

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

KPU

Support person present: No

1. My name is KPU. I was actually born with the name KPU but my mum married and her husband formally adopted me through the courts and I changed my name to KPU. My date of birth is 1977. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Life before going into care**

2. I was born and brought up in Kirkcaldy and have always lived there apart from when I was in care. My mum is . My adopted dad is . They married sometime between 1977 and 1981. My dad went through the courts and adopted me when they got married. My adopted birth certificate shows my name as . I was known as the whole time I was in care.
3. I didn't have a good relationship with . He was a drinker and was violent to me and my mum. Sometimes he locked me in my room when my mum was at work. My mum and went on to have their own two children and that's when I was really pushed to the side. I got a lot of beatings from . I had been involved with social workers from a very young age but I can't remember their names.
4. I know that had told the social work department that I was playing up and I ended up in Playfield House which is part of Stratheden Hospital in Cupar and it was a mental hospital. I was in there from 1983 at the age of five. One member of staff I remember from there was Jim and he was a child psychologist. I saw him quite

a lot when my mum and [REDACTED] were later going through their divorce. [REDACTED], my adopted dad, didn't visit me at all when I was in there so my behaviour was better. The doctors didn't see what my behaviour was really like when I was with him. I was in there about four months then went back home again. Jim continued to see me and he came to my house. [REDACTED] was never there when Jim visited me. Jim suspected I had autism but I did not display all the signs for him to officially diagnose me with it.

5. The abuse from [REDACTED] got even worse. I got the blame for damaging a plastic ride-on car one time when I was with [REDACTED]'s sister. He battered me for that. When my mum heard, she knew that I wouldn't have been able to damage it like was described. [REDACTED]'s sister admitted she had done it. By that time I had already been battered. [REDACTED] always treated my brother and sister better than me, probably because I wasn't his.
6. [REDACTED]'s drinking got worse and he was spending all the money on alcohol. My mum, auntie and gran all went to the social work department to see about his attitude and violence towards me. [REDACTED] pleaded his case to the social work department and because his family came from a more respectable background, they believed him.
7. During my mum's and [REDACTED]'s divorce in 1986 my mum had a nervous breakdown and it took her about three years to recover. During that time I was living and being looked after by my auntie and my gran. My mum eventually got her own flat in January 1988 and I moved back in with her. During that time there were custody battles going on between my mum and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was making out to social workers that I was causing a lot of issues and causing a lot of arguments between him and my mum. Even after they got divorced [REDACTED] blamed me for causing them to split.
8. I had been going to school and I had been moved from school to school because at every school I was seen as disruptive and they couldn't deal with me. I am not sure how many schools I went to. I was getting bullied at school. If I got hit, I hit the bullies back. [REDACTED] would batter me for hitting them. If I didn't hit them back [REDACTED] would batter me for that. I couldn't win. When I was at school I was showing signs of having learning difficulties. I know that Jim, the child psychologist tried to get me involved with

some autism groups but the social work department blocked it because I was seen as too disruptive and violent. I didn't get to go.

9. I started back at school after the summer of 1988 and I was at Dunearn primary. That school isn't there anymore. One day, just before I was eleven, at break time, three boys who were the same age as me put barbed wire around my neck and tried to strangle me. The social work and the school got involved but they never did anything more about it. I was just told I was disruptive. I was well behind in my reading and writing and I was seen as a troublemaker. I was like this because I was dyslexic. At that time dyslexia wasn't acknowledged and I was seen as having learning difficulties. The school headmaster just said that boys will be boys.
10. When I was still ten, the social work department told me that they were putting me into Ovenstone children's home. They told my mum that I could go there voluntarily or they were going to 'section' me under the Mental Health Act. Whatever happened I was going to Ovenstone. I don't know if I was sectioned or not but others have told me they believe I was.

