

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Jane CARMICHAEL

Support person present: No.

1. My name is Jane Carmichael. My maiden name was McDermott, which is what I was known as when I was a social work student. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I studied teacher training from 1982 to 1985. When I was doing my teacher training, I got a job as an assistant housekeeper at the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh. I did shifts there to fund me through my course. I worked in a housemother role in one of the houses for children with profoundly complex disabilities. I also had some experience of working as a carer for a fifteen year old autistic boy. He was non-verbal and required two people to accompany him out because of his challenging behaviour. I did quite a lot of extra work during my teaching course, just to fund it.
3. After graduating, I worked for Lothian Regional Council. I ran a nursery at Telford College. It was a full day-care nursery connected to the Pilton and Muirhouse areas of Edinburgh. The nursery was for the students of the college and the local community. The children were aged three to five years old. Some of the children came from challenging backgrounds. I did that until it closed down at the end of 1987, start of 1988.
4. After the nursery closed, I was going to be reallocated within the education department of the council. However, after working with the children in the nursery I decided that I

wanted to go on and study for a social work qualification. I applied to Moray House College in Edinburgh and studied social work from 1988 to 1990. I studied for a Diploma in Social Work, which entitled me to registration with the professional social work body upon completion. After completion of my diploma, I worked in the children and families department at Muirhouse social work office and I did some work at Liberton Hospital. I then moved on to the registration and inspection department in Claremont Street, Edinburgh and was employed as an officer for day care services. I left the profession in 1996.

5. I don't remember there being any vetting when I applied to Moray House. I think I just applied through the normal UCAS (University and Colleges Admission Service) application. I don't think there would have been any checks at that time. Although I referred to my childcare experience in the application, you could go into the course straight from school. If I remember rightly, you needed to have three Highers and one of them had to be English. The teaching diploma I had completed wasn't a prerequisite and I don't think there was a face to face interview.
6. I think we had three placements over the two year course. There was one placement in the first year and there were two placements in the second year. We went out on placement for a block, so a whole term would be spent on a placement. You were out at the placement full-time for that block. I think I was on placement at Wellington School for the middle term of my first year.
7. My understanding was that a number of placements were offered to the college for the social work course. I think you could express an interest in a particular area, but I was just told that I was going to Wellington. It was miles away from where I lived. I lived in Edinburgh and I had to go all the way out past Penicuik to get there. We weren't given any preparation or guidance before going out on placement. We were just sent out there. We did have a supervisor in the college, with whom we had regular meetings. That was mainly for the work that we had to produce, such as reports and essays. Other than that, we were really just sent on placement and supposed to get on with it.
8. We hadn't covered much on the course before going out on placement. Looking back, I realise how green we were. We had probably covered the basics of psychology,

sociology, social work practice and social policy. It really wasn't practice based rather it was the theoretical underpinnings of social work.

Wellington School, Penicuik, Midlothian

9. I think I was placed at Wellington School from the beginning of January to the end of March 1989. I can't be certain whether it was that term or the last term, after the Easter holidays. I was there as a residential care worker. The placement was to give me experience of a residential care establishment.
10. I'd never been to an establishment like that before. Before going there on placement, it was described to me as a List D school. At the time, in the community, it was known as a school for bad boys. The social work training described them as boys with difficulties and difficult backgrounds. I was aware that it was a school for boys who had been expelled, had not been able to attend school or came from difficult backgrounds. I think the age range was twelve to eighteen, but I can't be sure about that. That was basically all I knew before going there for the first time.
11. It wasn't a fully secure establishment, but the children weren't allowed to leave without permission. If I remember rightly, the doors were locked, but it wasn't secure in the way we think of secure units now. I would ring the buzzer to get in to the unit and somebody let me out when I finished my shift. The kids could move about the unit, but the main doors were locked. I can't remember whether the windows were secured.
12. I don't know how many children were in the school altogether. There were between six and eight boys in the area where I worked. My experience was only in that area. I don't know whether there were other residential areas as well as my own. My feeling is that it was all contained within one unit, but I can't be sure about that. I'm not sure whether other boys came in to the school as day pupils. There were lots of buildings on the grounds, but I never went into them. I don't know whether they were used or whether the numbers had dwindled so much that only the main house was used.

13. When I arrived at Wellington, I think I met with SNR and he showed me around. Nobody explained policies or health and safety to me. I wasn't given any kind of briefing before I started work. I think I was told to go to my team leader if there were any problems. I was also told that I wasn't allowed to go into the boys' bedrooms. I wasn't allowed in that area of the unit at all. I was told that I shouldn't be alone with any of the boys. Those rules just applied to me as a student and not to the other members of staff.
14. There was no training before going in. It was on the hoof and I was just supposed to follow people around. People would tell me things as we went along, like where the fire exits were. There wasn't really much effort made to integrate me and introduce me to the boys. I think it was a case of telling them that I was a student and that I'd be there for the next three months.

Layout

15. The school was run by Midlothian Council. It was completely remote. I knew where it was because I was brought up in Penicuik until the age of eight. I had known about the school as a child. It was very rural. You went right through Penicuik, down a back road and then the school was in the middle of the countryside. I have no idea how many boys attended Wellington School while I was there.
16. There were lots of rambling buildings, but I was mainly allocated to the main building. The main building was the living quarters for a group of boys. I was never allowed to go into the education part of the school. My job didn't involve going into that area. I don't know much about the school part of Wellington at all. Although it was on the grounds, it was very separate from the living accommodation. There were teachers who worked at the school, but I never had any contact with them. I don't even know whether there were day pupils attending the school. My job was mainly in the caring part of the accommodation.
17. There was a big living area as you came into the unit. It was open plan and there were rooms off it. There was a room with a stereo in it where the kids could listen to music.

