

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

**John Christopher MULLEN**

Support person present: no

1. My name is John Christopher Mullen. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Background**

2. I am currently working as a Chemistry teacher at Leith Academy Edinburgh. I studied Chemistry at Edinburgh University, graduating in 1985. After University I went to Jordanhill College to do a one year teacher training course. I finally graduated in 1987 as a Chemistry and Science teacher. During those studies I also picked up a qualification to teach English as a foreign language.
3. I don't remember getting any specific training in Safeguarding of children during my studies. My memory is fragile due to the time that has passed since then but I don't remember there being any emphasis on safeguarding. My training was all prior to the Children's Act and prior to the big scandals that took place in the 1990's like Soham. There wasn't really any mention of it or consciousness of it in those days.
4. Most of the emphasis and studying I remember was on the theory of education. We also had a lot of practical hands on experience of teaching chemistry. The generic training courses we learnt about were Piaget and Vygotsky which were very much the theory of education. There was very little on what we now know as the 'whole child approach'. Seeing the child as a human being, the things we look at nowadays.

5. Piaget was all about, 'in order for kids to learn optimally they need to be challenged to the optimum degree'. There is no point giving a primary kid Aristotle as it would be beyond them. It sounds blindingly obvious, too hard is not good, too easy is not good. There is a proximal zone of development that you have to try and hit and it's different for different kids and different subjects. The emphasis on the training was all about the education rather than the welfare of the child.
6. In terms of the discipline and punishment side, again there wasn't much guidance. I think they assumed we would pick that up as we went along in our practice. We had three practice teaching modules during the year at Jordanhill. This meant we were out on secondment watching and experiencing teaching and learning from staff already teaching. We also had the opportunity to take classes and we would be given feedback on our performance. There wasn't much discussion about the rights and wrongs of discipline.
7. I left Jordanhill in 1987 and in August 1987 I got a job through the British Council of Teaching where I was seconded to Botswana. I did this for two years, returning in September 1989. I worked in a small village and I was the only qualified teacher in the school when I went out there. I was teaching general science, it was a junior school. It was a really interesting role. The age range I should have been teaching was our equivalent S1/S2 so twelve and thirteen year olds.
8. In Botswana school is not compulsory but it is free. There were often young people at the school who had served their family and it was their turn to get an education. The oldest I taught was a young man of twenty four, he was older than me. The experience opened my eyes to the things that on reflection we are really good at here, for instance the quality of our education system. The depth of it and the degree of choice our children have here. To also see how much people value education over there as we completely take it for granted here.
9. When I returned from Botswana in 1989 I worked for a short time as a Chemistry teacher at Annan Academy in Dumfriesshire where my parents stayed. I did a year there covering secondment.

10. In the Summer of 1990 I took a sabbatical. I returned to Edinburgh and got a job as a motorbike courier. I continued to look for teaching jobs but there weren't many around.
11. At the end of 1991 I heard about a job at Wellington Farm School or Welly Farm as it was also known as.

### **Employment with the school**

12. I started my employment at Wellington school at the start of January 1992. I know that for a fact as it was the week of [REDACTED] January that year. I remember it vividly. I had a three month contract initially and then it was extended to the end of the May 1992.
13. Wellington Farm was situated in the countryside just outside of Penicuik. It was a social work facility, not education, but they were looking for a teacher to teach maths. I didn't have experience of teaching maths but I think I was the best they could get at that time.
14. I had previously given my name to Lothian Region Council, as it was then, notifying them of my desire for a job. I believe they phoned me up to tell me about the position. I don't even think I had a formal interview. I certainly didn't get much preparation for it as I was only given a weeks' notice. I did do my own homework on the facility before I went so I knew it wouldn't be easy.
15. Wellington school was a very noble Victorian experiment. The idea was that those kids who were not suitable for mainstream education or who weren't academically, behaviourally or socially suited for that, then Wellington school would be the alternative. This avoided forcing these kids through the rigours of English and Maths. Originally it was a 'trade school'. The children would go and learn a trade say electrician, plumber, bricklayer or mechanic.
16. Over the years it changed and there was an education side to it, they started to bring in teachers. Even when I was there, there was quite a strong tension of sorts

between the staff who had originally worked in the 'trade school' and the teachers. It was a class thing as much as anything. The trades would look at teachers like me coming in with my shirt and tie and degree and it caused a bit of tension.