#### **Ovenstone Children's Home, Pittenweem, Fife**

11. I went to Ovenstone children's home around [REDACTED] 1988 when I was still ten. Ovenstone was run by Fife council and it was a residential school which sat in its own grounds. It was mostly boys in there but they started to introduce girls too. There were about fourteen boys from seven up to puberty who were residential. Day pupils from outside Ovenstone came into school at the start of the school day then left straight after school. Some of the day pupils only came to the school for very short periods. There would have been about fifty to sixty day pupils. I stayed at Ovenstone from Monday to Friday and went home at the weekends. Towards the end of my time there I lived at home with my mum and went to the school as a day pupil.
12. There were three main buildings. The east part was where I was in. West was where all the gym stuff was. In the main building there was a reception and then the

headmaster's office. There was a kitchen and a dining area. There was an area where shoes were kept then a shower cubicle. Upstairs there were baths and bedrooms. Some rooms had six beds, with three on either side. I was in one of these rooms. Other rooms were single rooms. Just off that were shower cubicles, toilets and sinks. Downstairs was a big sitting room where there was a television, a store for all the gym equipment. Outside was a store where the bikes and skateboards were kept. There was a separate school block.

13. I remember some of the staff in Ovenstone. Miss Budd was the receptionist. There were care staff and there were teachers. The care staff did different shifts so there was someone there all the time. Staff that I do remember were Joy and Vivien. I can't remember their last names but they were on the care side. Other staff were LUS and LUS and SNR Cameron Watson. One was SNR and one was a maths teacher. I can't remember which one was which. There were two women called Anne, an English teacher called Margaret Smith and a child psychologist attached to Ovenstone. I didn't have anything to do with Jim from Playfield House when I was in there.
14. When I was at Ovenstone I was given a dyslexia type test. When Margaret Smith saw the results she was furious that they had allowed me to be treated like I had been. The test showed that my reading was at primary one level. She wasn't surprised that it was recorded at Dunearn that I was disruptive and she said that this was me trying to have things explained to me. She helped me a lot. She told me that she wasn't able to record that I had autism and put me down as having learning difficulties. She said that was all she was allowed to do, as anything else would have been labelling and discrimination.
15. There was another social worker, whose name I can't remember, who dealt with me when I was at Ovenstone. He believed me that my adopted father was abusive and he tried to tell this to all the other social workers but they didn't believe him. He retired when I was at Ovenstone. He told me that he had been trying his best for me but no one would listen.



## **Routine at Ovenstone Children's Home**

### *First day*

16. I remember being driven to Ovenstone by a social worker. He was an older gentleman and he took over my case just before I went in there. He worked from the Kirkcaldy social work office. No one really told me where I was going or why. I remember another child showed me around the building.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

17. Whoever was on duty woke us up in the morning, usually about eight o'clock. I got up, washed and dressed then went down for breakfast. The day pupils arrived around half past eight then we had an assembly about ten to nine.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

18. There were staff who used to do the cooking at Ovenstone. The food was alright. We had fish every Friday. There were no issues with the food and it didn't matter if you didn't like or eat certain things.

### *Washing/bathing*

19. We showered every night or every second night. The staff would tell us when we were to shower. They didn't supervise us in the shower.

### *Clothing/uniform*

20. We just wore our own clothes and we wore what we wanted. There was no uniform. We had ribbons of a certain colour sewn into our clothes so we could recognise them.

### *Leisure time*

21. There were some activities after school. We got taken by one of the teachers to Wade Academy for martial arts and some went swimming. I can't remember her name but sometimes she let me drive her mini car in the grounds. There were other activities like football and arts and things like that at Ovenstone in the evening.

### *Trips and holidays*

22. I remember going on a trip for a weekend to just outside Edinburgh around April 1989. It was a teambuilding exercise. I can't remember anything about that weekend. It was just children from Ovenstone that went.

### *School*

23. I went to school classes in the children's home at Ovenstone. The school building was only a few yards away. There were three classrooms. The classes started at nine o'clock and finished between half past two and quarter to three. They tried to put me into mainstream school for a while but it didn't work out. I went one afternoon a week to Buckhaven primary school. Even when I went home to stay I still went to the school at Ovenstone for a while.
24. When I was at Ovenstone I started listening to audio books. Margaret Smith was amazed at what I could remember from the audio books. My comprehension age listening to reading was more like what it should have been for reading at my age. Margaret Smith wrote this on my records which then went on to Linwood.

### *Healthcare*

25. If we needed we went to see the doctor in Pittenweem. If we weren't well enough to go to the doctor he would come into Ovenstone. There was a mobile dentist van that used to come in to check our teeth.

