

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Adrian SNOWBALL

Support person present: No

1. My name is Adrian Snowball. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1954. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I retired from work in 2011 following a long period of hospitalisation for treatment of a cerebral abscess caused by a streptococcal blood infection. In 2010 I collapsed at home and was found by a neighbour and taken to hospital. I was then in a coma for some five months but remained in hospital for about ten months.
3. I then had two years of rehabilitation trying to get back to something like a normal life, however I do still have some impairments. I suffer from some memory problems and I just cannot remember certain things. I also have some speech and balance problems and I struggle to concentrate over lengthy periods of time. I never returned to work after that. I thought I'd be better off retiring, but I have continued my involvement with voluntary organisations and projects.
4. I understand the Inquiry is speaking to me because I had convictions, which involved children, when I worked for the Aberlour Child Care Trust, in a child care environment.
5. My first conviction was around 1970, I think, it was for an indecent assault. That was on a child, a minor, under sixteen and I pled guilty. That was in Wirral in Birkenhead, England.

6. I have one other conviction from 2017 which relates to downloading pornographic images of children. There was a trial at Dundee Sheriff Court and I was found guilty and sentenced to six months in prison.

Personal background and qualifications

7. My academic awards are a B.A. Honours in Fine Arts (Sculpture) from Newcastle Polytechnic, which was in 1975 and an M.Sc in Social Work Services Planning, from Edinburgh University in 1994.
8. The professional qualifications and training I have undertaken as a requirement of my positions are as follows;
 PRINCE 2 Foundation Examination (June 2007),
 SVQ Level 5 Training and Development Strategy (SQA 2002),
 European Foundation for Quality Management Assessor Training (EFQM 2002),
 General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety. (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health 2001),
 Certificate in the Neuro Muscular Approach to Efficient Human Movement (Movement Education Services / University of Greenwich) 2000,
 Certificate for Internal Verifiers (SQA) 1997,
 Certificate for Skills Assessors (SQA), 1995,
 Practice Teaching Award (Central Council for Education and Training for Social Work) 1993,
 Certificate in Social Service, (Central Council for Education and Training for Social Work) 1988,
 Post Graduate Certificate in Education, (St. Martin's College, Lancaster University, 1981).
 I was also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development from 2002 until 2017.

Employment – Pre-Aberlour (1975 – 1983)

9. I was a play leader with Newcastle-Upon-Tyne City Council between July 1975 and June 1978. I was responsible for the provision of play activities and programmes and general management of the site.
10. I wasn't asked and I didn't provide any details about my conviction in the application process for that job. I presume they didn't know. They didn't have any procedures for asking, at that time.
11. I then applied for and secured the job of Assistant Organiser at Bendrigg Lodge Activity Centre, Kendal, Cumbria and I worked there from July 1978 until February 1980. I was involved in routine management of the centre and liaison with groups to plan activity programmes. I also took the lead on outdoor activities.
12. I worked with children and adults with physical disabilities and learning difficulties at Bendrigg Lodge. I was not asked about my previous conviction in the application process for that job. As far as I know they did not know.
13. In February 1980 I became a Residential Social Care Worker at Cedar House, Kirkby Lonsdale in Cumbria. I was responsible for the personal care of young people and I led in social and emotional development programmes.
14. Once again, I was not asked about my previous conviction so they wouldn't have known either. As far as I recall I wasn't questioned on my background in relation to convictions for any of the jobs in England.
15. It was around this time I got my Post Graduate Certificate in Education. When I was applying for that qualification I don't remember any questions about background or convictions. I just filled in the application form.
16. SNR [REDACTED] at Cedar House, was FXE [REDACTED], and in 198 [REDACTED] he left to go to Scotland [REDACTED] a List G school, Starley Hall, in Burntisland, Fife. FXE [REDACTED] took me with him,

he [REDACTED] had already interviewed me for the job at Cedar House so there wasn't any formal interview for Starley Hall. I just went with him to [REDACTED] school [REDACTED]. It was a private venture, we [REDACTED] and FXE [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

17. My role at Starley Hall School was also as a Residential Social Care Worker with similar responsibilities to that at Cedar House. I lived in, I had a separate flat, and I was involved in getting kids up for breakfast, seeing to them getting washed and showered and then getting them off to school. I also supervised the children at breaks, lunchtime and dinner and during any free time they might have.
18. I would supervise free time in the evening when they would watch TV or films. Bedtime, was around 9 o'clock and I would supervise the children getting ready for bed. I shared those duties with other staff at the school until night staff came on duty to supervise through the night.
19. While at Starley Hall I was never aware of any abuse allegations being made, either by children, or adults on behalf of children. I left Starley Hall in June 1983.