I mainly spent time in the dining room and the living quarters, which were very open and airy. There wasn't a lot of stuff for the boys to do.

Staff/supervision of placement

18. There was a SNR [REDACTED] or a SNR [REDACTED] at Wellington. I can't remember whether he was [REDACTED] of the whole place or whether he was SNR [REDACTED] and there was a separate SNR [REDACTED]. I can picture him, but I can't remember his name. I think he was in his fifties. He was allocated to me as my supervisor. He would tell me what was going on and all the routines. It was mainly him who allocated my work.
19. There was a tall guy with blond hair who I think was called Chris. He was in his thirties or forties. He was like a team leader. My shifts were supposed to coincide with his shifts because I was working under him. He was like a mentor to me, but my supervisor was SNR [REDACTED]. There were quite few care staff. There were always three or four members of staff on shift so there was quite a high ratio of staff to kids. I don't remember ever feeling that there was an overwhelming number of boys.
20. I'm sure there were a couple of female staff, but it was very male-orientated. They were all pretty burly. It was quite a daunting place. I can't be sure, but I think some of the staff had a nursing background. Some of them might have been psychiatric nurses. Some had a background in social work and others were just residential care workers. You didn't have to have a qualification to be a residential care worker at that time. There were often supply staff. The students were used as staff at times and used to make up numbers. I don't know what vetting checks took place when staff were recruited. I don't know when criminal records checks came in, but I was never vetted before starting my placement. I wasn't aware of any kind of regular review of staff performance or staff training when I was at Wellington.
21. Years later, I remember working for the duty social work team in Edinburgh at one point. There was a girl who needed 24 hour care. She couldn't be placed anywhere. I did night shifts in a house with her. The other staff on duty were psychiatric nurses, but they had been employed by social work. It was because they were big and they could contain and control situations. That was the attitude that was taken and that was

how they saw themselves dealing with really disturbed young people. It was a similar situation at Wellington. There wasn't an awful lot of thought going into things. The staff didn't have the training, the theory or the understanding to put a lot of thought into it. The other staff were not qualified social workers. Although I was doing a social work course, I think SNR [REDACTED] was the only person who was a qualified social worker or teacher.

22. There wasn't much of a link between the college and the placement. My tutor at college came to Wellington on two occasions to see SNR [REDACTED]. There was a three way meeting to see how I was getting on. I think they probably had a chat in my absence as well. I didn't have to record my experience, but I think I had weekly meetings with SNR [REDACTED]. We would have a conversation about how I was finding it. It was like a supervision appointment. He would sometimes give me some theory, but there wasn't much supervision compared to other placements I did later on.

Children in my care

23. I think there were about six to eight boys in the unit, but I'm not quite sure. I don't remember any children arriving at or leaving the unit during my placement. They were all about thirteen, fourteen and fifteen years old. I remember the names of two of the boys, KTW [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I remember other boys, but not their names. I think one might have been called [REDACTED]. I can see their faces but I can't remember their names. One of the boys was into the football casuals. I was never given a great deal of information about the reasons for children being at Wellington. It was confidential and they wouldn't share that with the students. I got very little information about the boys' backgrounds and that was problematic. I was just told that they were there on either supervision orders or voluntary orders.
24. I think we'd covered the legislation in our course so I knew the difference between a supervision order and a voluntary order. If a child was under a supervision order, there were more restrictions on what the staff could do. If a child was on a voluntary order, there was usually a sense that the family was still involved. If they were on a supervision order, it could be that there was no family involvement. There might then be issues about what access the child had to family.

25. All of the children had key workers. Although I wasn't given information about children's backgrounds, I think the key worker knew a bit about any child under his or her care. The key worker may have had access to information about the child's background. I don't know whether the other staff would have had access to such information.

First impressions/role

26. I was hugely daunted by the whole place. It was a very male environment. I think I just had to follow people around. I was at a bit of a loss. There wasn't a lot of direction. I worked the same shifts as a specific team. I was always on with the same team leader and my shifts were designed around that team's shift pattern. I was often on shift until 9:00 or 10:00 pm or I did a morning shift, which involved breakfast. When I was doing the morning shift I had to get out there really early, 7:00 or 8:00 am. I never worked nightshifts. I wasn't there for any kind of shift handover. I was just told to go and get my jacket. There wasn't much to it from my point of view because I wasn't allowed any responsibility for those kind of things. I wasn't really learning very much.
27. I just wore normal clothes. I probably dressed smartly the first week and then jeans for the rest of the time. I had a motorbike, which was how I got out there. I suspect I probably just wore my motorbike gear. The other staff also wore casual clothes, although I think the head might have worn a suit at times.
28. The boys sometimes had activities in the evening or they would hang around and I would talk to them. I never felt that I was accepted. I was kept very much at a distance and I never felt part of it. I didn't enjoy the placement at all and I was really glad when it finished. It was a very isolating experience. I was going out to that place every day and I wasn't seeing other students.
29. Because I wasn't given any information about the children's backgrounds, I was going in blind. I was talking to children and working with the children and I hardly knew anything about them. I wasn't told their backgrounds or their histories, I was just supposed to work with them. I think the children saw me as a transient human being. They would have known that I was a student so they weren't going to invest in that

either. I did manage to create some close relationships with the boys, two in particular. I never knew much about them or their background.