17. The children who were there all had behavioural issues, they came from chaotic home lives. Many had suffered abuse. Even in those days there was an understanding of the link with difficult family circumstances and behaviour of the young person.

### **Policy**

18. I don't remember there being any formal induction or training procedure before or after I started my employment at the school.
19. I don't remember being subject to any kind of checks before I went to the school. They may have vetted me behind the scenes but nothing I was aware of. There certainly wasn't anything like the PVG system now.
20. In terms of confidentiality of pupils and information I was party to, I wasn't given any training. They maybe just expected us to know that what was discussed was confidential. It does seem quite a big thing to miss out of with staff because the whole ethos of the school was about vulnerable children and it was a very unusual set up.
21. They had a really good procedure at the school in comparison with other places I've been in that all of the staff would meet once a week and discuss the kids and any problems they were facing. The things that would be discussed would be events that a young person may have been subjected to if they were away on home leave. For instance, if it was known a child had witnessed domestic abuse over a weekend it would be discussed and we would be advised to tread gently with the child because of it.
22. We would also discuss if a child hadn't had a particularly good week and each member of staff would be asked to comment on the child. The thinking was the parent wouldn't really be interested or have involvement and the idea was we were

their family and we would talk about the individual. There would be an attempt at joint collegiate decision making but ultimately someone would decide what was happening. It was all around support for the child and potentially finding an alternative option for say the maths class to woodwork class to support the child. In some regards the ethos was very much ahead of its time, there was a consciousness then around the needs of the child. The facility was very much there to help the children grow up and out of their bad habits

23. One of the kids assaulted me once, the policy was to get the Police in. This small twelve year old kid punched me in the stomach really hard, he was intent on hurting me which he did. I complained to management and the police came and they took a statement. There is very little anyone can do with kids under sixteen, he was already in a residential school so wasn't eligible to go to prison. There was likely some repercussion for the child, maybe withdrawal of visits but this wasn't something I decided and I don't know what happened to him.
24. Social work and HWG SNR and possibly the Educational Psychologist would meet and discuss the incident. I wasn't that bothered about what happened to the child, like now, I don't see the merit in punishing a child. The damage is already done. Unless it acts as a deterrent there is no point. He wasn't capable of controlling his own behaviour therefore deterrence is not a thing for someone like that. It was my fault for getting too close to him before he was about to kick off. I wouldn't do it now I would back off. I didn't do any other paperwork apart from give my statement. The Social work probably would have done some but I didn't see it.
25. I never made decisions in the facility. Any decisions around a child would be taken by the management HWG LUZ and the child's social worker. In terms of qualifications that HWG or LUZ may have had I have no idea. I only ever worked beside them in the school and I never kept in touch with either.

### **Strategic planning**



26. I don't recall anything about strategy or planning I was in a teaching job for only a short period of time at the school.

### **Other staff**

27. SNR [REDACTED] of the school was HWG [REDACTED]. He was [REDACTED], so he line managed the teachers and trades instructors. There was also a head of social work called LUZ [REDACTED] he was a lovely guy. I would say HWG [REDACTED] had [REDACTED] of the facility.
28. The set up at the school was that there were three sets of staff. Instructors who taught the trades aspect, teachers with teaching degrees who taught the education side and the social workers. It was quite generous staffing at the school. My recollection is that the three groups of staff were equal in number so say there were six teachers, five or six instructors and five or six social workers. It was almost one to one staff to pupil ratio but then not all of the staff would be there all of the time due to shifts.
29. I'm afraid I cannot remember any of the other names of any staff at the facility other than those I have mentioned. I can see faces but not names.
30. The trades instructors were lovely people, if I'm honest they were better with the kids in general than the teachers.
31. I also got to know quite a few of the social workers while I was at the school they were very good. They had a different mindset. They were more in tune with how we are supposed to be now in education. Considering the child's needs, considering them as human beings and working with the whole child rather than how well they did in their maths test the week before. That was definitely the mindset the social workers had and I put that down to training. It was very impressive, it made a big impression on me of how parental and how kind they were to the kids. That has been a good influence on me over the years.
32. There were also full time catering staff and cleaners at the school.