Aberlour Child Care Trust - The Sycamore Project, Kirkcaldy (1983-1988)

General

20. FXE [REDACTED] made all sorts of promises to me while I was at Starley Hall and they all came to nothing. Another employee, KNU [REDACTED], who was also at Starley Hall, had a falling out with FXE [REDACTED] and FXE [REDACTED] fired him. KNU [REDACTED] then got the job [REDACTED] Sycamore and when the post became available there, KNU [REDACTED] invited me to apply. As I felt nothing was coming from FXE [REDACTED] and my job at Starley Hall I went for and got the job at Sycamore.
21. I had a formal interview with KNU [REDACTED] and the deputy director Margaret Ferguson. It was thirty years ago, so I can't remember what they asked. I don't remember providing

- any references and I wasn't asked about previous convictions. I do think they did a SCRO check (Scottish Criminal Records Office) and nothing came up. It was some form of police check. I think that might have been because the conviction was in England and the check was only made in Scotland. I can only presume they knew I had worked in England because I worked with KNU in Cumbria, but I can't be sure.
22. I started at the Sycamore Project in Kirkcaldy, Fife in July 1983. The Aberlour Child Care Trust were responsible for the project and, as a senior protection worker, I was responsible for the day to day running of the residential unit. I was also involved in the personal care planning for the young people staying at the unit.
 23. The post I held at the Sycamore Project had a qualified and unqualified scale. I was regarded as qualified because I held a teaching qualification. I was seconded to do the Certificate in Social Service in 1987. There were various in-service training courses; both in Sycamore and Aberlour. I did shift work but didn't live in at Sycamore.
 24. When I started at the Sycamore Project it was just in Whiteman's Brae, but later on it expanded into a further two units. One was Cedar Avenue which was for children over sixteen, it was like an independence unit, preparing them for independent living. The other one was in Veronica Crescent which was for younger children, I think, nine to twelve year olds. Sycamore was roughly eleven to sixteen year olds.
 25. When I first arrived at Sycamore, I received a fairly rudimentary induction. I was told where things were kept, what we had to do, things like that. Before KNU was the Sycamore Project, Whiteman's Brae, had been a normal children's home for kids who didn't have problems. The kids didn't display any aggressive or problematic behaviour, they were just ordinary kids, with backgrounds that led to them not being able to be looked after by their own families.
 26. When KNU was that changed to children with specific problems. Sycamore focussed on children with emotional and behavioural needs, while another similar unit, in Dunfermline, focussed on children with physical and learning disability

needs. It was part of a bigger picture relating to an overall change of thinking on how children in care should be housed. Looking at specific needs rather than generalising.

27. I don't recall any specific training but we did have some in-service training on various topics. Outside people would come in and we would fit it round school time and supervising the children. I can't remember the topics.
28. KNU also led some training, some were led by social workers, some by educational psychologists. None of that led to any qualifications but when I was at Sycamore I was seconded to the CSS (Certificate of Social Service). That was the only training that led to a qualification when I was at Sycamore.

Staff

29. The staff structure at Sycamore consisted of a project leader, that later regraded to service manager, who had overall responsibility for the operation of the unit, three senior project workers and three project workers. Latterly there were four senior project workers and four project workers to provide relief cover and on call. There was also a cook and two domestic staff.

Supervision and reporting

30. In relation to supervision and reporting procedures there was a system of regular supervision between the service manager, the senior project workers and the project workers. Supervision was recorded and shared with the supervisee. There were annual appraisals or, performance and practice, in place and there were regular meetings for the whole team, the senior team and, I think, the project workers.
31. KNU was my line manager throughout and he and the assistant director for Sycamore, Cameron McVicar, carried out my appraisal. Cameron was replaced by Grace Adamson, and she then carried out my appraisals with KNU

32. We would hold one to one meetings or private meetings and we would look at the various duties the person held and ask how it was going and if there were any issues. We would also look at the kids they were working with and ask if there were any issues there and look over their care plans. We might have looked over things but I can't remember them.
33. Minutes were taken of meetings and reviews and copies were sent to the head office. An assistant director also attended the staff meetings on a regular basis, and was present at annual appraisals.
34. There were disciplinary and grievance procedures in place for staff at all the Aberlour projects. They were fairly standard grievance procedures. I think they changed over the years, when the personnel function was expanded and improved. I can't remember the details but if you felt you had a grievance you could raise it. It then went through various stages. The disciplinary procedures were much the same.
35. I'm fairly sure the supervisory system we used was TTI, that's Task, Team and Individual. Task looked at the duties, team looked at team issues and Individual looked at support, training need and annual leave, things associated with the individual.
36. I think the supervision and reporting procedures were very helpful and certainly robust. It looked at all aspects of the job and questioned performance, it wasn't just a case of sitting down and having a nice chat about work. It had a format and looked at things like performance strengths and weaknesses and where a person might need to develop.
37. I can't remember if there was a complaints procedure for resident children or for parents of carers, when I worked at Sycamore.
38. A procedure was implemented after I left Sycamore and the assistant director was given safeguarding responsibilities. That probably came in post 2000, when I was working at head office in a training function. I didn't have much contact with the

safeguarding policy, that was a separate department. It was around that time that a complaints procedure was put into place for children.