### *Religious instruction*

26. There wasn't religious instruction in Ovenstone. We didn't have prayers before we went to bed or anything like that.

### *Work*

27. We didn't really have any chores to do apart from keeping our bed space tidy. Staff occasionally came in and checked that it was tidy.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

28. On my birthday I got a card signed by all the other children and staff. At Christmas I went home to my mum but we still got a present.

### *Visits*

29. My gran came in to visit me once, and only because she had access to a car. My mum never came in to see me. I think it was too far for her to travel. The social workers came in when it was time for my reviews. I never actually went to these meetings which took place every three to six months. I might have spoken to the social worker after the review briefly and he would ask me how I was getting on. I can't remember his name but he retired in 1992. I didn't write to any of my family and no one wrote to me. I managed to occasionally speak to my mum on the phone.

### *Personal possessions*

30. We were given pocket money. We got thirty pence every week. Everyone got exactly the same to be fair. Some of the parents had more money than others so the staff always made sure we all got the same amount of money to last the week.

### *Running away*

31. I never ran away from Ovenstone. It was too far away from anywhere and I wouldn't have known where to go.

### *Discipline*

32. Ovenstone had a points system for discipline. You would start off at the beginning of the day with eight points. If you were good, went to class and did reading or chores you would be given points. If you did something that was naughty or bad, points would be taken from you. If you ended up with less than twelve points at the end of the day, you got sent to your bed early. Good behaviour was rewarded by giving us points. If you did something that was really good you would be given a token. This token would entitle you to an extra candy bar on movie nights. Other punishments if you lost points might be that you would lose a fifteen minute break at school and you would have to stay in the classroom and do class work. Staff kept a record of points in a book. Looking back I think it was quite a fair system.
33. I got sent to bed once that I remember. Things were happening at home and I was lashing out at somebody. I just didn't understand what was going on at home. The staff knew what was going on and at some point they phoned and spoke to my mum. She told the staff about what was happening with [REDACTED] so they tried to help me.

### *Bed Wetting*

34. Some of the boys wet the bed at Ovenstone. The staff didn't make an issue of it and it was just cleaned up. There was no punishment. I don't think I ever wet the bed there.

### **Abuse at Ovenstone Children's Home**

35. There was a boy in Ovenstone called [REDACTED] who had his own bedroom. He was about the same age as me. He bullied me and he bullied all of the other children in there. He

punched and kicked me sometimes. He sometimes watched the other boys when they were in the shower. I never really thought anything about it at the time but looking back it was wrong. I don't know why but [REDACTED] was never allowed to sleep in the dorm with the other boys. He was always in his own room. I saw in the news earlier this year that [REDACTED] had been sent to prison.

36. There was another boy there called [REDACTED] and he was slightly older than me. He had epilepsy and some of the other children used to bully him to try and induce an epileptic fit. I can't name these other children. [REDACTED] was only there for a few months. The staff did their best to deal with the other children if they saw it happening.
37. Staff at Ovenstone were good to me. They had a lot to deal with because they had the aftermath of me having been strangled with the barbed wire and all the problems I was having at home, because of [REDACTED] my adopted dad, and because my mum and [REDACTED]'s divorce was finalised when I was there. The staff helped explain a lot of things to me about what adoption and what other things actually meant. There was no abuse from the staff when I was in Ovenstone.
38. I remember one time a female member of care staff took me back to her house. She lived in the grounds but I can't remember her name. This was about the time I found out that [REDACTED] had adopted me. She said she wanted to explain adoption to me but couldn't do it at school. Together we went through a book which was about adoption. I might have been in her house for three hours. Nothing happened when I was there but looking back I don't think it was appropriate for her to take me back to her house.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Ovenstone Children's home**

39. The staff were aware of [REDACTED] bullying the other children and they dealt with it as best as they could. If they saw something happening they would break it up and stop it from developing but they couldn't be there all the time. I went to them and told them what [REDACTED] was doing and they dealt with it. I can't remember who I told.

### **Leaving Ovenstone Children's Home**

40. Ovenstone was only for children up to the age of puberty. When you reached puberty you had to leave. When I was at that age I was told that I was going to go to the first place that became available, which happened to be Linwood Hall school. I didn't have any say in this matter. I went to Linwood Hall [REDACTED] in 1990. I was twelve. Stanley Hall near Dalgety Bay would have been a better place for me to go to because it dealt specifically with children with disabilities. Because the social work department would not recognise that I had autism, and were fighting against me being diagnosed with it, I could not go to Stanley Hall.
41. By the time I left Ovenstone I would say I was in a much better position than I had been when I arrived. They had sorted a lot of things out for me when I was there. This was all undone when I went to Linwood. I know that Margaret Smith had written things in my records about my reading and writing but it was all ignored.