### **Recruitment of staff**

33. I am unsure of how staff were recruited into the school I only have experience of how I got the job.

### **Training of staff**

34. We had Friday afternoon training activities. I can't remember much of what was covered, very little has left a lasting memory in that respect. I know I received training in restraint techniques. It involved staff, including me, rolling around on a gym mat and being taught how to restrain someone bigger in size. The training was done by HWG SNR. During the training I was also given guidance on the circumstances when restraint should be used.
35. It was explained, as it is nowadays, you could only use the absolute minimum force where health or safety or life is threatened. It only really works if you have two or three other staff due to the ages and size of the kids we were dealing with. That is one of the reasons I have come to speak to the inquiry because the incident I have come to speak about left such a deep impression on me because it was so flagrantly out with the parameters that were described.
36. I do remember being put through my minibus training while I was at the school. This enabled me to drive the bus on trips.
37. In terms of the residential cover that I did, I don't remember receiving any further training in that aspect.

### **Supervision/staff appraisal / staff evaluation**

38. I saw HWG as my line manager. Lothian Region Council was my employer. Because I was only there a short time I have no recollection of any appraisal system.

### **Layout of school**

39. The school was built in the 1960's or it certainly had that sixties look about it. It was two storey buildings built around a central courtyard. It was one big facility with the residential and classrooms near each other. There were two or three separate residential wings to the facility. Wings being prison terminology. The wings were two storey and 'L' shaped. I think the children ate in their wing. In each of the wings there was a communal area where the kids could watch television, play pool and I think that's where they ate. I think that was an attempt to mimic family life and the staff would bring through the meals on trays and give them to the children who would be sitting at a table. Staff would sit with the children and chat with them, just like you would with your own family at home. I can't quite remember but something makes me think the children were placed in the wings according to age.
40. Kids had their own rooms. I think their rooms were split between the first and ground floors. Apart from the times I did the overtime I wasn't in the residential part of the building so it's quite difficult to remember. I think once or twice I was shown a kid's bedroom by them, more as an act of trust. Even in those days you had to be very careful so I would go to the door and they would show me their room and the posters they had.
41. It had quite good grounds with playing fields. It was in a remote location, the idea being that the kids wouldn't be exposed to temptation by going back to their communities. Most of the children were from Edinburgh, but could potentially come from all over the Lothians.
42. The whole place had the feel of a prison because the kids didn't go home at night or the weekend. I have no experience of prison but its just what it made me think of.

### **Children's Living arrangements**

43. All of the twenty to twenty five children at the school also lived there. The children were aged from eleven to sixteen. It was mostly boys though I do recall a couple of



girls. There was the occasional child who got home at night time to try out the arrangement or for a visit to family.

### **Staff Living Arrangements**

44. The place was staffed permanently at all times. There would be social workers who would do shifts and then go home. It was complicated because there were three sets of staff with different pay and conditions and I'm not exactly sure of the set up.
45. At the weekends there was a rolling system of overtime for teachers to reside at the facility, it was entirely voluntary. I would go so far as to say it was lavishly funded certainly by modern standards and it was easy money. You got hundreds of pounds for it but the exact amount I can't remember. I stayed at the weekend on four or five occasions. I think it was seen as a perk, it had been pushed through by teaching staff.
46. When you were on the overnight shift you had a room to sleep in. There were a couple of rooms which were specifically used for overnight staff. I think the rooms we had were on the same floor as the kids' rooms and similar to their rooms. There certainly wasn't a separate section or block for staff. It was alright, a bit like a budget hotel room, not particularly comfortable but it was fine.
47. I guess if you wanted to do something to a child it would have been quite easy. Nowadays you would want to safeguard that but in those days nobody gave it much thought. If there was an abuser there they would be in a great position. I can't quite remember if a member of staff was required to stay awake the whole night in case any of the kids left the facility. I certainly didn't. I was able to sleep during the night and be available in case something kicked off.
48. If there were say fifteen children staying in overnight there would be three or four staff covering.