39. During my time at Sycamore there wasn't an independent person that a child would have been able to speak to if they had any concerns. If a child was concerned or unhappy about their treatment they could have spoken to the staff at Sycamore or their field social worker. As far as I remember there was no system of safeguarding and befriending.
40. The field social workers attendance at Sycamore varied, it wasn't that often. They would come to reviews and case conferences but otherwise the contact was made by our staff with the field social worker. As I remember there wasn't a lot of contact with the field social worker. When they did visit, there was opportunity for the child to speak with them on their own.
41. Contact between the children and their own families also varied, some children had no contact whatsoever with their families and others had families that contacted them at various intervals. Families would visit the unit and there would be provision for the families to speak on their own. They were able to go out together, into town for a coffee or shopping.
42. When I started at Sycamore there were nine children with two staff. There always had to be somebody in the house, so if a child had to be taken somewhere, to a club perhaps, in the project vehicle, then staff had to be on their own with that child. A keyworker could be taking a child into town for shopping for clothes, thing like that. If a key worker was preparing for reviews, and doing life story work, they would be in a room by themselves with a child.
43. If a child was acting up or being disruptive or aggressive, quite often we would take the child into the office and talk to them. Sometimes that would happen by yourself because there would only be two of us and somebody would need to be need to be supervising the other kids.

44. I can't recall if there were any discussions surrounding a child being on their own with a member of staff and that creating a situation where the child or the member of staff might be vulnerable.
45. Apart from family members and staff within the unit there was no one that would have had access to a child on their own. We tried to make Sycamore as much like a normal house as possible. It was generally a very happy place, the children and staff joked between themselves a lot. As I remember it, there was quite a lot of fun, just normal interaction.
46. We would allow the children to bring back friends but it was always in sight of staff. However, if a child was outwith the home, perhaps visiting friends, we couldn't monitor them directly. We would sometimes meet the friends or their families but that, obviously, couldn't always be the case.

Roles and responsibilities

47. The senior project workers were responsible for running each shift with a project worker. The senior project worker would attend reviews with a project worker and external staff, tend to specific responsibilities such as organizing staff rotas, arranging holidays, liaising with families and the social work.
48. Project workers had key work responsibility for one or two children and liaised with the families and the social work.
49. The project workers, who were also the key workers, were responsible for arranging liaison between families and the social work, purchasing clothing, toiletries and other such items, preparing reports for reviews and case conferences, organizing activities for children and liaising with the schools.
50. They also performed many other general duties such as preparing and serving meals, laundry, supervision, transportation and writing up daily logs. The logs were written up

at the end of each shift, detailing the activities, behaviour and any issues for each child. These were then used to pass on to the next team so they were aware of things.

51. If the child had any issues or was unhappy that would, probably, have appeared in those logs. Although the sort of unhappiness that appeared in those logs could have been that they didn't like something they had for tea or that they weren't allowed out at night for misbehaving.
52. Senior project workers would also carry out all the general duties project workers did, as well as managing the shifts, attending reviews and case conferences and liaising with external social workers. External social workers made regular visits to the project and attended reviews and case conferences.
53. The local authority, Fife, had responsibility for inspections. I remember inspections being carried out but I can't remember any detail. I think there was some sort of visual inspection to check the facilities and look at written records. They would have met with KNU SNR to discuss what was on their agenda.
54. I can't remember if any part of those inspections involved speaking with the children or getting any type of feedback from them.

Children's daily routine

55. On weekdays the children were woken up about 7.30 am and they had a choice of a shower or bath which they could have in the morning and/or in the evening. Then they had breakfast and departed for school from about 8.30 am.
56. Most of the children attended local state schools and some came back to Sycamore for lunch. Some attended List G schools, either on a daily basis or residential during the week.
57. The children would return from school about 4.15 pm and snacks would be available. They then had TV or game time or free time in their rooms until the evening meal.

Some might go out locally to see friends or play in the local park. The evening meal was about 5 pm.

58. After tea it was schoolwork, TV, games or other activities or, if they had free time, they might go see friends, get visitors, attend clubs or just go out and play in the locality. If they were out they had to be back for about 9 pm, when they had supper, and then it was bedtime. Bedtime varied according to age.
59. At weekends and school holidays getting up was variable, but it would be the children's choice unless they had something arranged. During the day they would have free time, see friends, play games or other activities. In the evenings they might watch films in the sitting room, and bedtime was generally a bit later, but they would have a supper and go to bed. Again, times varied according to age.

