we were allowed out of the yards.
22. We spent our time in the yard talking with each other. I don't remember playing football. There was nothing to play with and no facilities. We'd just be mingling about, smoking and talking. It was just a big square yard with nothing in it.
23. On the other Saturdays, after I'd seen my mum, we'd watch TV and play board games like chess. We didn't get any pocket money at Balgowan, but my mum gave me some money when I saw her. I don't remember there being a tuck shop.

Birthdays and Christmas

24. I was able to go home to my family in Edinburgh. I ran away from my home at Christmas so I wouldn't have to go back to Balgowan. Birthdays were not celebrated.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

25. I was told when I was first in Balgowan that it would be for three months only. After the first three months was up, I was taken to a meeting and told that as I was getting an education I would have to stay. I wanted to go back home to Edinburgh, but the social worker Janet told me I would have to stay. I wanted to go to a school nearer to my home.
26. Every Saturday I would see my mum as she would come up to Dundee to see me. She'd come up for 12 noon to take me out and I'd be back at between 4 and 4:30 pm. I'm not aware of any visitor book for her to sign. I didn't see my siblings on visits as it was just my mum who came up. I saw my brother and sisters briefly when I managed

to run away to Edinburgh. I'd not see them at all if my dad caught me as he'd send me straight back to Dundee and the police would come to the house for me.

Healthcare

27. I never received medical attention when I was caned. I didn't see a nurse, I don't remember if there was one. I never saw a doctor or dentist when I was in Balgowan and I was never ill.

Running away

28. I ran away constantly from Balgowan and try to get back to Edinburgh. I got myself into some dangerous situations. The social workers started to get concerned. I ran away on my own and went to the train station in Dundee. I asked strangers for lifts to the train station. I begged strangers for the two pence I needed to get a platform ticket to get in the station and then got on the Edinburgh train. Sometimes I made it back to Edinburgh and to my mum's house. I'd be taken back to Balgowan, my dad made sure of that. I couldn't say anything to him about what was happening to me at Balgowan. He thought I was getting an education there and that's what I needed. The police would come round to the house for me so I started to find other places to hide, like in doorways or under the bridge in Gilmerton.
29. I had to steal things in order to run away. No-one asked me why I was running away so much. There was a meeting three months after I started at Balgowan to extend my placement, but there was never any meeting to discuss why I was running away so often. The headmaster asked me why I was running away and there was no way I could tell him what was going on so I told him I wanted to be with my family. I didn't trust anyone.

Bed wetting

30. I used to pee the bed when I was first at Balgowan. I used to have to take the sheet off my bed to dry it on the radiator. The older bully boys would pick on me because of

that and call me names. At night time I would knock on the staff room door to report I had wet the bed and I'd go back to my bed. Then the night staff would come along with a torch to see who had wet the bed. They would slap me across the face and shout at me. The staff on duty at night could be on duty during the daytime too, they weren't only on at night.

31. The sheets would be taken off you and put on the radiator. This made the sheets smell so other boys would notice the smell and see you drying them. Nothing was done to try to help the problem. I was too scared to speak to someone during the day because I didn't know how to tell anyone and whether anyone would believe me. I was just told I was a bad laddie. It was always one of the abusers who gave me clean sheets.

The Wellington Farm, Penicuik

32. I was running away constantly from Balgowan. I got one home leave from Balgowan and didn't go back. I decided that, as I was always getting sent back to Balgowan from Edinburgh that I'd get to Dundee train station and get on the first train to London, but the Edinburgh one came in instead and I jumped on that.
33. I always begged the social worker to send me to Edinburgh so I could be nearer to my family. I don't remember there being any meeting, but she arranged for me to attend an assessment centre near to Edinburgh and maybe I wouldn't run away so much. I went to Wellington Farm in Penicuik. This was also known as 'the Welly Farm'. I was there for six to nine months. Everything was ok there. I was then moved from Penicuik as an assessment was required in a closed centre.