### **Culture within Wellington school**

49. It was a military ethos from the top down as borne out at the assembly that took place every day.
50. I really hated the school, I hated working there. It was my first introduction to working with vulnerable children with behavioural issues. Of course, nowadays these kids are in mainstream education and I work with them day in day out as do all teachers. Looking back on it now I was a very young and inexperienced teacher and it was really a shock to me to see young people who would self harm, vandalise their bedrooms and assault each other. It was really quite scary for me. I didn't lead a sheltered life myself and I had also helped out at a youth club in Leith at one point but I had never even imagined that degree of emotional need existing in young people and it was an eye opener for me.
51. The incident that I want to share with the Inquiry is one that went badly wrong but there were pockets of kindness amongst the staff. Some staff had insight and cared for the children but more so the social workers. There was a lot of tolerance. These kids were at the very sharp end of social and emotional difficulties, they were hard work.
52. The average age of the staff was probably late forties, early fifties and I got the impression most had worked there for decades. My thoughts are, if you work in a place long enough there are habits that contribute to the ethos of the place and that was very much the ethos of the place, 'don't mess around or someone will throw you to the floor'. I would say that was the message given to the children.
53. An interesting observation I have on reflection is that during my time there the smoking ban hadn't come in in schools. A lot of the teachers and pupils smoked, so in the common room quite a few of the kids would be smoking. I'm not sure where the kids bought the cigarettes from. Looking back, it wasn't great.
54. Wellington was a pseudo military establishment proud of its traditions. The ethos and the way the school ran itself was based on stuff from the Victorian days. They weren't comparing themselves with what they could be, as it was a one off. They were comparing themselves with what it would be for those kids who went there and

how it could have been for them if the institution wasn't there for them. Those children wouldn't be at school they would instead be running riot in their community stealing, drug dealing, committing assaults and thieving. They would have thought of themselves as a force for good and maybe they were right, maybe there was some truth to that.

### **Discipline and punishment**

55. Every morning we used to have an assembly. It was like a parade, the kids used to have to line up in one line all facing the same way. I haven't served in the armed forces but it was like you see in films, it had that feel to it. SNR HWG HWG would walk up and down the line. It wasn't quite that the kids had to stand to attention but it had that feeling about it. I never thought about it at the time but it was absolute silence. It was almost like he was looking at their attitude when he was walking up and down. They didn't have uniform, they had their own clothes so he wasn't inspecting them as such. He would make comment that a kid's shoelaces weren't tied or ask them if they had cleaned their teeth. I can't get away from the image of a Sergeant Major.
56. I hadn't been given any guidance on the punishment or discipline that was permissible at the school. What I can say though is there was certainly no question of physical punishment as that had been outlawed some ten years before.
57. There were secure rooms in the facility. They didn't have bars on the windows but the kids couldn't come and go as they pleased. If necessary, children would be locked in the secure rooms. It would generally be for their own safety, that would be the justification. I'm not sure how long kids would stay in these rooms.
58. It would be an exception if a child left the school but if they did abscond the Police would be contacted. On their return they would probably go into 'secure' for their safety so they could not abscond again. It would be more than likely while they were absconding they got involved in criminality therefore the 'secure' procedure was to keep them safe and prevent them from getting into the criminal justice system.

59. Even in those days I think we still spoke about behaviour and engagement. I do remember there were kids there who would refuse to attend a class. Those kids might already be under lock and key so you were limited to what you could do with them. Their visiting might get taken away from them to try to encourage the child to go to all of their classes and then they would get home for the weekend. Maybe that's the way it was done but I don't remember much and I didn't have a part in that decision making.
60. I am not aware of the children having to do any chores

### **Day to day routine and running of the school**

61. The kids had a timetable which they followed. I think it was a 9.00 am start or perhaps later. There would be the assembly and line up, like a military parade. HWG would call out the classes and the teacher for that class would walk off with their class. The teacher would take them to the class and spend an hour and a half teaching. I think the whole assembly process was HWG asserting his authority as the kids knew their timetable and which classes to go to.
62. There was a lunch break and school finished at normal times around 3.15 pm. After school there would be organised activities such as going into Edinburgh or the children could watch television or play pool. There were no computer games then. It was all very laid back.
63. At the weekends when I stayed I would sit with the kids at night and watch television and during the day we would go for a walk or play football or myself and the staff would take them into town and go shopping.
64. Bedtime was not really a big thing, it was fairly laid back and I can only comment on the nights when I stayed as I'm not sure of the routine of the children other than that. Certainly, when I stayed the kids could go to their bed when they were tired but it was the weekend. Someone must have woken them up but I can't say for sure, maybe one of the social workers. I saw them at breakfast time.