Disciplining children

60. Many, if not all, the children at the Sycamore Project had disturbed backgrounds and had experienced abuse or neglect. Many displayed challenging and volatile behaviour and they had varied family backgrounds and support.
61. The main methods for disciplining children were to ground them, and not allow them out of the house unsupervised, or if they were being disruptive or aggressive they would be asked to sit in the hallway away from the dining room and lounge where they could then be observed by staff. The layout at Sycamore was such, that with many wired glass doors and windows, staff could supervise a child sitting in the hallway from many other rooms, while the child was still separated from other children. After such incidents the children were given the opportunity to discuss the incident and they were given advice about how it could be avoided in the future.
62. At the time I was at Sycamore, we didn't receive any training or guidance in how to deal with a child that became physically aggressive. We just had to deal with it as best as we could. Later on they introduced a system called CALM (Crisis and Aggression Limitation Management) as a method of restraint.

63. There is one incident I can recall from Sycamore, when a lad about fourteen or fifteen, came back into the unit quite drunk. We had to physically restrain him. When children were being aggressive to each other we found separating them or moving them apart was quite effective. There was no physical punishment of children.
64. There was a varied frequency of child discipline, it depended on what state of mind the children were in, but it was fairly frequent. Being teenagers and teenagers with troubles, there was a lot of winding up and there would be nipping, under the breath, just to try and get a reaction.
65. If we did have to physically restrain a child, we would stand in front of them, hold their arms or their shoulders, and keep them with you until they calmed down and could be allowed to go free, without the risk of them continuing what they were doing.
66. That was pretty effective, by in large there was a lot of respect between the children and the staff. The children listened to staff, some staff more than others, but they usually calmed down and were able to re-join the group or carry on with their activity.
67. Whenever there was an incident involving physical restraint that would be recorded in the daily logs. We also recorded when a child had been sent to sit out in the hall and was separated from the group or if a child had to be spoken to about their behaviour. We recorded what they'd been doing and what their behaviour had been like. It was about behaviour and attitude more than just punishment or discipline.
68. I can't recall any incident where the behaviour of the child was beyond management. If a child was separated from the group and I was dealing with it and it was not working, another member of staff would come in and I would disappear. That would take the aggravation away. We worked as a team to diffuse these situations.
69. I don't recall receiving any training on how a child ought to be disciplined, not at Sycamore. When I started there, the method was grounding or separating, as we've

discussed, and that was all instituted by KNU at the outset. There was no training or guidance after that.

70. Each child did have a Care Plan and that plan set out what the response should be to certain situations. We worked with that and each Care Plan was different depending on the needs and age of the child. That said, the threshold for behaviours that required sanction were fairly general for all the children. They would be aggressive behaviour towards staff or children, damage to the fabric of the house or damage to themselves. The Care Plan was different scenarios for responding to that specific child.
71. If a child caused damage to the house or the fabric of the house, it would be repaired if possible, if not, and it was replaceable, within financial limits, the child would be fined from their pocket money. I didn't see any child trash a room at Sycamore, the worst I saw was ripping up books.
72. I think the aims and objectives at Sycamore, to try and understand and respond to the children in relation to their needs, worked well. The way the staff responded to and treated the children was always very friendly and understanding. The staff, myself included, would sit and talk with the child, if time allowed, and try to explore the issues. If time didn't allow we would talk about it later.
73. If any of the methods didn't work and if a child was perhaps refusing to go to school, having been spoken to, we would contact the school, we had good relationships with all the schools. That was not a regular occurrence, but if it happened we would let them stay at the unit, and get work sent in for them from the school. They would then have to sit in the dining room and do the work. I should say that most of the time the kids couldn't wait to get out the house, to go and see their mates, in any case.
74. So, if it was a con they weren't getting away with it, and if there was a real reason, we had time to discuss whatever the issue was, when all the other kids were at school.

Abuse

75. Many of the children who were resident at Sycamore had a history of abuse that took place prior to their admission and was contained in their personal records. Those records were maintained confidentially by the keyworkers at Sycamore and any relevant information would be shared at reviews or in staff meetings.
76. I cannot recall any investigation into abuse at the actual Sycamore Project but there were two separate occasions when children absconded, in the company of adults, and abuse took place.
77. One involved two girls from Sycamore, one of whom was quite promiscuous. She was about fourteen or fifteen but could easily pass for sixteen or seventeen. She absconded with another girl to a local house and both of them were abused. I think the men were charged and prosecuted. That was when I was in Sycamore. The girls were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I don't recall her surname and they were in the Whiteman's Brae unit at Sycamore.
78. The other concerned two boys who absconded to London with the older brother of one of the boys. They were sexually abused and I believe an investigation and court proceedings followed in London. The boys that absconded from Sycamore were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I forget his surname. They were both Whiteman's Brae as well.
79. If a child absconded we would inform the police, talk to the other children to see if they knew anything, if we thought it likely they'd be in the neighbourhood, then we'd go out and look for them. Absconding varied, some children absconded regularly, some not at all. By in large I can't say there was that much absconding.
80. When a child returned, having absconded, we would talk and discuss things with them. We would try to find out what the problem was, the reasons why. Reasons varied, sometimes kids were quite open and would tell you, perhaps they were upset at not seeing mum and wanted to see mum. Sometimes they wouldn't give very much away.

