

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of PBU

Support Person Present: Yes

1. My full name is PBU. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I have never received any formal education and as a result I have great difficulty reading and writing. I also have a great difficulty in remembering dates times and names of persons I have encountered when I was in care and throughout my later life. I suffer from a number of health problems and psychological problems which I associate as being caused primarily from my time in care.

Life before going into care

3. I was born and brought up in Falkirk, Scotland. I lived with my parents and my sister in [REDACTED], Falkirk. I don't remember much about my sister or my parents. My father was an alcoholic and used to abuse me which caused me to run away from home. I used to be a bed wetter as a result of the beating I took from my father. My mother preferred girls to boys and used to force me to wear my sister's hand down clothes. My parents are both dead and I have no idea where my sister is or if she is still alive.

Institution

The Royal Scottish National Hospital, Larbert

4. I still do not know why I was subsequently put into care at age four and a half. I was to remain in care at The Royal Scottish National Hospital, Larbert, for the next 11 years of my life. I did suffer from pneumonia as a child but I'm not sure if that is the reason that they put me into the hospital. I also ran away from home when my father beat me. I never appeared at a children's court or anything like that. Some of the patients had been at Carstairs State Hospital and were much older than me.

Life in care

Admission

5. I remember being taken to the R.S.N.H in a car. I don't know who was driving. I was with my mother and a social worker. We were met at the hospital by a Dr Primrose. I think he was the head man at the time. I remember that the hospital was huge with four large blocks in the institution part. There was also an area called the colony which had chalet style dormitories. The whole hospital was contained inside a large fence. If you wanted to go into the huge grounds you had to be accompanied by a member of staff.
6. There were four blocks at the male part of the hospital. There were three floors on each block. Each floor had about 8 dormitories with between 25 and 40 beds in each dormitory. I think that there were two chalets also containing about 25 to 40 patients/inmates. There was also a female only part of the hospital which I never visited. I think that it was similar in size to the male wing. The occupants in each dormitory were of all ages and included adults and children alike. This changed after I had been there for a while. I must have been about 11 when they built more villas.
7. I was taken by a nurse and put into block three. I remember being taken away from my mother and walking down a staircase to a veranda, or covered hall. I was then admitted into block three. The grounds and surrounding area were all fenced in and you were not allowed to go for a walk without a nurse present.
8. I think that the whole hospital was run by The National Health Service but I never asked and was never told.
9. There were two parts to the hospital. The Institution part which housed the blocks and the colonies part which housed the villas. The institution part is now demolished. A railway ran through the middle of the grounds. This area was called Bellsdyke. Bellsdyke was where the grounds were.
10. The residents of the hospital varied in age from about 3 or 4 years of age to much older men. We were all put in the dormitories and you could be in a dormitory with all different aged people. There were adults and children together. After I had been there a few years they built additional villas for the older men. You would be rewarded for your good behaviour and moved into the villas or you when you were older and needing less supervision.
11. There was a system where if you behaved you would be rewarded by being moved to the colonies where you had extra privileges like being able to stroll in the grounds on your own or being allowed to go into Larbert unaccompanied. You had to earn these privileges.

Routine

Mornings and bedtime

12. You would be wakened every morning at 08:30 hours and the day would begin with getting washed and then breakfast at 09:00am. You would get a bath once a week. When you got up in the morning the dormitory would be locked behind you. You would get dressed in the corridor outside the dormitory where your clothes were kept. I never went to school and there were no classrooms that I was aware of where I could do normal school work. After breakfast we started doing all the cleaning of the hospital. I was left alone until I was about 6 or 7 and that is when I had to start work. We would be on our hands and knees cleaning the long corridors or making beds. We did not attend school.
13. When I became a bit older I started being put into therapy sessions where we would weave baskets and that sort of thing. When I was older I was put into the cement sheds where I worked most of the time. I hardly had any schooling as I was working all the time. All the work was done at workshops in the hospital grounds.
14. I had to wear a uniform which consisted of khaki shorts and other normal clothes. The RSNH was sewn into the material. You also had a suit for Sundays. The underclothes were changed every day as there was a big laundry on site. The staff also used to wear a uniform which told you what rank they held. The male staff wore a white coat or a brown coat depending on what they were doing at the time. The brown coat was worn when they were in the workshops.
15. You were not allowed to wear your own clothes and you were not allowed to have your own personal possessions.
16. Work started at 09:00 every day and finished at 4:00pm. Bed time was at 8:00pm. Before going to bed you were able to play snooker or watch television. You got your supper and then you were put to bed. The dormitories were kept locked during the day. At night time the staff would come in and waken up the bed wetter's.
17. Block 5 was where you were sent if you got into trouble or if you were caught running away. There was also a place called the box room where you were imprisoned in solitary confinement and usually in a strait jacket.
18. We did get some pocket money which you could spend at a small café and shop which were in the grounds of the hospital. That was a place where you could take visitors to have a tea or coffee.