### **Linwood Hall School, Leven, Fife**

42. Linwood hall was run by Fife council. It was called a care home for children with special needs but it was actually run as a residential school for children aged eleven up to about sixteen. Children resident there had a range of issues. Some had ADHD, anger issues or were involved in drugs. The fact that it was a care home for children with a history of violence was hidden from the locals. They always played down the behavioural issues.
43. The children were divided into units. Forth was the name of the unit for the younger children. Tay was for the older children aged up to sixteen. The girls were in a completely separate building and they were the Clyde unit. There were eleven boys in Forth. Tay had between six and eight boys and there were about six to eight girls in Clyde.

44. The headmaster when I arrived was a doctor but I can't remember his name. He lived in St Andrews. Jim Henderson, or his name might have been Jim Heard, was another teacher and he was good. There was a member of care staff called Jim. He was an ex-soldier and he was my key worker. When I was at Linwood I had issues with my autism, and especially my reading and writing. Jim, my key worker, tried to get me tested for autism but he wasn't allowed. All the other staff blocked him. Another member of staff called **KNH** was one of the team leaders. There were two teams.
45. When I was at Ovenstone I always tried to hide my autism and be normal. It didn't really work because I couldn't maintain this outward appearance. This continued into Linwood Hall where I tried to be normal.
46. When you came in the main gates into the grounds you could see the Clyde unit where the girls lived. It was two cottages which were joined together to make one big house. Then there was the coach house which contained a gym full of weight lifting equipment. There was a walled garden where vegetables were grown which we ate in the house. Further up was the rear of the kitchens and the delivery area. Round from that was the main entrance.
47. When you went in the double doors at the main entrance there was a staircase leading up to the first floor. On the ground floor was the headmaster's office, the kitchen and a big dining room. Opposite the headmaster was a door which led to the stores and a kiln where we did pottery. To the left of the front double doors was the staff office and a big room where we had assemblies. Next was a science lab, a single toilet then there was a cage where the shoes were locked. Beside that were lockers and a door leading outside. Next to that were stairs leading upstairs. Beside that was the deputy manager's office then there were some classrooms. On the other side were showers and toilets then the laundry.
48. Upstairs on the first landing was a door which led to the Forth dormitories, bedrooms and showers. The bedroom that I was in had bars on the window. It seemed to be the only room with bars on the windows and I don't know why. Beside this room was the toilet where there were two sinks and two showers. Next to that was a sitting room, a

storage cupboard then the staff bedroom. Next to that was a big storage cupboard where all the clothes were locked.

49. The Tay dormitories were opposite the Forth dormitories. In there were six toilet cubicles and sinks. The main dorm was on the left where there were two sinks, a toilet and two showers. You had to ask for permission to use their toilets if you weren't in Tay. Tay had their own sitting room, staff room and other bedrooms and a store for the gym. Next to that was a gym. The local community centre was being built during the time I was there so members of the public were able to come in and use this gym for playgroups and other things.
50. Just outside Tay were storage cupboards and another stairwell. This led to a corridor and rooms above Forth where there were more storage rooms then a room with a model railway, Scalextric and a pool table. Opposite was a room with camping equipment and airguns. Above Tay were the air rifle and archery ranges. There were stairs and ladders from there which led up onto the circular roof terrace.
51. When you came out the side of the main building there were three separate classrooms. Then there was the assault course which we knew as 'Jungle Gym'. Through the trees about fifty yards away was Clyde. There was a car park and a small hill which led to a big field. Opposite that was the primary school. There was another building beside the entrance gate which was like a house. Inside was a kitchen and another classroom. This was used more by the pupils who came in during the day. They often just came in for a morning or an afternoon.