81. There was a sanction for absconding, they would be grounded, kept within the house for a period of time and not allowed out without staff supervision. It wasn't secure accommodation at Sycamore so it was easy for the children to abscond if they wanted to.
82. In the case of the two girls we increased supervision, the older one wasn't very happy. There was definitely an awareness, an appreciation of the vulnerability surrounding the girls, and particularly the older more promiscuous one. There was no suggestion of any grooming, she was someone who had been abandoned by her mother and was desperate to have her own baby, to have someone to love, and to love her.

Child Protection

83. There were organisational Child Protection procedures and project specific procedures in place. Close liaison was maintained with field social workers when a child was deemed at risk or had absconded.
84. I remember there were definitely some child protection procedures in place at that time, but I can't remember the detail. They were written down and perhaps every member of staff had a copy, but I don't know where they were kept, or any of the detail, I can't remember.

Records

85. Daily logs were made for each shift for the purpose of shift handovers and a record of events and activities was kept on the logs. They were generic logs but if something of significance happened it would be copied from the daily log to the child's personal file by the child's key worker. The logs also had a space where we could record any behavioural, emotional issues, activities and incidents.
86. Each child had a personal file maintained by their keyworker which contained basic information, parent or carer information, social work contacts, details of any orders

relating to their residence, medical records, school details, any clubs they attended and their Care Plan as well.

87. The personal files were kept in the staff office in a locked filing cabinet.
88. When I started at Sycamore, the record keeping system was being reviewed. The system of logs and Care Plans was instituted when KNU came, so I was aware of it but it wasn't part of a formal induction or anything.
89. KNU instituted quite a lot of change. The change from children's home to the Sycamore Project meant a lot of changes had to be made. There were changes in the way we managed the unit, to the number of staff employed, in the way records were kept and just the general running of the unit.
90. Most of the changes came from KNU. I didn't have much contact with any of the other units or projects that Aberlour ran, but I'm pretty sure they were all Sycamore specific. At the time I joined, the organisation changed to naming the units by the name, to calling them projects. I know there were a number of projects, in Fife, in Dunfermline, in Aberdeen, but I didn't have much contact, if any, with them.

Aberlour Child Care Trust – Whitfield Family Centre, Dundee (1988–1991)

General

91. In 1988 I was married, I wanted a day job and I was also ready to move on from Sycamore. A Depute Project Leader post came up at the Whitfield Family Centre in Dundee, so I applied for it and got it.
92. I think SCRO checks were carried out, as I mentioned before, but I can't be sure. Nobody came to me questioning my conviction.

93. Whitfield was a day unit, and the families that used it attended on a voluntary basis. The children were pre-five, so it was a bit like a child care unit. I became depute project manager then project manager and I worked with parents and other agencies. I also had an overall responsibility for management of the centre including supervision of staff. The post of deputy project manager required a social work qualification.

Staff

94. We had a project manager, depute project manager, assistant project manager, four play workers/project workers, a cook and two domestic staff.
95. There was a system of regular supervision, just as at Sycamore, and all supervision was recorded and shared with the supervisee.
96. There were regular meetings for the whole team and the senior team and separate meetings for the assistant project managers and project workers. Minutes were taken at meeting and reviews and copies were sent to head office. An assistant director also attended the staff meetings on a regular basis and would be present at annual appraisals as well. The staffing and supervisory procedures were all much the same as Sycamore.
97. I believe there was a complaints procedure in place, for parents, but I cannot recall any details and, as I mentioned earlier, there were disciplinary and grievance procedures in place for staff at all Aberlour projects and the local authority, Dundee, had responsibility for inspections at Whitfield.

Roles and responsibilities

98. The project manager had overall responsibility for the operation of the centre. In his absence the depute would stand in.

99. The depute project manager worked with the parent group and liaised with other agencies, community groups and organisations. They were also responsible for organising specific groups and activities.
100. The assistant project manager organised play sessions and the play workers were responsible for working with the children in the play sessions.

Children's routine

101. Attendance at the centre was voluntary, parents were interviewed and the provisions available for the children were explained. The centre used the High Scope education approach. The expectations for parents and child protection issues were also explained. If there was a place free in a play session at the centre they could take it up, if not, they were put on a waiting list.
102. I think the children arrived at 9.30 am and went into the play area. The three to five age group had a separate session to the younger children. There was a mid-morning snack and lunch was at 12.30. After lunch the children went home. If there were activities for parents in the afternoon, child care was available.
103. During holidays the same provisions were in place for pre-school children, but, during the Easter and Summer breaks, activities were organised for families with school age children.
104. Parents had use of the rooms in the centre if they wanted to stay while their child was in a play session, but there was no requirement to stay.

Disciplining children

105. The children at the centre were pre-fives and were responded to in an age appropriate manner. On the occasions when children had a 'tantrum' or were otherwise misbehaving they were removed from the area they were in, until they had calmed down. The same action was taken when the school age children were in the centre.