Food

19. The food at the hospital was adequate but tasteless as it was all steamed. There were no choices but there were no penalties for failing to eat what was served to you.

Schooling

20. I received no schooling to speak of. I suppose was that my behaviour running away meant that I spent most of the time in the workshops. I have since been able to teach myself basic reading and writing but I still struggle badly as a result of a missed education. I worked in the cement making work shop and also on the farm which was within the hospital grounds. I liked the farm because it made it easier to run away.

Holidays and trips

21. There were no holidays at the hospital as the routine just carried on. I do remember going on two day trips. One to Aberdour and the other to a children's home somewhere.
22. Some of the older patients could work outside locally and earn money. Some of them would save up to go to football matches. You could go to the pictures on a Tuesday. On a Sunday you could go for a supervised walk. It was embarrassing as all the local people knew who you were and where you came from. They thought that the R.S.N.H. was a mental hospital and looked at us very suspiciously.

Christmas and birthdays

23. There were no birthday celebrations at the hospital in fact I always thought I was born on the [REDACTED] of the month and not the [REDACTED]. You did get a present at Christmas time and there was a celebration of sorts.

Visits and Inspections

24. I was not aware of any officials visiting the hospital. I can't recall any visits from the social workers.
25. I did receive one visit from my mother during my whole stay at the hospital. She called to visit with her new boyfriend. I thought I saw my father one day outside the grounds of the hospital. I thought he was coming to visit me but he never came in.

Medical care and medication

26. The whole time I was at the hospital I was put on medication. I was permanently on two drugs Agapato and Oxport 100. These are the names that I remember. I received those twice daily in tablet form. I would get the first dose in the morning and the second dose at night. The staff always checked

that you took the medication. They would hold your nose and hit you on the throat to make sure I swallowed it. I think this medication was given to me to keep me calm and controlled.

27. There was a medical wing at the hospital which housed the treatment unit. The hospital had its own doctors so there was no need for doctors from outside the hospital. You would go there if you had physical injuries that required treatment. I recall being battered by one of the members of staff on my legs which drew blood. I was taken to the hospital wing and was bandaged up. I don't think that the staff there even asked how I came about my injuries. I was never taken to a hospital outside the grounds.
28. On the many occasions I ran away from the hospital I would be brought back by the police. The staff would give me an injection of Pralidaxide. I would also be put into a cold bath. If I resisted in any way I would be put into the straight jacket and put into the box room.

Abuse

Physical and psychological abuse

29. Basically from day one in the hospital the staff would hit you for no apparent reason and some of these batterings were very painful. The physical abuse was relentless and you didn't know when it was going to happen. There was no instruction from the staff as to how to behave. A lot of the fellow patients in the hospital were very violent and were constantly fighting the staff and each other. I still have scars on my legs where I had been hit by members of staff and blood was drawn.
30. Things started to go badly for me the day I retaliated to being hit. I was cleaning one of the corridors when I accidentally splashed some water on one of female nurses. The nurse hit me with a brush and I immediately retaliated by striking her with the brush. This was the start of all my problems. I was taken to villa 5 and given an injection which knocked me out for several days.
31. On one occasion a Pakistani nurse asked me if I would go to his room and help him move something. The staff quarters were out of bounds to the residents of the hospital. While I was in the room he tried to sexually abuse me but I managed to get away. I had never been in this area before so in my attempt to escape I was seen by other staff members. The Pakistani nurse then accused me of stealing something from his room. I tried to tell the other staff what had happened but they would not believe me. That was the hardest part when no one would believe you and no one would listen to what you had to say.
32. I ran away a lot trying to get to my grandmother's house in Bonnybridge. The police would pick me up there and bring me back to the hospital. I would then be put into a cold bath and given the injection which would knock me out

few days. I would be locked up in block 5 and would have my privileges withdrawn. I was running away to get away from my abusers.