30. There was another student on placement at Wellington, John, but I think he placed was in a different unit. He spoke about being kept away from things as well, but I think he got on a bit better than me because he was a man. John was older than me, in his thirties or forties, and he had a background in psychiatric nursing before studying social work. Occasionally, we would leave together after a shift. We would discuss how little structure there was for the children. There really weren't many activities for them to do after school. We were used as staff, as numbers to cover shifts. I'm pretty sure there were weekly team meetings, but I wasn't allowed to go to them. I was kept separate, although I think I was allowed to go to occasional meetings. I did feel like a spare idiot a lot of the time. I would wonder what I was supposed to be doing. I would just be sitting around a lot. I didn't know what to do. There wasn't really a lot to do and I didn't do very much.
31. I helped with breakfast. I don't think we did the laundry, but we would make sure the kids had brought it down from their rooms. I was asked to spend some time with a boy called [K]TW so I used to speak to him. I would spend some time with the children. I would hang around in the living room, trying to chat to them. It was very awkward and for me, as a student, it was very difficult.
32. It was constantly kicking off. It was an environment of fear and eruption from both the staff and the kids' point of view. There were constant eruptions. That seemed to be the main focus, trying to stop these eruptions. There were often two or three guys jumping on kids and restraining them if there was a problem. I was terrified. I'd never experienced anything like it before. I was very small, I was very thin and I looked young. I don't think the staff were very impressed about who had been sent to them. I think they were expecting a big strapping bloke. I think I was wondering what I was supposed to be doing there. I don't even know why I went back after the first week.

Routine at Wellington

Mornings/bedtime

33. I understand that the children had bedrooms of their own. I wasn't allowed to go into the bedrooms, but I know that the team leader did go into the bedrooms quite a lot. I do remember a little chap who was very small and very young. I think he was quite new to the school. He was obviously very unhappy and he found it difficult to settle at night. I know that Chris, the team leader, spent a lot of time with him in his room at night time. He would try and settle him because he was so miserable. He was on his own with the boy and, at the time, I thought it was a bit odd and that it wasn't something I would do.
34. The care staff woke the boys up in the morning. I was never involved in that because I wasn't allowed in the bedrooms. When the children got up in the morning, they would have breakfast in the dining area. After breakfast, they were all supposed to go to school.

Mealtimes/food

35. There was a dining area where the children ate their meals. There were separate staff who did the cooking. Breakfast was usually cereal or porridge. The children came back from school for their lunch. The staff ate the food with the children. It was alright. I can't be sure, but I think there were times when children had to stay and eat if they hadn't finished. I don't think there was a level of care or input where children were encouraged to eat. I'm not sure how much nurturing did go on.

Washing and bathing

36. I was never anywhere near the bathrooms or washing facilities. I was never involved in any of that. I think the bathrooms must have been in the same area as the bedrooms. Because I was a student and a female, I wasn't allowed to be a part of that.

Clothing

37. I think there was a uniform for the boys, but it was never worn. I don't think the staff bothered trying to get the boys to wear it. The children wore anything, just their own clothes.

Schooling

38. I'm not aware of any of the boys attending school out with Wellington. It was hoped that the boys would go to school during the day. Many of them didn't so they would be hanging around the unit during the day, talking to members of staff. I was never allowed in the school. It was very separate from the care part.

Leisure time

39. A lot of leisure time was spent watching TV. There was also a stereo. There might have been a wee pool table. After school, I think there were a few things that the boys could do with the teaching staff. [REDACTED] used the art facilities in the school quite a lot. Some of the boys were allowed day passes at the weekend and they would go out. We didn't do very much with them in the unit, apart from at the weekend when we would take them skiing at Hillend. If I was on shift at the weekend, I would be involved in the trip to Hillend. If I remember rightly, there was a minibus and we went in that. I think we took ten to twelve kids with about three staff supervising. We took kids who wanted to go and those who weren't on any restrictions. There were restrictions, depending on behaviour. I think I also went into Edinburgh, shopping. The kids were fine outside of the school and the trips were usually ok. They loved going skiing.
40. There were a lot of grounds around the building, but the children never went out to play on them at the time I was there. Because of the time of year, it was dark early on in the evening. I don't know whether they went out on the grounds during the school day. A lot of the time, boys were just in the unit talking to staff. They also used to go to their rooms quite a lot as well. I'm not sure whether boys were allowed to go into each other's rooms. I've got a feeling that wasn't allowed.

41. Some of the boys smoked. I don't know whether they had their own cigarettes. I was a smoker in those days, but I can't remember whether we went outside to smoke or whether we smoked inside. I think the staff might have given the boys cigarettes. I think there might have been a room in the unit where we smoked. There wasn't any alcohol in the place that I was aware of, but boys could get a hold of it when they went out at the weekends.