Abuse

- 106. Whitfield was non-residential and I have no knowledge of any abuse there.
- 107. There were no police investigations, during my time there, however, I think the social work were involved in some case of suspected abuse or neglect.
- 108. There were organisational child protection procedures and project specific procedures.

Records

- 109. Daily logs were kept in respect of children. The activities they were involved in were noted and any other things of note, behaviour, wellbeing, signs of illness and the like. I suspect any issues or incidents of note were recorded but I don't think they were that detailed.
- 110. The logs were maintained by the playworkers. Each child had a file which was kept in a locked filing cabinet to which the parents had access.

Aberlour Child Care Trust – Head Office, Stirling (1991-2008)*General*

- 111. In 1991 the funding ended for the family centre, it was changing to a Community Nursery and there wasn't a post for me in the new set up. I had enrolled in my Social Work Services Planning course at Edinburgh University and I was interested in training. The job as training co-ordinator at the Aberlour Child Care Trust head office in Stirling came up, so it all just fell into place.

112. I don't know what checks were made but there was some form of check carried out and I was told it came back clear. I then started as training co-ordinator.
113. There was no qualification requirement when I took up the post however I undertook further training in that role. I did SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualifications) assessor and internal verifier and practice teaching qualifications. Later on I undertook a level 5 SVQ in Training and Development Strategy and then I became a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
114. The learning and development team did not work directly with children but with staff teams and head office staff. They provided child protection training to several Aberlour projects and I have provided the Inquiry with a list of the full training programme courses for 2007.

Roles and responsibilities

115. As training co-ordinator I was responsible for the development and delivery of in-service training programmes, assessment and verification for SVQ awards and supervision of student placements. My line manager in that role was the deputy director, Margaret Ferguson.
116. I was then promoted to staff development officer in 1994 and I was responsible for management of in-service training programmes, SVQ assessments and student placements. My line manager in that role was the chief executive Bill Grieve.
117. In 2001 I was promoted to head of learning and development and this entailed policy and strategy development for learning and development, management and delivery of in-service training and qualifying training programmes, both at vocational and professional levels. As a member of the senior management team I also had corporate responsibility for overall management and strategy development.
118. As head of learning and development I reported to three chief executives Bill Grieve, Rory Langland and Adie Stevenson. That was separately during my time as head.

119. Throughout these posts there was no induction. I did undergo training as part of my working week and I reported on development and training. I had also become aware there was no health and safety policy so I wrote the policy and, following on from that, I did the National Examination Board Occupational Safety and Health certificate.
120. I became the responsible person within the organisation that was responsible for health and safety. Later on someone else was appointed as health and safety co-ordinator and that role was taken off me.

Staff

121. Initially, in 1991, there were two part-time training co-ordinators who were managed by the deputy director. Then, in 1994, the post of staff development officer was created, with the responsibility of managing the other training co-ordinators. After this, the post of head of learning and development was created in 2001. Eventually, there were four people in the position of training co-ordinator, together with two SVQ assessors or in-house trainers.
122. There were also two administrative assistants, one for practice teaching and one for in-house training and SVQ.
123. There were annual appraisals, as previously, as head of learning I supervised the learning and development co-ordinators and they, in turn, supervised the SVQ assessors. There were regular team meetings.
124. We had a disciplinary and grievance procedures in place for all Aberlour projects and for head office staff. They were fairly standard procedures and didn't differ from most other organisations. There was also a staff complaints procedure but HR would have dealt with that, the learning and development team did not work directly with service users but with other staff teams and head office.

Training

125. I was involved in training for many years with Aberlour. There was a project based induction and a head office induction. I introduced the head office induction. We gave an overview of Aberlour, to give a flavour of the organisation and its history. A general opportunity to introduce them to Aberlour and each other and make them feel part of the wider organisation. They would meet senior management and ask questions, that kind of thing.
126. Each project ran their own induction and when I was with Aberlour there were projects running in many places, Elgin, Aberdeen, Fife, all over the country. The project manager or his assistant would look at what needed to be done in terms of orientating their staff.
127. We also produced a booklet and circulated it to every project highlighting what courses were available, so that every manager, and every worker, knew what courses were available. If there was a course, that was relevant to their job, and their manager agreed, they could put their name down. If we got enough staff to run the course, we ran it. The training could take place in head office or other locations wherever it was suitable for the participants.
128. There was some training that was mandatory and some that was optional. Child protection training, for example, that was a mandatory training course.
129. In the disability sector there were a lot of young people with severe disabilities so staff needed to be trained to move them safely and efficiently. I prepared a policy for moving and handling young people with disabilities, using the Neuro-Muscular approach, and a policy for moving and handling pre fives as well. Things like placing children in and out of cars. The Neuro-Muscular approach was accredited by the University of Greenwich.
130. We also introduced training in record keeping and report writing, I'm not sure why it came about, but it was before 2007. Perhaps it was a response from operational

managers or just something we decided to put on anyway. It was just looking at the basics, how to structure a report and how to keep records.