### **Routine at Linwood Hall School, Leven, Fife**

#### *First day*

52. I remember arriving at Linwood. I was taken to my room and told where I was going to sleep. I remember I was expected to make friends very quickly and there was pressure



to fit in straight away. I wasn't given any help to try and settle in. Because of my communication barriers I had difficulty making friends.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

53. We got up about eight o'clock in the morning and we would shower and get dressed then go down for breakfast. Often when we were having breakfast the day pupils would be arriving. Some would come by taxi. We then went to school which started at nine then broke for lunch at twelve. After lunch we would go back into class at one and then school would finish about half past three. The day pupils would leave and go home.
54. After our activities in the evening, at nine we would go back to our units and have some supper. We would then get ready for bed. Forth would be in their beds by half past nine. Through the night there was a security guard in the building. I think he was there to look after us and stop us from running away. His niece had been the nurse at Linwood before I arrived.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

55. The girls from Clyde would eat their meals within their house. The boys from Tay and Forth ate their meals together around five pm in the big dining room. Some staff would eat with us but only certain boys would be allowed to sit beside them. The staff would tell us all where to sit. It was obvious the staff had their favourites.
56. There were several vegetables that I didn't like so when I was taking a plate of food I would pick one with the least vegetables on it. The staff would usually tell me that if I didn't finish my main course I wouldn't get a pudding. Otherwise there was no real punishment.

#### *Washing/bathing*

57. Beside my bedroom was a toilet and there were two showers in there. You weren't allowed to lock the toilet door, even if you were at the toilet, in case someone wanted

to have a shower. There was no privacy. You had to use your own toilet and couldn't use the one nearest the sitting room. The staff had their own toilet and you weren't allowed to use it.

58. We didn't get any privacy to have a shower. There were two showers side by side in cubicles and there was a toilet. The showers had curtains. You weren't allowed to lock the bathroom door even when you came out the shower.

#### *Clothing/uniform*

59. At Linwood we wore coloured sweatshirts depending on what group we were in. Boys in the Forth unit, which is where I was, wore red sweatshirts. Tay wore black sweatshirts and the girls in Clyde wore a pinkish-red sweatshirt. Day children who came in for the day wore green sweatshirts. The bright coloured clothes I got away with wearing at Ovenstone were deemed to be unacceptable at Linwood. I have never had any sort of dress sense and always wore things that were comfortable. The staff at Linwood decided what I should wear. Our shoes were kept in a locked cage. We wore slippers all the time in the house. If you wanted to go outside you had to get a staff member to unlock the cage to get your shoes.
60. When I was at Ovenstone small ribbons were sewn into my clothes so I could recognise them. I still had some of these clothes when I was at Linwood. At Linwood there was no similar system for identifying clothes. Our clothes were washed in the laundry but you had to be there when the clothes came back otherwise other boys would steal your clothes. Clothes were often stolen.

#### *Leisure time*

61. Between six and nine o'clock during the week we had activities. We could go swimming, archery, shooting or walking at Falkland Hill. Some teachers would do extra classes like pottery and some would let you catch up if you were behind in your class work.

62. Initially I got home every weekend. At some point a boy came to Linwood Hall from Aberdeen and he stayed over at the weekend. After he came they introduced 'residential weekends' so some of the boys stayed on these residential weekends to keep him company. I stayed over at the weekend quite often. When I did get out at the weekends I went to my mums. Sometimes I would only be allowed home twice in a month. The residential weekends were made out to be team building weekends. One time I was stopped from going home at the last minute. My mum phoned the school to find out where I was because I hadn't gone home. I got the blame for not telling her, even though the staff wouldn't give me money to phone her.

### *School*

63. There was one class where there was learning support where we got help but there was just one teacher in the mainstream classes. I struggled in these classes and couldn't keep up with the work. There were only three classes which I enjoyed. They were woodwork, because it was practical, maths, because it was logical, and home economics, again because it was practical. The woodwork teacher was Jim Henderson and he made everything fun. The science teacher would sometimes use Jim Henderson's woodwork clamps and would clamp your thumbs to the table. He did it in such a way that it didn't feel like a punishment. If you managed to escape he would give you £5. One boy managed and the teacher kept his word and gave him £5.
64. They tried to send me to mainstream school again when I was fourteen. I went to Buckhaven High school for short spells in the week, maybe once a week. After a while they wanted me to go more often but for some reason Linwood children's home refused.

### *Healthcare*

65. There had been a nurse at Linwood before I arrived but she had left. She wasn't replaced. I saw a local doctor when I developed shingles. This caused quite a problem because they had to get permission to access my hospital medical records to confirm

that I had previously had chicken pox. This had to be done through the social work department.