33. The staff had a large leather belt which they used for discipline. It was a 'tawse' like a school belt. They would hit you with this when they felt you had done something wrong.
34. I was put into a strait jacket once and given an injection after I ran away. The staff held me down and injected me in the bottom. I was then put into the box room where I was kept for about a week. The box room was padded. The problem was that your arms were restrained and you just had to go to the toilet in your clothes. At night time they would let you clean up. I think that I was aged about 9 when this happened.
35. There were patients in the hospital that had both physical and mental problems. There were some kids I would call Mongols at the time. All the while there was abuse going on with these people. The abuse was physical and sexual but you just thought that it was normal behaviour.

Sexual abuse

36. The sexual abuse didn't really start till I was about 12 years old. The first incident was the Pakistani nurse. He tried to get my trousers off and tried to touch my privates. He was wrestling with me. I managed to get away from him. Because I was in the nurse's quarters and I wasn't allowed there I was seen by other staff. He accused me of trying to steal. They all believed him and I was not believed. I was given an injection and put into the straight jacket.
37. The sexual abuse occurred on a regular basis when patients and members of staff would get into your bed and start touching you. They would then force you to masturbate them and perform oral sex on them. There was further penetrative sex which continued to the end of my time at the hospital.
38. I thought that this was not right but the behaviour was all I knew. I thought that it wasn't right but I couldn't understand it.
39. The staff would threaten you so that you didn't report it. You used to get called an "arse bandit" by the other residents. We never really discussed what went on amongst the other patients as it just wasn't done.
40. I found that I was running away more and more to avoid the sexual abuse.

Reporting of abuse

41. Every time I ran away I tried to tell the police who took me back what was happening to me and how I was being abused at the hospital. All they ever said to me was that I had to go back. They never conducted any enquiries to my knowledge. I was never interviewed about what I told them.

42. I did try to tell members of staff about what was happening and I remember I did tell John Fuller and Richard McCartney who were nurses at the hospital about what happened to me with the Pakistani nurse but they didn't do anything. Not all the staff were bad and quite a few looked out for me including Mary Easton who used to give me cigarettes despite the fact I was too young to smoke.
43. When we were physically abused and had to go to the treatment area no one there ever asked how I came by my injuries. I have never made a formal complaint to the police or social work department. I did not have a visit from a social worker the whole time I was in hospital.

Leaving the institution

44. With the help of a member of staff at the hospital I wrote a letter to the Scottish Home Secretary questioning as to why I was being held at the hospital. A short while later I got a reply from the Home Secretary I think that it was Colin Campbell. The letter said that I was no longer required to remain in the hospital as I was an informal patient. The letter also suggested that if I was going to leave I should discuss the matter with the doctor in charge. I was free to leave the hospital after twelve long years. I would be about 16 years old. I had been there for nearly 12 years and still have no idea why I ended up there in the first place.
45. I first went to my mother's house in Camelon, Falkirk where I showed her the letter. She was not prepared to let me stay at her house. She arranged for me to go to my father's house. Things did not work out there as my father was still drinking and he would repeatedly assault me.
46. I then made my way to my Auntie [REDACTED]'s house. I remember she told me when I first arrived that I slept for a full week almost constantly. I had stopped taking the medication at this time and this may have been responsible for how sleepy I was. Auntie [REDACTED] was friendly with a social worker and this social worker arranged for a place for me to stay.
47. I was then sent to a children's home called Viewpark Home in Alyth. Life was quite good there but I had become institutionalised. I didn't trust anyone. I didn't know that these staff at this place were trying to help me I was very suspicious. It was the old problem of trying to survive the best way you could as I felt all these people were against me. I was then transferred to a farm called [REDACTED] in Peterculter, Aberdeen. This was a farm run by the [REDACTED] family. They were very nice and treated me very well, but once again I couldn't settle down there. I returned to Falkirk. I had been under a social worker from Falkirk when I was in Aberdeen but the distance was proving to be a problem and I was never visited by her.
48. By now I was dealing with a different social worker from Falkirk called Helen Petrie. She tried to arrange for me to go to a place called Humble

Holdings, Kirknewton near Edinburgh. I couldn't go there initially so I was sent to the Cyrenian Hostel, 20 Broughton Place, Edinburgh. I think that Helen Petrie was friendly with someone who ran the Cyrenian Hostel. This hostel was run by the Dominican monks and the man I dealt with was called father Anthony Ross.