65. The food there was very good, like hotel food. Breakfast was porridge, cereal, toast and they also did cooked breakfast. I'm vegetarian and I was then so I'm quite picky about my food but it really was good and of course it was free for everyone. There weren't any issues if a child didn't want to eat something that just wasn't a thing. In fact, throwing food on the floor was a focal point of difficulties of a child, to signal they were upset about something. If this happened they would just be taken up to their room.

### **Abuse**

66. This is why I came to the inquiry to tell you about one of the morning assemblies or parades as I think of it as. This incident happened near to the end of my contract, the reason I know this is because the weather was quite good so I estimate March or April time of 199█.
67. It is important I describe HWG █ He was about six foot two, very well built, very muscular, he was about the age I am now, mid-fifties. He clearly looked after himself, he looked like he went to the gym and he was also a PE teacher. I think as well he may have had military experience. He would pace up and down the line commenting on laces untied or querying if the children had cleaned their teeth. This one day a little kid, who was about thirteen, stepped out of the line. HWG █'s immediate response was to knock him to the ground.
68. HWG █ was obviously really good at it. What he did was, he put one of his feet behind the kid's and barged into him with his upper body, with his elbow at the kids face and the child was thrown to the ground. Almost like a rugby move. The boy went down with quite a clatter, it would have really hurt him. The boy was shaken. It was brutal to see a really well built grown man do that to quite a small child. Even in the context of the workplace where there was a lot of weird behaviour going on it seemed so out of place. It wasn't that the child was seriously physically injured it was more the combination of the mismatch in size and power and status. Also, the psychological effect on the boy, to be knocked to the ground by an adult in front of his peers. I felt terribly sorry for him. From HWG █'s point of view that was the job done, he had established his physical superiority like the big dog, like the leader of



the pack. Nothing was said by him and the wee boy picked himself up and that was it.

69. I think there would have been at least six staff there during the incident including HWG, LUZ and myself. I just can't remember the others.
70. Because we had just recently done the restraint training, that incident was out of order on so many grounds. There was no risk to life or safety. The kid's crime was simply to have very slightly challenged HWG's superiority and it was very clear to me that that was something you must not do. I think it probably put a bit of fear into to me. Not that I thought he would physically assault me but the sort of guy that would do that, what else could he do if he didn't like the way I was teaching for instance. It was really upsetting at the time.
71. I did query it with one of the social work staff who had witnessed it, I think it was LUZ though I can't swear on that. I suppose whoever I did speak to minimised it to an extent, as if to say what can you do, that's how it works, though those words were not used. I also recall some conversation following it about 'that's restraint'. I felt like saying 'no it bloody isn't, it's not at all restraint, it's an assault'.
72. What bothered me most was that it wasn't that different to when the wee boy punched me in the stomach. We got the Police then but this was much more serious. This was a grown up, supposedly a professional who has just brutalised a small boy. I didn't say it but I thought why weren't the Police in speaking to HWG, it was worse than what happened to me.
73. As far as I know that incident was never reported nor I can remember the boy's name. I don't think there was such a thing as a discipline log although it's possible there was a file I did not see, I don't know. I think it was a case of if you worked in a place like that you had to accept the way things were done.
74. That was the most extreme behaviour I saw because it was so flagrant and in public, but that was how it was. I think that was the punishment. If you were non compliant you could expect someone like HWG to knock you to the floor. That was the worst but not the only incident that I saw where an adult inappropriately used

restraint as a behavioural tool. That said I would be lying if I could tell you about them in detail after all of those years. I think I saw social work and other teachers doing it, I never did it. I wouldn't have felt confident doing it. I never saw any other instances of assault in my time there.

75. When I talk about the weird behaviour in the school, that incident was the one that stuck with me for all of those years. What I refer to is the general experience of working in a residential school for behaviourally challenged kids. I knew what I was going into with that job. I knew I was going to see things that were going to be unusual to me so when it happened maybe in quite a minor way it wasn't such a shock to me and therefore it hasn't made a lasting memory. That said, it was completely unlike anything I had ever experienced, before or since.
76. That one was so out of the normal adult, parental or professional behaviour towards a young child.