66. At some point the staff gave me exercises to do just to get me out of the way. They told me they thought it would help my dyslexia. It was believed that improving balance would reduce the symptoms of dyslexia. They made me stand on one leg and put my arm out to the side and keeping my arm straight rotate my arm in small circles. I was to do it for ten minutes then rotate my arm the other way for a further ten minutes. I then had to swap feet and do it with the other arm. I was given an exercise sheet with the exercises. No one else was given exercises to do and I had to do them on my own. I had to do this three times every day. I did this for around three or four months until they realised it wasn't working. I can't remember the names of the members of staff who made me do this.

#### *Work*

67. I was often picked to help out setting up the gym for the playgroups. This was when the others were in the English class. They did this to get me out the way. We didn't have any other chores to do really.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

68. Birthdays and Christmas were very low key. There was no Christmas tree or decorations put up. We usually just got given a selection box. I went home over the Christmas holidays. Nothing really happened at birthdays. There was no card or cake. Some of the staff might have wished me happy birthday but that was all.

#### *Visits/Inspections*

69. My mum was in hospital at some point and the staff took me to visit her. I was taken in a staff car by a male member of care staff but I can't remember who. On the way he went to visit somebody at their house and I had to wait outside in the car for an hour

and a half until he eventually came out. There was no radio or anything in the car. I had to just sit there.

- 70. The social workers came at other times for reviews but I wasn't invited to these so I don't know what was discussed. Nothing changed as a result of these meetings.
- 71. There was a public payphone I could use to contact my mum. If I wanted to use it I had to get the staff to give me some of my money which was kept in the staff room.

#### *Personal possessions*

- 72. Beside the beds were cabinets which had two drawers. We could lock the top drawer but the staff could access this at any time as they had keys. Our clothes were in a wardrobe but there wasn't much in there.

#### *Running away*

- 73. I never ran away from Linwood. I thought about it but didn't know how I would have got back to Kirkcaldy from there, so I didn't.

#### *Discipline*

- 74. Linwood started a similar points system to that at Ovenstone. It wasn't in place initially when I went there. They didn't send you to bed early or anything like that. If you were caught using a toilet you weren't supposed to use you would lose points.

#### *Bed Wetting*

- 75. The first few nights I was there I had a plastic sheet on my bed. I think this was normal practice for all the new boys when they arrived. If there were any accidents it was just cleaned up. The staff didn't make a big deal if anyone wet the bed. I didn't wet the bed when I was there and I am not aware if any of the other boys in my room did.

### **Abuse at Linnwood Hall School, Leven, Fife**

76. I was told by one teacher at Linwood that I was unteachable. She used to make me sit in a corner and told me I could do anything I wanted as long as I didn't disrupt the rest of the class. She taught English but I can't remember her name.
77. One evening in 1991 we went out on a trip to Falkland Hill. This is where things went really downhill for me after this night. On the way back we stopped at the shops in Falkland. **KNH** the team leader, who was driving the minibus drove away and left me on my own at the shop. I didn't know what to do. I started walking and ended up walking about two and a half miles in the pitch dark and found myself at a farm. There were no street lights. It was at the start of winter so it was cold. The people at the farm phoned the school and **KNH** drove the minibus back down to collect me. When I got back to Linwood all the other boys said that I had spoiled their night and I got a hard time from them. Some of them punched me. I was sent to my room by a member of staff but can't remember who it was, while all the others were having hot chocolate. I was on my own and I was upset and crying.
78. **KNH** later came into the room and he was shouting and bawling at me and he raised his hands and I am sure he was going to hit me. Just at that moment Jim Henderson came in and **KNH** must have seen him so didn't hit me. Jim Henderson told **KNH** to go and said that he would deal with me. I was curled up in a ball and was crying. I was confused because I didn't know what I had done that was wrong. Jim Henderson told me that I hadn't done anything wrong. That night a couple of boys hit me through the night when I was in my bed. I don't know who it was that hit me. A short time after this incident **KNH** left Linwood Hall. After **KNH** left, if any of the other kids started picking on me, the staff turned a blind eye. It was almost like they were saying that I deserved to be punished for making **KNH** leave. Jim Henderson shielded me from some of the other staff after **KNH** left. He knew I was vulnerable and he gave me a lot of support and tried to help me. He subsequently died of a heart attack.
79. I couldn't swim when I went to Linwood. I had been in the swimming pool at school when I was at Ovenstone but I was able to stand on the bottom of the pool so I was