49. I got involved with the wrong crowd there as the hostel was full of ex-cons who were just out of prison. I got involved in petty crime and had a lot of trouble with the police.
50. I spent a day at Humble Holdings and it was in Kirknewton that I met my wife [REDACTED]. We spent a lot of time together but split up for a while because of all the bother I was getting into.
51. Because of all the trouble with the police in Edinburgh I was sent on a two year probation order to St Marys Chapel, Eskdale near Beauly, Inverness. I was under the care of Father Anthony Ross. The main reason I was sent so far away was because I was stealing cars and the law courts felt that if I was in the countryside I wouldn't have the same temptation or opportunity to steal a car. I contacted [REDACTED] and asked her to come up to Eskdale and we were married not long after that. I enjoyed the freedom of the countryside and we were happy there away from all the trouble of the big cities. I was not abused any more.
52. We did move back to Falkirk for a while so that I could try and find out why I was put into care. I dealt with a Les Cowan who was a social worker there. He tried to get my records but was then taken off my case and I didn't see him again. I returned to Inverness with my family because we couldn't get on with my family living in the Falkirk area.
53. About 10 years ago I was assigned a psychiatric nurse called Fiona Wylie. She advised me to go to the Court of Human Rights. She said that she would speak to her boss to get the paperwork. She came back once more and told me that the records didn't exist as they were destroyed. She was then taken away from us and I have had no contact with her since.

Impact

54. I have found it very hard to socialise with people and don't like being in crowds. I hate being in any hospital and get very agitated as I feel like I am back in the institution. I do not like anything to do with medical things. I feel that I constantly let people down.
55. Because of the sexual abuse I am unable to let anyone touch my mouth or examine the inside of it. I have great difficulty swallowing and often start to feel sick when I try to swallow food.

56. I never got an education. I am not good with my hands and could never hold down a proper job. I did try to train on a government scheme as a bus driver but I was unable to cope with the money side.
57. I have always been very soft with my children so that they wouldn't have to experience what I did. My wife did not understand what had happened to me and it did cause problems between us. When we had our children we were better able to cope as we had responsibilities which took up our time.
58. I have never been able to have a complete night's sleep. I have a lot of flashbacks to my time in the R.S.N.H they are always very unpleasant and cause me to get further agitated.
59. Inverness Social Work Department put me in touch with an organisation called Children First and we did get some support from them.
60. It feels like every time we had support and were making some progress it seemed to stop for no reason. Often it was because we were asking for our records and I suspected that the support was withdrawn because of this.
61. Since I have been in touch with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry arrangements have been made through our GP for further psychological support. All I really ever wanted was for someone to tell me why I was put into care when I was 4 years old. I want to see my records but have been unable to do so. I need help with this.

Records

62. I have tried on numerous occasions to get access to my social work records to find out how why I was put into the hospital in the first place. At various times I have asked several people including John Tolland, who worked for Falkirk Social Work Department, to try to get my records but he also failed. John Tolland was an older man and knew me when I was living in the Falkirk area.
63. I was in touch with my MP in Inverness. I think that his name was Ian Blackwood. I asked him if he could get the records but he referred us on to other organisations and the records never appeared.
64. About two years ago in 2014 I contacted a lawyer attached to a support group called Children First. I was going to get the lawyers firm to try and get the records on my behalf. My wife contacted the law firm online but they wanted to be paid up front and we could not afford their services.
65. Some years ago I learned that my mother was dying and that she wanted to see me. I went to her bed side and asked her why I was put into care. She couldn't give me an answer. She asked for forgiveness but I couldn't forgive her. After she passed away the rest of the family did not want me to go to the funeral.

Other information

66. I have not had any contact with the other residents at the R.S.N.H. who were there when I was. I didn't really make any friends there.
67. You have asked me about lessons to be learned and I would have to say that children should not be put into care. If they are there should be checks done as to the reasons and the institution that they are going to. There should be close monitoring of the children when they are there. You do not want what happened to me to be repeated I was very much "out of the frying pan and into the fire".
68. I would like to remain anonymous and would not like to give oral evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. My children do not know what happened to me. I now have 7 grandchildren and would not like them to know.
69. 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 statement are true.

Signed

PBU

Dated

13.9.2016