#### **Reporting of complaints/concerns**

77. I never reported my concerns to anyone about the school. I wasn't given any guidance at the start around whistle blowing or anything like that it wasn't a thing back then.
78. I never reported the incident at Wellington to the Police and I've felt bad about it ever since. The incident in 199█ was illegal as it would be now and it should have been reported to the Police and I should have been one of the people who had a responsibility to report it. We didn't use the term child protection in those days but that was an absolute child protection thing I absolutely should have reported it. If the school were able to report the assault on me to the Police on my behalf then I should have been able to pick up the phone and report them. I would have been putting my job in jeopardy reporting my line manager for a serious assault. My feeling is that then and possibly still is today the police wouldn't have prosecuted .They would have likely spoken to the child to check he was okay.

79. I have recently been involved in a whistle blowing compliant in my role as union representative at the school so I know how it goes and it's much better now. Obviously, Edinburgh Council have had to up their game in light of the Sean Bell case so they are really trying harder now. My recent experience of it has been very good, very professional. It was a team's meeting. I suppose I wish it was like it is now, then. It's not perfect now of course. I think people nowadays know if they have a problem there are things they can do.

#### **Trusted adult/confidante**

80. There wasn't such a set up at the school around trusted adults. Kids had their social workers that they could speak to and in many cases these were supportive relationships.

#### **Child protection arrangements**

81. It was never mentioned to me at Wellington what my course of action would be if a child disclosed anything to me.
82. There has never been a time when a child has made any kind of disclosure to me in my career.
83. I did have clear guidance certainly later on in the Outreach job as to what I would do around any disclosure but nothing like that at Wellington. I would never have held on to the information or kept any secrets. I would have firstly spoken to my immediate team to identify if the matter was a legal or social work issue and who the information should then be passed on to.

#### **External monitoring**

84. I am not aware of any agency or body coming into the facility at Wellington School to inspect it.

## **Record-keeping**

85. I didn't have to keep any records or paperwork from my time at Wellington school while I was teaching or during my overnight activities. It would be fair to say it was quite casual.
86. When I was in my later role as Outreach teacher we had far better systems. The children all had files and you put notes in the files. It was all handwritten notes, we weren't at the stage of computers. Notes would also be taken at any meetings we had.

## **Leaving the school**

87. I left the school in May 199[REDACTED] as my contract ended. This was shortly after the incident I have told the Inquiry about. I was happy to leave, the general culture of the place wasn't my cup of tea. I did take some positives but most of what I took was that I would not want to work in a place like that again. I also learned largely how not to do things.
88. I then got a job at Howdenhall secure unit in Edinburgh for two months, I was covering maternity leave. Howdenhall was a similar clientele to Wellington but it seemed a more joined up, organised system. More professional and caring. It had a secure unit and it all seemed much more humane. SNR [REDACTED] was zGFG [REDACTED] he was a lovely, caring, kind man, the complete opposite of HWG [REDACTED]. It was still a difficult place to work but I felt far more supported there. I was employed as a teacher only and I was more comfortable with that. I didn't do overnight duties there, they had specialist staff that did that. Although I was only there for two months, I kept in touch with the staff from Howdenhall when I moved onto another role.
89. After Howdenhall I went to Willowpark School in Edinburgh which was a school for children with minor physical disabilities. Willowpark was a day school only. I stayed there for a year, leaving in 199[REDACTED].

90. For the second half of 199█ I did some temporary supply teaching placements across different schools.
91. In December 199█ I got a job as an Outreach teacher for children in care. I was interviewed for the role and got the job. It was my first permanent job and was based at Cedarbank School in Livingston. The intention of the role was really good. The Children's Act had just come in and Lothian Region Council were implementing a Youth strategy acknowledging that children in care had very poor educational outcomes. The main purpose of the role was to identify the best way to educate those children in care.
92. There were six members of teaching staff, two teachers each split across the local authority areas working alongside a child psychologist. Joe McDermott who was a Senior child educational psychologist was my line manager. The main part of my role consisted of meeting with social workers, child psychologists, children themselves and foster parents to talk about the individual needs of that child and tailoring a curriculum for them.
93. It involved one to one teaching work with the child but the ultimate aim was re integrating the child back into their own school community. I often met the child in the school or library or similar facility. Sometimes I would go to the unit or home they were placed in. Many were with foster carers or living in Young people's units. I taught for approximately three sessions every day with different children. The main teaching was literacy and numeracy.
94. My case load was about six children at any time and I could work with them from anything from two weeks to six months. The expectation was that a kid would get three sessions from me a week. It was never meant to be a permanent arrangement and the aim was always to get them into some kind of schooling. I got to know many of the children's homes in Edinburgh and the Lothians quite well through my role but most of my work was in West Lothian.
95. My new job was good in respect it was a new system and I was right in at the start and could help to design it. Part of that was the training, it was much better