Howden Hall Assessment Centre, Edinburgh

34. I was in Howden Hall from the ages of fourteen to sixteen. That would have been 1979 to 1981. I don't know why I was maintained in care at this time. My mum has never told me anything and always said it was my dad who wanted me to stay in care so I

would get an education. Maybe she signed some sort of form to say I was 'out of control'.

35. There were between two and three hundred boys and girls at Howden Hall, including thirty to forty seniors and a group of bairns called the wombles would be about the same number.
36. Howden Hall was in the Gilmerton area of Edinburgh. It was a square box of a place and a much smaller building than Balgowan. There was a TV room and a games room with a pool table and a snooker table. I slept in a dormitory. There were both boys and girls at Howden Hall. My mum's house was [REDACTED] from the assessment centre, and I could run home [REDACTED].
37. In terms of staff, there was a man called Mr EWA or EWA [REDACTED] and another called LAM [REDACTED], who was [REDACTED]. Both of them were team leaders. Both men were aged between forty and fifty. Mr Russell was the head teacher at Howden Hall and he was in overall charge. I don't know the name of the Governor, but I remember the SNR [REDACTED] was Mr PAQ [REDACTED]. With regards to my own group, the person in charge changed as it was whoever was team leader on any given day, and that was either EWA [REDACTED] or LAM [REDACTED].
38. The atmosphere at Howden Hall was ok and we could have a laugh as long as EWA [REDACTED] and LAM [REDACTED] were not around, it was very different when they were. EWA [REDACTED] was a bully. He'd chose what we could watch on the TV and steal fags off the boys. He shouldn't have been working with children and he'd been in trouble in the past.

Routine at Howden Hall

Mornings and bedtimes

39. I slept in a room with four other boys. I remember the names [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. In the morning we'd be up to get a wash and a shower and ready for school. There was no set time. It was more relaxed at getting up time than Balgowan. We'd have to clear up the dining room after breakfast and this was one of our chores. The bedroom would be unlocked. I was supervised to make sure I didn't break a window in order to escape.
40. It was a Mr Motherwell who let me out of the bedroom in the morning to let me use the bathroom and wash or shower. He wanted to be sure I didn't break a window and try to run away on his watch. One time, me and [REDACTED] took his master keys off and tied him up so we could escape. He'd put his keys down on the bench when we were playing badminton and we took the opportunity. He was just a young, normal guy and aged about twenty-three years old. As a result of tying up Mr Motherwell I got six of the belt from Mr Russell and sent to the dormitory.
41. I'd stopped bed wetting by this stage and I don't think we'd get into trouble for doing it like at Balgowan.

Food/Mealtimes

42. The food wasn't great. If you didn't finish the food on your plate, they'd give you more of the food that you didn't want to eat. There was a tuck shop at Howden Hall and you weren't allowed to go to the tuck shop that week if you didn't eat the meals.

Clothing/uniform

43. We didn't wear a uniform. We wore jeans, sweatshirts and black plimsolls. We didn't have any best clothes to wear on Sunday.

Leisure time

44. We watched TV between 6:30 and 8:30 in the evening. There was a snooker table, pool table, table tennis, football, we played badminton in the gym and board games.

We didn't have any trips out of the assessment centre unless I was going to a children's panel.

45. I don't remember having any personal possessions, apart from I had a signet ring that my mum and dad gave me and I had it when I was in the assessment centre. I think the ring was stolen one time when I took it off my finger at one of the sinks. I had no presents from Christmas to keep for myself, apart from the things the assessment centre gave me.

Christmas/birthdays

46. I spent one Christmas locked up in solitary confinement when I was just fourteen. My mum never said anything about me being locked up and I don't know if she complained to Howden Hall about it. We were given a goody bag at Christmas and I got a St Christopher medallion for round my neck, as well as some fruit and sweeties. All the boys got the same medallion. I refused to wear mine as it was so big.

Work/chores

47. We had to clear the tables after breakfast and lunch. We cleaned the dorms after school and the TV room. We had to do sweeping up, wiping tables and generally keeping the place clean. There was no reward for doing that. There was a sweet shop but I'd have to get money from my family to buy sweets.