131. Ideas for training could come from one of the sectors in Aberlour, they could come from a specific project or they could be initiated by the training team. Training needs for individuals were fed up to the training team from appraisals, the project teams and also from the training team, who were always looking at what was around and what needed to be done.
132. There was a formal review of the training provision every year. A look at what we were doing and from that we developed the next year's plans.
133. When I first started at Aberlour, I was not aware of much training, apart from some within the projects. When I left we had a systematic approach to training needs, analysis and identification, a training programme for in-service courses, a broad range of SVQ's, a system for putting people forward for social work training and a system for practice learning. One of the last things I did was develop a database of practice learning opportunities for each project.
134. The post of training co-ordinator was created in 1991, with the advent of SVQ's and a big part of the role was to be an assessor and verifier. That was a means to get staff qualified and I think that started the change to a more organised and coherent system.
135. It meant people who were employed and unqualified were able to gain a qualification without leaving employment. There are a lot of critics of SVQ's and vocational qualifications but I've done one. You have to know what you're doing and why and then evidence what you're doing. In my case I did a lot of reading but it is an effective training tool.
136. There was general training in health and safety and specific training in dealing with responding to challenging behaviour and moving and handling. We did health and safety co-ordinator training, as each project had to have a health and safety co-

- ordinator. They would be responsible for maintaining records, doing fire safety checks and risk assessments. They were responsible for staff, service users, visitors, anyone.
137. With moving and handling training, there were two separate areas, disability and pre-fives. The training involved moving people safely, perhaps from wheelchairs to hoists. Pre-fives was about picking them up safely and efficiently.
 138. The Neuro-Muscular approach covered using non-aversive and indirect holds, approaching the person and how to hold them. I don't remember any issue arising in relation to any inappropriate touching.
 139. In relation to management development training and specifically effective recruitment, you have to get somebody to fill the post. You have got to do your best to make sure they are the right person, you have to do your best to identify what training they need, now, and perhaps later on in the same post. You also have to look at promotion possibilities and any likelihood of them moving on. The personnel department did most of that training.
 140. In relation to changes in recruitment, at Aberlour, I can't really comment from early on in my career, because I didn't have much contact with other projects. When I started in the training post, recruitment was managed by the assistant directors and project managers, as there wasn't any general training in place.
 141. By the time management training came in, there was a personnel section that provided training on the basics of effective recruitment. I can't remember if I had any impact on that training or not. The change in recruitment could possibly have been described as going from a rather fragmented approach to a more organisational approach, to make sure everybody was doing the same thing.
 142. When I was in the senior management team I did visit some of the child care establishments, to provide training for staff teams. I did team specific training and some SVQ work, which mainly took place with staff teams. Occasionally young people

would be present in the unit but they wouldn't be present in the training that was taking place.

143. There was training involving children and young people in the recruitment of staff. I think that was about finding the most appropriate way to involve young people. Perhaps sitting in on an interview panel, providing questions to put to potential recruits or showing them around the building. That must have started around 2004 or 2005, but I can't be sure.

Child Protection

144. The director of children and family services was responsible for child protection. I think, when a post was created, or reviewed, or needed to be reviewed, the assistant director produced the job spec and passed it on to me. I would check the appropriate qualifications were on it, if they weren't sure. For example, if it was a pre-fives worker the range of qualifications were relatively narrow but if anything new came in I would let the assistant director know of that, for the qualified scale.
145. There were child protection policies in place and each project had its own, because each project was different. I can only really speak about Sycamore and Whitfield, which we've covered. When I was in the training posts I didn't have much to do with the day to day running of the projects.
146. I think there was an overall Aberlour child protection policy and individual project policies, probably a bit of both. As time went on these were all refined, but every project would have something for child protection. That would have included child protection and disability as well, that was another area the assistant directors would look at when it came to training staff. I can't remember the dates they came in, but it would have been before 2007.

Policy

147. There was a regular ongoing review of the policies, if anything occurred that required review that was done. I think it was done on an annual basis. That would happen across the board, with all the policies, but I would only have been involved in the discussion if it came up at senior management meeting, as policy was really outside my role.
148. The senior management meetings were attended by the chief executive, the deputy director, four assistant directors and me, once I joined. If policy was to be reviewed it would be circulated for discussion at those meetings. Later on following organisational changes a chief executives team was instituted which consisted of the chief executive, the director of children and family services, the director of finance, the director of personnel and the director of fundraising.
149. An operational management team was also formed at that time which comprised of the director of children and family services and all the assistant directors. There was also a senior management team which comprised of the chief executive team, the organisational management team, myself, as head of development and the head of personnel.
150. I think there was a policy developed for discipline and punishment of children but I can't remember.