organised. Every month I would meet with the social workers and psychologist where we would have a day and discuss what we were doing, what we needed and what was and wasn't working well.

96. There wasn't anything in place for the training because it was a new role, it sounds bad but we made it up as we went along. That said we were basing our training needs on best practice and researching stuff.
97. We did receive safeguarding training, both our safety and the child's safety. The main focus being on our safety. We would be taught things like if you were on your own with the child, then leave the door of the room open, use a room with lots of people going past. The training was nothing like it is now.
98. The job meant I was working with social workers very closely, a bit like Wellington. Some of them were very good, others not so. Some of them really cared, some didn't. Some didn't really value education, so it was really difficult for them to promote that to the kids. I cannot remember any of the names of the social workers because it's so long ago.
99. I did the job until 199█ when it ceased to be a role due to Local authority changes. The job was brilliant and I would do it again, the downside of it for me was the impact on my professional development. I was away for five years and I found it quite difficult to go back to teaching Chemistry.
100. After leaving the outreach post I got a promoted post at Castlebrae High in Edinburgh in 199█. The job was head of science and I did that for 5 years until 2002.
101. I went from Castlebrae to I started in Leith in 2004 and did 3 years then went to work in America 2007 to 2011. I was also a year in Fife. I've been at Leith Academy as a Chemistry teacher since then.

102. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

103.

104.

### **Helping the Inquiry**


105. Looking back, obviously if you were setting up a school like Wellington again all of the training and things would be done very differently. We have moved on so much since the 1990's in terms of Children's rights, the way we care for children now and in terms of vetting and safeguarding.
106. We have got much better at providing support for learning needs like autism and dyslexia. For behavioural not so much. There are kids with emotional, behavioural and social needs that aren't being addressed. As a parent of such a child you would maybe yearn for your child to be placed in such an institution as Wellington, for all of its faults. At least they were getting an education and stability. It's a difficult one.
107. The final things I would like to say about residential homes in my experience was the huge disparity of quality and provision. There were some homes and some staff that

were very very caring and went out of their way to help you. There were others who you thought why are those people getting paid, that they were actually part of the problem. I never saw a flagrant assault or abuses. There were some of the staff who really weren't on my side and nor on the kids' side. They were just doing a job, they didn't like it and didn't like kids. I didn't always feel the staff were on my side to engage the kids into education, some were very good, some just weren't.

108. I would feel quite aggrieved because lots of meetings and planning had gone into working out what was right for the child. I would go round to where they stayed and staff would tell me the child just wasn't into it that day. I would then try to get them to motivate the child or ask them if there was any slight pressure they could bring to bear but they would say no. I would then end up thinking what's the point and it was very demoralising. The Outreach job itself was an early attempt to bring joined up thinking about the education of children in care, who prior to that, didn't get any education.
109. My feeling about the outreach work was it was a really good idea, very much ahead of its time and it was a victim of the local government changes in 199█. The role was subsumed into the hospital outreach teaching service which is a very worthwhile thing but a totally different focus. I quite often come across kids in my job now and I think if only there was someone like me twenty years ago. There isn't a similar resource.
110. It goes back to the Tony Blair vision of no specialist schools and no need for outreach teachers because the system would be so well resourced. The truth is we haven't seen that in practice. The degree of bespoke educational design we did for those kids who had such a horrible experience of life and education to that point, was truly amazing. I've felt over the years it's really something we could do with in mainstream school now.
111. I think of kids I teach now who hardly ever come to school and they probably could do with some support. Someone chapping their door and encouraging them to school. It just doesn't happen, the support isn't there. It was a broken promise from the government. Also, the expertise of the staff who worked in these establishments

was lost. We were assured those staff would come over to mainstream but they never did.

112. 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..... 22 December 2022 .....