School

48. The school wasn't good, but there was no caning. I got slapped by EWA or the teachers for being cheeky. We did metal work, maths, English. I couldn't get the words on paper. If we misbehaved they gave us the belt, but there was no cane. Howden Hall wasn't quite as big on education as Balgowan was, it was more relaxed.

Healthcare

49. HYY was a staff member at Howden Hall, he came up to the spyhole at the door of my bedroom to see how I was one day, and could see I wasn't well and I was covered in blotches. He came to tell me to get up because I had a day pass. I thought he was joking, I'd not got home before and my family had to come in to see me. When I got home, my mum could see straight away that I wasn't well and took me to see the GP and Dr Black told me I had shingles. He must have told the assessment centre and I stayed away from Howden Hall for three weeks so I wouldn't give it to the other residents. I saw it as a bonus that I wasn't allowed back in the assessment centre for so long because I was contagious.

Visits and reviews of detention

50. My mum brought my brother and sisters to see me. I'd not seen them properly for two years. I didn't get visits from my dad.
51. The only review of my placement in care was at Balgowan when my placement was extended after three months. There was no meetings with my mum and dad being present to review my progress. I didn't see my social worker, Janice or Janet, when I was in the centre, and she never came to check up on me as there was no need to because I was in care.

Running away

52. I ran away a lot at Howden Hall. I would smash windows to get out and I was put in solitary confinement as a result. I ran away overnight and two policemen got me the next morning. I slept rough for a while when I was thirteen and slept under the bridge. I broke into shops and started drinking spirits like vodka at the age of fourteen.

Abuse at Balgowan

53. I was sexually assaulted by two or three or four different people from the night staff. It happened weekly or more often. It was always at night when I was in my bed. I don't know if these people were on duty during the day time too as I couldn't see their faces at night. Other laddies were assaulted too, I don't know if we were chosen because we were the youngest ones in the dorm. A few other laddies were taken from their beds. They took me to a room with a TV in it, and I was sexually abused there by staff members. I can't remember the names of the staff. Sometimes, staff would take me out of Balgowan during the night and take me to another house. Sometimes they'd tell me a special person was coming to visit to me and he would take me in a car to this other house. I didn't know where I was going. These special people sexually abused me and sometimes that happened inside the car. The other houses were somewhere in Dundee, I don't know where.
54. I was running away from the home by this time as I couldn't take any more. The night-time staff had some sort of link with these special people, and I don't know how they would get them into the home. There were about five young laddies that they took to some big, fancy houses, like mansions. They'd give us alcohol and drugs. I don't know how many adults there were. I just remember there were fancy leather couches in the one house that we were taken to. I was sexually abused there. I never spoke to the other boys about this. I didn't know the other boys I saw, but they were from Balgowan. I didn't know them as they were older, or from different wings. This abuse didn't happen all the time when I was at Balgowan, but there was always people coming in with the night staff, I don't know how. One of these people would always be nasty, and another one would always be nice. The sexual abuse was always at night, not during the day when the teachers were around. It always involved the night staff and they would shine the torch in your face to wake you up.
55. I don't know how many night time staff there were in total. There was maybe between four and six staff members involved in the abuse. I can't recall their names. One staff member had a beard and a moustache and was a heavy-set guy in his late 30s. With

regard to the 'special people' we were taken to meet, I never saw their faces. It was always in the dark so you can't see them and they'd shine the torch in your face.