Healthcare

42. If a child had a dental or medical appointment, he would be taken to it by staff. I think those appointments were usually in Penicuik. I didn't see much in the way of medical intervention at the unit. I think boys were usually taken out if they needed medical attention. I was aware that some of the children had prescribed medication, which was the responsibility of the team leader.
43. There was a lot of self-harm amongst the boys in the unit. [REDACTED] had a lot of self-harm scars. I think it was dealt with by monitoring it and taking away [REDACTED] but he would find a way. I wasn't aware of [REDACTED] receiving any medical treatment for self-harm. I didn't see much in the way of intervention at the unit.
44. I didn't see anything by way of psychological or psychiatric input for the boys. I remember asking whether [REDACTED] received any treatment for his mental health. I think he did get medication, which might have come from a psychiatrist, but there was no ongoing support. It was left to the care staff to deal with it. I always think about him and wonder what happened to him. He was just so disturbed. He was so introverted and he had so much anger in him. I used to wonder where it was all going to go.

Christmas and birthdays

45. I wasn't there over Christmas, but the boys' birthdays were marked. I think a couple of boys celebrated their birthdays when I was on placement. They had a cake.

Visits/reviews

46. I never saw any visitors come into the unit, apart from social workers. I didn't see any family members visit. I don't remember many visits to the place at all. Social work visits were by arranged appointment. There was a meeting room where boys could meet their social workers. It was private and you could shut the door.
47. I was allocated to a boy called [K]T[W]. I think I attended one of [K]T[W]'s reviews as his befriender. I was there alongside his key worker. I have a feeling that I might have met his parents at the review. That was the only time I ever saw them because [K]T[W] wasn't in their care. He was in the care of his uncle at the weekend. The team leader and [K]T[W]'s social worker were also there.
48. The review was held within the school, in the meeting room. [K]T[W] was on a supervision order so I think there was a formal review process that had to be followed. There was a record taken of the meeting. I think that was the key worker's responsibility. The review was very superficial, about how he was getting on at the place. [K]T[W] didn't say very much. He didn't have legal representation or an advocate present. They discussed how he was getting on at school and which subjects he liked. It wasn't very in depth. There wasn't really much to it. It was just a general review about how he was getting on. It was really about how he was getting on at school, rather than how he was getting on in his life or his thoughts or feelings. It didn't consider other placements for him. He had been placed at Wellington and that was it. It was very functional and a bit of a tick-box exercise.

Weekend leave

49. Some of the boys used to get out for the weekend. I think they were taken into Edinburgh, Penicuik or wherever they were going and then picked up again. It was so remote that they couldn't get buses back, so they would be met somewhere by a staff member. A lot of the boys were on supervision orders in the care system. The residential placement was responsible for their care. Some of the boys couldn't see their families or have access to certain areas of Edinburgh. There were different restrictions for different kids.

50. It was difficult to manage supervision of the boys when they were dropped off in Edinburgh. They would often get into all sorts of trouble with the police, through the football casualties or something they'd done. The staff would get phone calls, saying that boys were in the police cells. Sometimes, boys would abscond when they were out. A lot of time was spent hunting for boys at the weekend. If a boy wasn't at the pre-arranged pick-up point, the police were supposed to be alerted. It was then a case of waiting for the police to find them and bring them back. I remember that happening on one occasion. The report was made over the phone and the boy was eventually brought back by the police. As a student, I wasn't allowed to be involved in these kinds of incidents. It was always kept away from me.
51. I remember one incident, which I think involved [REDACTED]. I have a feeling it might have been connected to football, but I can't be sure. The staff were aware that [REDACTED] was in police custody. I thought the staff would go and get him, but they didn't. They just left him there for the night. I don't know why that was the case, whether he was drunk or something, but he wasn't collected until the next day. He was fourteen or fifteen and he spent the night in the cells.
52. There was an understanding amongst the staff that boys might get into trouble when they were on weekend leave, but there wasn't an awful lot of care. There didn't seem to be a lot of concern about them. It was more an obligation, that they might have to go and collect them from the police station. The staff all knew that the boys might be at risk on weekend leave. They could be in Gorgie, they could be in Dalry, they could be with gangs. I've never learned so much about gangs and football casualties. They were also at risk from older people getting them to do things. They might have access to drugs or alcohol, although I think at that time it was more of an alcohol culture than a drugs culture.
53. There was a massive awareness that these boys were at risk, but they weren't seen as boys. The regime didn't see them as young boys needing help. The regime saw them as kids who had made bad choices and were coming up to being adults. I don't think they were seen as vulnerable children. They were seen as little hard nuts. That was the presentation that a lot of them gave out because of what they had been through, but they were very vulnerable.

54. The staff did try to talk to the boys and steer them in a different direction, but the boys hated the place. They didn't want to be there. Most of them were there because they'd been sent there by some kind of order and had such a resentment of that. It was really difficult. It wasn't a homely place and they didn't like it there. They wanted to go out whenever they could. They could meet other boys who they had associations with.