Strategic planning

151. The operational management team would make plans for future developments which would be submitted to the senior management team. My involvement was to then give an input from a learning and development side.
152. I don't know if allegations of abuse at Aberlour contributed to strategic planning or reviews of any plans or policies. Such allegations didn't cross my desk, they were dealt with by the assistant director and director of children and family services. I can't think how they would affect any policy development but it wasn't something I dealt with. My role was more to do with giving a view on what training or qualifications were required.

Abuse

153. I never had any concern about abuse of young children or anything of that nature during any of my training visits to any of the Aberlour projects. I very rarely saw children on the projects I visited.
154. During my time at Aberlour, I have never been subject to any allegations of abuse or mistreatment of a child and I have never been involved in any investigations of abuse or mistreatment of a child, by any other persons. I have never been asked to provide a statement, not to the police or anyone, about my experiences at Aberlour in the context of allegations of abuse.

Post Aberlour (2008-2010)

155. In 2008 there was a re-organisation of the child function at Aberlour and my post was made redundant. There was another post available, but as I was past fifty the rules said they had to offer me my pension. I accepted that and decided to go self-employed.
156. In July 2008 I became an independent consultant and provided workforce planning and development for voluntary agencies, learning activity in supervision, appraisal coaching and mentoring and team and management development. I also carried out some research projects for the Tayside Learning Network and the Scottish Social Services Council.
157. Examples of the work I did included work for Camphill Blair Drummond providing supervision appraisal training and helping them develop their health and safety.
158. With the Tayside Learning Network I worked with a colleague to produce a report on work force planning. Basically work force planning is getting the right people in the right place at the right time. The report was based on a survey of organisations in the network area and fed into the networks plans for what they were going to do.

- 159. With the Scottish Social Service Council I worked with a number of colleagues reviewing the implementation of the continuous learning network and practice learning.
- 160. When I left Aberlour in 2008 they had no knowledge of my conviction from 1972. I was subsequently convicted again in 2017, as I have mentioned. I have no other outstanding cases.

Lessons to be learned

- 161. I worked for Aberlour for twenty five years but I haven't worked directly with children since 1991. A robust complaints procedure is essential but I assume one would be in place, by now, at Aberlour. Things have changed significantly over that time frame.
- 162. In relation to one to one informal conversations with a child, it's very difficult. It may be that's what the child wants, due to the sensitive nature of the information. At Sycamore children would often speak to you in the car, when going shopping or taking a child to a club, for example. It was a safe environment and they might then talk to you, it could be about a problem or it could be any kind of chit chat. The conversations could be positive or negative.
- 163. If we went into town shopping and went for a coffee, that was a public, yet private, environment as no one knew the child. That might be another opportunity for the child to talk and there was no risk to either party.
- 164. At Sycamore, children might have preferred members of staff, perhaps a keyworker, who they could become close to and might speak to. Sometimes bringing in a third party could change the dynamics. I really don't think you can do without one to one situations but you need to look at the practicalities. You can't always bring in a third party, that could close the child down. It might provide safety for the child and/or worker but it also wasn't always possible or practical.


Closing comments

165. I started work at the adventure playground because I knew somebody, who had a friend who worked there as well. I helped him with one or two activities and I got a summer holiday job there when I was at college. When I left college I got a job full time. I then moved to Cumbria and the outdoor centre, because I wanted to live there. I then worked in Kirby Lonsdale and then I moved to Scotland. Working with young people was something I was interested in and, in relation to work and decision making, I would say that my choices have been affected by my interest in children.
166. I openly admit to having had a sexual interest in young children. I am currently off my licence conditions but I'm going to a group run by the social work, on a voluntary basis, and I'm maintaining social work supervision, as well. I see my supervising officer on a weekly basis. Hopefully, I've got that under control and I feel quite differently now.
167. I am being quite honest, something I've learned is that you've got to be candid if you're going to admit things to yourself. The group I'm going to have been very helpful with that and I continue my voluntary attendance because I know I need help if I am going to be able to move on in my life.
168. I liked working with children and I liked being near them but I never had inappropriate contact with them. Later on, my choices moved away from children towards working with adults, that was when I moved into training.
169. I do think there should be some system in place, for the recruitment of staff, that work with children, that identifies whether or not a person has convictions in relation to children.
170. I agree there was a risk with me and that there should have been a system that might have identified my convictions before allowing me to be in a workplace with vulnerable children.

171. There is protection of vulnerable groups legislation in place now but that only works for people that have a conviction. I don't know how you can identify that interest, for people that have not been convicted. It's not something you go about candidly admitting.
172. Perhaps psychometric or psychological testing at the recruitment stage but that would be resource heavy and expensive and it might put lots of people off, who had nothing to hide.
173. Looking back at my experiences at Aberlour I would say one of the sanctions we used, that was perhaps too excessive, was loss of privileges. Not letting the child have anything or not letting them go on an outing, for example. That occurs to me as something where the punishment doesn't meet the crime. I think withdrawing privileges was negative punishment enforcement and is not in the context of the behavioural system.

Other information

174. 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.....12/10/2018.....