Abuse at Howden Hall

56. EWA [REDACTED] used to take me to his house in Lasswade. He used to put music on and he gave me alcohol and made me drink it. I hated him. He was a pure monster. He was sick and he caused me physical pain. He used to catch me when I ran away from the assessment centre and take me to his house. He took me to his house on more than one occasion. It would be just me and him inside the house. He had a wife, but he'd tell her to go out and take the dogs for a walk. She was [REDACTED] at Howden Hall.
57. The two men, EWA [REDACTED] and LAM [REDACTED] were the main abusers, and the abuse was of a sexual nature. EWA [REDACTED] had master keys for the assessment centre. I'd try to keep my head down so he didn't notice me, but if he did I'd be taken into his office. He could lock me in his office and do things to me then. I don't know if he abused girls, but I know he abused other boys as other laddies in the centre mentioned him.
58. Because I was running away, I was put in a cell in solitary confinement for three months. I smashed windows to run away and I was costing them money. I was in a senior cell for three months. I had no visitors in that time. I was just in the one room. It had a plastic window and a bed with a thin mattress. I was wearing just my underpants so I wouldn't try to run away. I got just one hour's exercise time each evening. There was another boy, [REDACTED] (he was known as [REDACTED]) and he was put in the womble cell.
59. It was Christmas time when I was in solitary confinement. The other boys were getting to go home on Christmas leave, except for me and a boy called [REDACTED] who was also from Gilmerton, and he kept running away too. Then the team leaders said one of us could go home and they tossed a coin to decide which one. It was [REDACTED] who won the coin toss and I had to go into a cell so I couldn't go home. I got a Christmas dinner in my cell. My mum never asked why I was in solitary confinement, she never said anything about it or complained about it.

60. EWA had a big bunch of keys that he kept on a large metal ring. He used to smash the keys and the ring against my hand. I'd just have to look at him the wrong way and that was enough for him. He'd call me to his office. He tried to touch me, I started to push him away. I was fifteen by then and getting bigger and stronger and I told him I'd hurt him back.
61. LAM was the same, always trying to touch me and watching me in the shower and he was masturbating. At fifteen I stood up to EWA and the abuse stopped, it was the same with LAM but he was harder to deal with. I'd go for a shower and he'd be creeping about the showers and he'd try to do things when I was in the shower. He got me on more than one occasion in the showers on my own.

Abuse in Edinburgh

62. The man who lived next door to my mum and dad in Edinburgh used to sexually abuse me too. Before I went away to Balgowan he used to pay me to walk his greyhound. After that, I went to Balgowan and used to run away back to my parent's house and I'd stay out of the house to avoid the police who came looking for me. One time, the neighbour saw me, and at the time I was with another laddie from Edinburgh. The neighbour told me we could stay with him. When we went inside, the man said to his wife that she would have to sleep on the sofa that night and we would sleep in the same bed as him. That night, me and the other laddie were asleep in his bed and I woke up to find the neighbour having oral sex. The other laddie's name was [REDACTED]
63. The neighbour was called LAO and his wife was LAN. They lived at [REDACTED] and my parents lived at [REDACTED] in the same street. The man now lives in Ireland and that is where he is from. The abuse started after I was placed in Balgowan and went on for a few years until I was aged fifteen. It happened more than once. When I ran away to Edinburgh and got to my mum and dad's house, the neighbour was always telling me I could come and stay in his house.

Also, he would come into my family home to abuse me when my parents weren't with me and I was sleeping on the settee downstairs. People left their doors open in those days.

64. I believe LAN [REDACTED] was also involved with the sexual abuse, although I didn't see her. One night when I was in the neighbour's house, someone put a sock in my mouth and I believe it must have been LAN [REDACTED]. She must have known about the abuse.
65. I think they are both now in Ireland. He was always disappearing from Edinburgh and I think he may have been in jail in Ireland.
66. I was with a laddie called [REDACTED] and I'd known him because he ran away from children's homes in Edinburgh and slept rough under the bridge in Gilmerton. I don't know if LAO [REDACTED] abused [REDACTED] as well. I stole £40 from the neighbour once when I was on the run. I felt so bad that I rang the home to get them to pick me up and take me back to Balgowan. That never happened any other time.
67. The abuse from LAO [REDACTED] stopped when I made sure I kept away from him and slept rough or at my pals houses, and then I got too big for him to get me. I was a big laddie when I was fifteen.

Reporting of abuse at Balgowan

68. I never reported anything at the time it happened. I was scared of what would happen and I didn't know who was involved in it, the headmaster could have been involved for all I knew. I didn't tell anyone until I spoke to my wife [REDACTED] seven years into our marriage. She had guessed something like that had happened to me before I ever told her.
69. I went to children's panels and I was never asked why I was running away and behaved the way I did. I couldn't say anything to anyone else, I didn't know who I could

approach and I didn't think anyone would believe me. I didn't trust anyone. I can't remember being asked by anyone why I ran away. Even when Mr Russell was belting me he didn't ask why I ran away and I wouldn't have told him anything.