Environment/culture in unit

55. I'm not sure what experience I was gaining, but I remember thinking that the place was nutty. I remember thinking, "How can people live like this?" It was really stressful. It was like a tinder box. There wasn't a calmness or a nurturing around it. It was more a feeling of, "What's going to happen today?" Everything was so suppressed. The staff were trying to keep the boys suppressed. The boys were seen as very disturbed. They weren't seen as kids. They were just seen as adolescent boys who were out of control. It was a very stressful place to be.
56. As a student, I was always on the periphery. I used to sit around a lot and wonder what I was doing. If I was on a shift in the morning and the kids had gone to school, I was really a spare part for much of the time. If there were kids who weren't attending school, I would sit and talk to them. I never felt that I got to know the children at all, apart from a couple. There wasn't that connection. I was quite extrovert and able to talk to the boys. I wanted to get to know them, but I never felt that was encouraged. The staff kept me very distant.
57. The team leader was very friendly towards the boys and supportive of them. He wasn't a hard human being. Some of the staff were, but he did try and talk to the boys. He tried to get to know them and support them. The head was also very kind. I remember him being caring the time that I was there. His heart was in the right place for these kids.
58. The kids were quite depressed. They were teenagers, which was bad enough, but they were also pretty disturbed and depressed. They didn't do very much and often weren't able to motivate themselves to do very much at all. There wasn't any individual planning to make sure each child was stimulated and entertained. The only time that

ever happened was when it kicked off and they had to keep two boys apart. They would try and do something with them. There was an awful lot of time spent hanging around, irritating each other, waiting for it to blow. It was just too unstructured for the boys.

59. I think there was quite a hierarchical structure amongst the boys. There were some young boy and some old boys there. Some of the boys were football casuals and used to having really big punch ups at the football matches. That was their mentality and it was what they'd grown up with.
60. Key workers maybe had three or four boys each. There was a willingness to build a relationship with the boys and the key workers did have time on their own with the boys. The difficulty was that the boys didn't want it either. The regime was so much about containment and it was so suppressed. It's hard to explain, but it was dampened down the whole time. It was all about control. It was all about keeping this explosion from happening. There was no gentleness. It wasn't a nurturing place.
61. Most of the staff did not view the boys as vulnerable children who needed care and nurture. I think that was because of the lack of training and education amongst the staff. I don't think many of the staff had any formal training about the children. It does still astonish me because, at that time, we did know that children's behaviour was determined by their experiences. I still think the practice didn't meet what the theory understood. When you're in an institution like that, it becomes like a culture. I think it's a male thing in society as well, an expectation that boys get themselves into trouble.
62. There was just a lack of care and a lack of seeing the boys as vulnerable. They put on hard nut personas. I think there was also a feeling of, "What can we do about it?" The boys could go out at weekends. Depending on what order the boys were on, it might not have been possible to stop them going out at the weekends. It just fell between all the different loops of the care system. I don't think the care system was looking at these children. I think it was all about containment.
63. I think some of the staff were institutionalised. Maybe some of the professions that they came from influenced the culture. Some of them had a background in psychiatric

nursing and working in psychiatric hospitals. At that time, it was very much about containment and restraint. It was driven by fear. I was fearful myself. When I was there, it always felt so tense and fearful. Everybody was afraid of something happening so they didn't relax. It then becomes the culture and the kids react to that. The staff react to the kids. Maybe when you deal with it day to day, you lose perspective of what these children are and just look at the behaviours. The discipline was very behaviour oriented, which is never going to help a child who has been traumatised. There was a lack of care and a lack of empathy. It was a very emotionally cold environment. I think there was emotional neglect.

Discipline/restraint

64. Kids would have privileges withdrawn from them as punishment. Things like trips to Hillend would be withheld if a child didn't behave. I didn't see a lot of punishment, I just saw a lot of chaos. I didn't see any physical violence towards the children, but I did see an awful lot of restraining. I saw needless restraints. Kids would be restrained before things kicked off. The staff would just do it because they thought that it was going to kick off.
65. The kids were bored. There wasn't much going on. They would bicker with each other or wind each other up. There would be a fall out between a staff member and a child. Some of the boys were bigger than me. There were constant eruptions like that and the way the staff responded was to jump on the children and restrain them. The atmosphere was one of control by use of strength rather than emotional intelligence or negotiation. I'm sure that was going on, but I didn't see an awful lot of it. That was all I had to use because I wasn't going to restrain anybody. I was never asked to restrain anybody, thankfully. I didn't receive any training in restraining the children.
66. If kids were arguing over something, it could be over the TV, it could be anything, the male staff would block them. They would stand in front of them. It was very confrontational. Sometimes that would work and they would disperse. On other occasions, two or three men would lie on top of a boy, who was face down. There was always more than one member of staff in a restraint and the child was mainly face down on the floor. One could be on top of the boy, one could be on his arms and one

could be on his legs. The child could be prone on the ground for quite a while. It could be ten, fifteen minutes. It just depended how long it took the boy to calm down. I'm sure the boys felt that they were being assaulted so they fought back. It was an assault. It was big men on them.

67. It was quite full on, but I don't know whether children were ever injured. To me, it didn't look like a trained and expertly executed process. It may well have been, but to me it just looked like the staff piled on top of a boy and held him down until he calmed down. I don't know whether there was a protocol that was being followed. I don't think the staff enjoyed restraining the children, although there was one member of staff who was quite burly and I didn't think it mattered to him what he did. He looked like a prison officer. I don't think he bothered about the boys' feelings, but I don't think most of the staff liked having to restrain boys. It left people feeling very frazzled. It must have been very tiring for the staff who were doing it.
68. The restraints usually took place in the main living area. The staff would try and get the other boys out of the way. They would be taken to the dining room or another area. We would be hustled out of the way quickly so I don't know whether there was any communication by staff during restraints. I hated watching the restraints. I couldn't bear it so I didn't stay around. I thought the restraints were barbaric and I hated it. They were scary to witness. The boys would become very quiet and subdued when another boy was being restrained. Some of them would get excited about it all and kick off, but it was just fear. It was very traumatic and it was a very explosive thing to happen. It happened right in the middle of the boys. There was a lot of fear around after a restraint. It was scary to witness and I know that I was scared. It was an incredibly humiliating thing to witness.
69. There was no emergency button. You had your legs and you got the heck out of there. I remember one incident with a boy called [REDACTED]. I quite liked [REDACTED]. He was a huge boy and he was extremely emotionally disturbed. I've always wondered what happened to him. I thought he'd either end up in prison or end up killing himself. He loved to use the art room and spent a lot of time going down there. He was an incredible sculptor. He had the capacity to sculpt clay, but he was very closed in. I tried to get to know him. We were sitting in the side room one day with the stereo system. I