Leaving Howden Hall

70. When I was fifteen, I went home for the weekend on a Friday and Mrs McGill told me before I went home that if I came back to the assessment centre on Monday there would be a surprise for me. On the Monday she told me that I could start to be a dayboy at the assessment centre and sleep in my own home. I was then a day boy for four to six months, and I was at Howden Hall from 9 am to 4 pm and attended the school in the assessment centre. Mrs McGill was very good at being straight with me. She was a Reporter with the Children's Panel.
71. Things changed when I turned sixteen and I left the care system and I was out of the door and getting my freedom.

Life after being in care

72. After leaving care I stayed with my mum and dad for six months. In this time I had six court appearances. I was always fighting with the police and getting into trouble. Then I met my wife [REDACTED] in the local chippie and we've been together for thirty-six years. I got married at seventeen. We got a flat together at Gracemount. Then our son [REDACTED] was born and he is now thirty-four. Then we had [REDACTED] the next year and she is now aged thirty-three. Both of them have children of their own.
73. I've drunk a lot of alcohol over the years to block things out. [REDACTED] guessed that something had happened to me in the past and it took me seven years to open up to her about it. She tells she just knew from the way I re-acted if I heard anything about child molesters and my reaction was over the top. There was also my insecurities, mistrust and violent reactions. I would put up a front to stop anyone getting through. I was afraid that [REDACTED] would leave me if she knew and she still has to get through to me that

she loves me and won't leave. The kids could guess that that something bad had happened to me in the past, as well as [REDACTED]'s mum.

74. When we had the children we were in the flat in Gracemount and then moved to South House, then a main door in Gilmerton before we got a house in the [REDACTED] area and we live there now. We've always lived in the Gracemount and Gilmerton area of Edinburgh and our family and grandchildren are nearby. I've not worked for more than a couple of weeks at a time. I never learned skills for life when I was in care. I didn't have much by way of social skills and don't know how to mingle with other people. I lack trust in others and imagine that everyone has an ulterior motive for whatever they do, so I can't make friends.
75. One day, sometime around 1990 or 1991, myself and [REDACTED] came out of her mum's house one day and ran into [REDACTED] LAO [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] told him he'd ruined her husband's life and told him to go to Ireland because she was going to the police. I believe he disappeared to Ireland that same day. About three years later, [REDACTED] saw him a second time in Edinburgh, outside my mum's house. She ran out of the house and chased him. He told her he would leave Edinburgh and he went back to Ireland again. One other time, me and [REDACTED] were walking up the road and saw [REDACTED] LAO [REDACTED] again. [REDACTED] was angry and pushing at him and he threatened to tell the police I was using drugs in my house. She pointed out the phone box across the road so he could phone the police, and then she'd tell them what he'd done to me. Instead, he said he'd leave again.
76. The last time, we came across both [REDACTED] LAO [REDACTED] and his wife, [REDACTED] LAN [REDACTED] in a local pub. [REDACTED] spoke to [REDACTED] LAN [REDACTED] and told her she'd better leave the pub because she was involved in the abuse and told them to leave the Gilmerton area. Not long after that their house was put on the market and sold. I believe [REDACTED] LAO [REDACTED] is alive as my sister is friends with their daughter because of them living next door. [REDACTED] told my sister as she'd bought his mum's house, and she sold it right away. When I saw [REDACTED] LAO [REDACTED] the last time, my wife said I went grey-faced and looked just like a scared wee laddie and it made [REDACTED] more angry.