was chatting away to him. I can't remember what I said, but I must've said the wrong thing. Whatever I said was a trigger. The next thing, he exploded and threw the whole stereo across my head, above me. I remember legging it out of there because I didn't know what else to do.

70. I remember [REDACTED] being restrained by guys coming in. There was no debrief for the staff afterwards, no discussion, nothing. It was just accepted that was what [REDACTED] did. I must have said the wrong thing and triggered something in him. He got very angry. I didn't know because I didn't have any background information about him. I don't know whether there was any discussion with [REDACTED] afterwards because it was taken out of my control. Every time something happened I wasn't allowed to be involved. I was very much taken away from it and I didn't get to be part of it.
71. I don't know whether the restraints were recorded at that time. They might have been noted in the unit day book. It happened a lot of times when I was there in some form or other. It wasn't daily, but maybe every other day. I don't think that the restraints used were always necessary, but I don't think the staff had the skills to do anything else. I don't think they had what we now call de-escalation skills. The kids were allowed to do what they liked and until it got out of control. The staff then came in and reacted. There was very little structure for the boys when they weren't in school. The restraints must have been traumatic for everyone involved, but particularly the boys. They were so powerless in that moment.

Disclosure of Abuse at Wellington

72. I was allocated to a boy called [REDACTED]. I'm sure his name was [REDACTED], but I hesitate a little because I worked with another boy years later at Cherrybank Day Centre in Dalkeith. He was very similar and I can't quite remember whether he was [REDACTED] or the boy at Wellington was [REDACTED]. I have a picture of him and I know who I'm talking about, I'm just not certain that I have the correct name.

73. I think [K] [T] [W] was quite new to Wellington and had only been there for a few months. He was a nice lad. He was quiet, introverted and non-threatening. I think they gave me him to work with because he was the least confrontational. I was supposed to spend time with him on my shifts and get to know him. We got chatting and we got to know each other. He had a social worker who came to visit him once every two weeks. She had a regular meeting slot with him. I think she came from the Gilmerton Social Work Office and her name might have been Helen.
74. [K] [T] [W] went home every weekend and stayed with a disabled uncle. He'd been doing that for years. One day, [K] [T] [W] told me that he was being sexually abused by his uncle. He told me that when he went to his uncle's at the weekend, his uncle came into his room and raped him. He said it had been happening for a long time, months and even years. I was horrified. I think it was towards the end of my placement, maybe in my last month there.

Reporting of abuse at Wellington

75. Throughout my time at Wellington, I was never told about any procedure in place in the event of disclosures of abuse. I told the other staff on duty what [K] [T] [W] had told me, but they didn't believe what I had been told. I think I told the team leader, Chris, and left it with him. He never took it anywhere. I can't remember what happened, but it wasn't taken on at that time. I think I was told that [K] [T] [W] had a history of telling stories. I think [K] [T] [W] might have gone out for another weekend and been abused.
76. When [K] [T] [W]'s social worker came to visit, I told him that he needed to tell other people that he was being abused. He asked me if I would come in with him and tell the social worker, which I did. We had a three way meeting. I told the social worker what [K] [T] [W] had told me was happening at weekends. The woman said it absolutely wasn't happening and asked [K] [T] [W] why he was telling lies. She was awful to him. She just didn't believe him at all. She didn't ask him any questions, she just completely dismissed it. [K] [T] [W] stormed out and left. The social worker told me that I shouldn't believe everything he told me. She was a qualified social worker and I was just a student. I suffered agonies over what to do, but I couldn't let [K] [T] [W] go back to the abuse.

77. I took it to SNR [REDACTED]. I said that the boy had disclosed that he was being abused and that he was going out to stay with his uncle again at the weekend. I said he was going to be abused again. SNR [REDACTED] did take it on at that point and the police were contacted. It was completely taken out of my hands and I was left on my own with it. I was removed as quickly as you could say the word lightening. They didn't let me be a part of the investigation. I'm pretty sure that I had to write down what KTW [REDACTED] had told me, but that was the only thing I had to do. I think I gave that report to SNR [REDACTED], but I don't think I ever gave a statement to the police.
78. The police were involved and KTW [REDACTED] was medically examined. It was deemed that the abuse had been happening. Although I wasn't part of the investigation, they did tell me that there was a lot of physical evidence that KTW [REDACTED] had been sexually abused. I think the uncle might also have admitted it.
79. KTW [REDACTED] told me that he'd disclosed the abuse to his social worker ages ago. She knew about it before he disclosed it to her in my presence. He had told her about the abuse before but she hadn't believed him. There was a huge cover up afterwards. Nothing ever happened to that social worker and her job wasn't affected. KTW [REDACTED] had known her for a long time. She wasn't a new social worker. She was a woman in her thirties or forties. I couldn't understand it. It was all just hidden in social work. She wasn't held accountable or anything. I think KTW [REDACTED] and I met with her once again. I think it was after the police had become involved. In the course of the meeting, she accepted that she had made a mistake.
80. I felt very uncomfortable about it afterwards. Even in my college, I think there was an uncomfortable feeling about what I'd found out. I discussed it with SNR [REDACTED] and my college tutor, but it wasn't really looked at. I got the feeling that there was embarrassment that a boy had been disclosing something, been disbelieved and then found to be telling the truth. I think the staff felt very undermined by me about it. I was just a student. I felt very unwelcome at Wellington after that. It hadn't been good before KTW [REDACTED]'s disclosure, but it certainly didn't feel comfortable afterwards. The reaction was that a boy had been abused at weekends while he was in the care of the school. It was a huge thing that had to be looked at, but I don't know whether it was looked at.

81. After KTW's disclosures, I felt good that I'd believed him and we'd stopped him going back to his uncle's. It was horrendous to hear him tell me what had happened and I had a lot of sleepless nights. I was never given any support to cope after hearing this disclosure. I just had to get on with it. KTW was stopped from going to his uncle's at the weekend. He became full-time at Wellington. I don't think KTW was given any additional support after his disclosure either. I remember speaking to him afterwards and he said that he was glad it had come out. At the same time, he was now in Wellington full-time which was difficult for him. He couldn't go out at weekends, which wasn't great.
82. I'm not sure there was anybody the kids could go to if they had concerns or worries. The team leader was quite gentle, but he was also involved in restraints. I'm not sure the boys had anybody they could approach if they wanted to complain about a restraint or the staff. I know they hated the restraints. I'm not aware of a boy making a complaint about a member of staff when I was there. I don't know whether there was a process for that. I'm not aware of any members of staff being disciplined when I was there, but I was very much kept at a distance.

Records

83. I didn't have access to the children's records when I was at Wellington. I wasn't involved in any record keeping. The only thing I had to do was write in a unit book if anything happened. It was there in the book for the next shift coming in. It was like a unit book. I was allowed to write things in that. If something had happened and nobody else was around, the staff would tell me to put it in the book. I don't think I even read the book. I suspect that I put more comments in the book than anybody else because I was a student, which probably made them all fed up. I can't quite remember, but I think it would say things like whether someone had had a quiet night or someone needed something. It was a continuous log which formed part of the handover, although I wasn't there for much of handover.

84. I don't know what records were made on a daily basis. It's not something that I witnessed being done. The only thing I saw was the unit book. I knew that reports had to be written up if restraints were used. I'm not sure how detailed those were because I wasn't a part of it. I don't know what then happened to those reports. I would imagine that records would have been kept in the head of care's office. His office was towards the front of the unit. It wasn't locked.
85. I'm not aware of any personal records being kept for the boys, such as photographs of them doing activities. We certainly didn't take any photographs on the trips that I went on. I don't think staff kept childhood records that the boys might be able to look back on when they were older.

Reflections on placement

86. I think my placement was indicative of residential care and List D schools at that time. There were other places that were run through social work on the same kind of regimes. I don't think Wellington was out of the ordinary. Maybe because it was all boys, it might have been more brutal, more male oriented and more harsh. I don't know because I haven't worked in a residential school for girls.
87. It was awful when I had to leave the placement and leave [KTW]. I asked whether I could write to him. I was told that I couldn't have any contact with him after I left. It was sad because I think I probably would have visited him. It must have been awful for [KTW] but that was what the children at Wellington were used to. They were so used to these transient people coming into their lives. They weren't going to risk making relationships to any depth.
88. I don't know whether placements are managed better by colleges and universities nowadays. I worked for the University of the Highlands and Islands from 2004 to 2014. I placed students in nurseries and schools, but not residential schools. Universities and colleges are at the mercy of what placements are on offer. Because they have a number of students to place, they're always looking for placements. If you can get a placement, you take it. Sometimes, you do know that the practice might not be very

good but you don't have anywhere else to put the student. I think an element of that still exists. Colleges and universities are dependent on these placements and don't always check them out very well.

89. Students do now have to get criminal record checks before going on placement. That wasn't done when I was at college. At least the individual is now checked before going in. Otherwise, the student is still left to get on with it most of the time. In my social work course, we didn't have any input about how to report concerns we might have on placement. It might depend on individual tutors nowadays. I don't think it's a formal part of the curriculum. I don't know whether students are now supported to report concerning behaviour or disclosures. It's hard for me to say whether that's improved since I was on placement at Wellington. When I worked at a university, we certainly encouraged our students to get in touch if there was anything that they were worried about. I think it would depend on the individual tutor and the relationship he or she has with the students.
90. Wellington needed to be far more nurturing. The layout and everything about it was very institutionalised. The boys all knew that they were there because their behaviour wasn't good. There was no effort to change that persona in them. It was just functional, getting them to school and getting things done. There was a lack of empathy. There was kindness, but nothing was fostered between the boys. I suspect a lot of boys met each other outside of the school and engaged in risky behaviours. It was very isolating. The boys were stuck out in the middle of nowhere with no transport anywhere, apart from depending on the staff. It was isolated and rural. It just wasn't very nice. It was an institution.
91. Restraint is still being used in day schools, special schools and residential schools. The amount of restraining going on is huge. I'm part of an organisation that campaigns against restraint. I've been working with the Scottish Learning Disabilities Commission. A woman called Beth Morrison profiled families of children who were disabled or had some kind of care element and had experienced restraint. She has recorded over five hundred cases of restraint over the past five years in Scotland alone. That's not even touching a great deal of it.