Impact

77. I continue to have nightmares about what happened to me in care. I was always terrified of something similar happening to my children. I couldn't let my children stay overnight with their friends away from home because I didn't know what their dad was like.
78. I've been a glue sniffer in the past and I learned that in Balgowan. I was still sniffing glue when I met my wife. I've taken a lot of drugs up to just last year. The drug use just got heavier and heavier. I've nearly lost my leg twice. On numerous occasions I've tried to take my own life. My son said I had to stop. He is in prison and he told me he didn't want to get a call in jail to say I had died. Now I just smoke hash and I've been clean for nearly two years, but up until then I was injecting hard drugs. Now is the first time I've been clean since I was aged twelve. I want to see my grandchildren grow up.
79. I suffered with addiction issues and self-harmed. I've tried to kill myself with overdoses, slashing my wrists and [REDACTED] I've been in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital several times. At the Royal Edinburgh I got prescribed medication. I assaulted a police officer and was going to prison, but was referred to Health in Mind instead. The last time I tried to take my own life was in 2018 when my allocated worker left Health in Mind, and I lost the support he had given me.
80. In 2017 I was allocated a counsellor from Health in Mind and he was called John Whelan, but he left his post. I was re-allocated to another worker and she was a young lass that I didn't know. I didn't like the way she treated me and I had no trust in her, she left me with no support for one month. I missed two meetings as I couldn't go into the city centre to see her and I was taken off their list.
81. Twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago I told staff in the Royal Edinburgh that I had suffered abuse as a child but I was not offered any counselling or support, only medication. I am bi-polar and they have given me anti-psychotic medication. I told my

GP that I wanted help because I was addicted to drugs and I was told I was too old to be on them. He told me I was using them to block out my memories. The doctor told me to get off them, but no help was offered.

82. I've been in prison, but never done a sentence. I've been in prison on remand and for non-payment of fines for one to two weeks. I've not been able to get psychological help through the prison system.
83. My son [REDACTED] found a letter about historical child abuse from the Amethyst Team. At the time there had been reports in the press about abuse by Catholic priests in homes, and he thought it was only priests and monks who did that sort of thing. I told him it wasn't just priests, and other people who ran homes abused children too. [REDACTED] was fourteen and got more and more angry. Then his cousin died, and [REDACTED] deals with everything through violence and that is what he knew at home from me. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The person [REDACTED] had nothing to do with what happened to me in care, but [REDACTED] thought he was going to touch me [REDACTED].
84. I'm healthier now than I was two years ago. I was a skeleton. I have been so ill that my wife thought I would die. I lack confidence in myself, I don't trust other people, I suffer paranoia and have mental health problems. I have insecurity issues and my wife says I am difficult to live with and I acknowledge that. She has had to be very strong to have lived with me for so long. I was over protective of my own children and my grandchildren too. I wouldn't allow anyone to get near to them. I started to feel better and this stems from John Whelan and him giving me skills to cope with things. Further counselling would probably help, but there is a long waiting list at Health in Mind and I wasn't happy with the manager there.

Reporting of Abuse

85. I reported the abuse to the police in the Amethyst team in Edinburgh in 1997. I saw [REDACTED] with his two wee granddaughters and I decided to go to the police and

tell them what he'd done to me. I had one interview session with them, but didn't finish the whole story as the police officers had to leave the station to attend to an emergency. I can't remember who I spoke to in the police, it was a young woman. They took an impact statement from [REDACTED] I never went back to finish my account as I couldn't build myself back up to go back. The police made attempts to contact me by putting a card through my door, but I never followed it up.

86. The police were very interested in one of the names I gave them and I told them I was allowed to stay in that man's house. [REDACTED] told my mum that the Amethyst team might want to speak to her about what happened, and she wasn't interested and said 'to leave the past where it belongs'. At first she said I was making it up for attention. [REDACTED] didn't speak to her for two years. I could never tell my dad anything, he was a drinker and very violent. He would have killed the abusers and got jail for it.

Records

87. I have never seen a copy of the records of my time in care. I would like to get them and I understand that there are organisations that can help me.

Lessons to be Learned

88. Bairns that go into care now need to be safe and better protected than I was. I don't want what happened to me to happen to other children. I was adamant that I would give a statement to the Inquiry and I hope the Inquiry can help children. There should be more support for children and vetting of people working in homes as well as CCTV of the building to view people going in and out of children's homes.

Other information

89. 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.....GCW.....

Dated.....26/11/18.....