92. I think there is a lack of understanding of what trauma does to children. When I was at Wellington, the trauma informed practice that we do now wasn't thought about much. Even now, establishments still resort to use of restraint. I've seen it with [REDACTED] in this day and out, throughout his education. [REDACTED] when he was three years old. He was heroin addicted and had suffered terrible abuse. He was very disturbed. From the age of five, he ran away from school every single day. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] There were scenarios when he was locked in cloakrooms at the age of five. Nobody was in there with him and he was screaming his head off. It was so traumatic, but they didn't see it like that. They just saw that they didn't know how to manage it.
93. For years, [REDACTED] was restrained at school. He was restrained after I had told them that they couldn't touch him, but their fear overcame it and they saw him as dangerous. This was happening when [REDACTED] was six, seven, eight years old. He had more than forty restraints from the age of five to eight in school. I was not notified of all of them. I got them from records. Some of them were two man holds, some of them were single man holds, some of them were restraints on the ground, some I didn't even know about it. It was all because [REDACTED] was a runner. He was expelled from every school. He was sent to Ochil Tower in Auchterarder, [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later
94. [REDACTED]
95. [REDACTED] is now fourteen and he has only been in school for two years. It's taken [REDACTED] from when [REDACTED] three to get to this stage. [REDACTED] they opened up a class for him in the local school. They have a teaching assistant and three pupils in it. He hasn't ran away for the past year, which is great. I still have to meet with the school every week because every week there is still an incident. They

still operate on a behavioural process rather than a trauma led process. It's really hard to get people to understand it.

96. [REDACTED] the school pay for a clinical psychologist to be involved. They found another way of working with [REDACTED] in the school. You have to change the environment. I managed to get an agreement that they would work with [REDACTED] in a trauma led environment. He's in a smaller classroom. It doesn't have to be that dramatic. There just needs to be a shift in attitude in terms of what they're seeing. Instead of looking at the behaviour, they need to look at the trigger behind the behaviour. If you train people to work in that way, it is possible. It requires people to take time.
97. It's very difficult to change that culture. I was able to fight that system because of my background. I was able to say that it wasn't okay and that they needed to change it for him. There are so many [REDACTED] who can't do that. Who's going to fight the corner of a child in foster care or residential care? Nobody does it because it's so difficult. It was incredibly stressful. All the time, I wondered why I was doing it and thought I should just take him out of the system. Then I thought that he had adulthood and he needed to be in some kind of system. So many [REDACTED] give up and home educate their children. Nobody is going to do that kind of fighting when a child is in residential care. They're part of the system.


Hopes for the Inquiry

98. I hope that there will be an understanding of what it was like for children in residential care at that time. I would like there to be an understanding of what they went through and what the system was like. I hope that it's different now. I'm hoping that the Inquiry can influence practice, influence people or even just raise awareness so that it no longer happens. There are always going to be individuals working in places who are not good, but you can change the systems. We still have places like Wellington, places like secure units, and they're not good for children.

99. There needs to be a care system that really puts the child at the forefront. It's not doing that. If you take a child out of a family, regardless of how dysfunctional that family is, the child's protection automatically goes out into the wider world. Ultimately, the child is on their own in a system that doesn't have somebody ear-marked for them. It's really hard for them. They're in a sea of different individuals, different ideas, different principles. They might need to be taken out of the family, but as soon as you do that you place them into a care system that's so anonymous, so wide and so financially based. The child is so open to the elements or chances. They might hit upon a nice person but they might not.
100. I think a lot of the improvement has to come from training and education. I think that anybody who works with children who have had any kind of adversity should be trained in a trauma led approach. It's a much more empathic approach. It looks at what's going on for the child rather than looking at the behaviour. I still struggle to understand that people don't see that, but sadly that's not the way things are yet.
101. I think there also needs to be a shift in culture. We're terrible with our children in this country. We see them as commodities. If we look at the ethos of society and how it views adolescents, we really are poor. We see them as troublesome or bothersome. We don't think fully about protecting them. I think society still uses them as scapegoats and fails to recognise the trauma that is done to children. Only yesterday, I saw an advert for a role of care support officer in a residential care setting. It stated that, "Prison officer skills and training will come in useful." I was wondering why skills in dealing with hardened criminals would be useful when it comes to dealing with children in care? I found that quite shocking.
102. Any time a child is taken into care, I think there has to be an advocate allocated to that child that stays with them through the whole care system. I know that social workers are supposed to do that, but they don't. Social workers change, they leave jobs, they do this, they do that, they don't have time. That child has to be allocated a person like a guardian, who is fully trained in working with children in care. The guardian should follow them throughout their time in the care system. Otherwise, it doesn't work. You can leave a child in foster care and think that they're okay. I've seen foster placements that are dreadful and money oriented. It's appalling. Social work do nothing about it

because, as far as they're concerned, that child is safe and that child is being fed. If a child is taken away from their family, you have to give them one person that they can have until adulthood. It's a relationship that builds. I think that's the way to go, but it would need a huge societal and cultural change in how we view children.

103. 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.....07 December 2021.....