fine in there. At Linwood I asked the sports teacher, GLQ, if I could get armbands. He told me that at my age I didn't need armbands. He took me to the deep end of the pool and pushed me in. I went under the water. I was panicking but I managed to do the doggy paddle to get to the side of the pool. I think I was an embarrassment to the sports teacher and he took a real dislike to me. I wasn't very good at any sport. This teacher also taught geography.

80. When I was at Linnwood I did the Duke of Edinburgh award in 1992. When I was at one of the camps near Stirling, one of the other boys held a lit cigarette against my chest on top of my T-shirt. It burnt a hole through the shirt and burned my chest. The material actually melted onto the burned flesh on my chest. The boy was a pupil from Linwood and was around my age but I can't remember his name. I didn't get any medical attention.
81. Another time, still in 1992, it was break time at school and I was playing outside in the grounds of Linwood at a bit called the 'jungle gym'. It was like an assault course. Three girls grabbed me. Two girls held my head and my jaw and another girl put a lit cigarette down my throat. Other girls just stood and watched. I can't remember any of the girls' names. The girl that did it to me, who was about sixteen, thought it was hilarious. There was no reason for them to do this and there was no lead up to it. They just thought it was funny. When the girls were coming towards me there was a member of care staff there called Tina. She was facing towards me too then conveniently turned away so she didn't see what the girls did. She must have known that something was going to happen but didn't want to get involved and didn't want to stop it.
82. The back of my throat was red. I told Tina later that I needed some medical attention. She just told me that I was to go away. She said the girls didn't smoke so I had made it up.
83. When I was on one of the residential weekends when I stayed at Linwood this was when the worst incident happened that really affected me. We had eaten our tea and were in the sitting room playing while the staff were having their tea. I was getting hit and threatened. The other kids told me that if I didn't show my private parts I was going

to get hit even more. I tried to leave and I went in to speak to the staff to tell them. Before I could tell them anything they told me to leave the room as this was their quiet time. I had to go back and they were still threatening me and the punches were getting more painful. Eventually I had to give in and I showed my private parts. It was the only way that I could see that the punching would stop. Later on the staff came looking for me and dragged me into a room. I can't remember who the staff were but I know that Pearl was the member of staff in charge of that group, although she wasn't actually there. They asked me why I had shown my private parts. They told me that I could be charged by the police with flashing. I tried to tell them I was bullied into doing it. About two hours later the same staff came in and told me that they weren't going to contact the police but were going to tell the headmaster. They said they were going to tell him that I was just trying to 'fit in'. They denied that I had gone in and tried to speak to them when they were eating.

84. On the Monday morning I went in front of the headmaster. I can't remember his name but he was a doctor. I told him what had happened. I was in tears. He said that he knew the truth. He had spoken to a couple of other boys who had told them that I had been bullied into it but by the time they left his office they had been encouraged to agree with the staff that I had done it just to fit in.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Linnwood Hall School, Leven, Fife**

85. When I was at the camp and my chest was burned I told a female member of staff that I had been burned. I can't remember her name but she organised the Duke of Edinburgh trips. She later went on to work at Stratheden hospital. She was also a foster mother in Buckhaven or Methil. There was another boy there when my chest was burned. I can't remember his name. He tried to tell the same member of staff but he was told to keep his mouth shut. He was told that if he mentioned it to anyone he wouldn't get his Duke of Edinburgh award. I told the same member of staff when I was back at Linnwood that the burn on my chest was really sore. I told her it was burning and really painful. I needed medical attention. She just told me to go away and play.



86. When I was back at Linnwood at the end of the camp the T-shirt was taken from me and destroyed. I was told not to speak about the incident to anyone and not to take part in any sport until it was healed. By the end of the week the burn wasn't healing and it was so painful I had to rip the melted material and scab off my chest so it would bleed and heal. I was on the ground and I was in tears. I went to a member of staff and asked for help because of the pain. I was told to go away. I can't remember who this was.
87. After my chest had been burned I should have been going home that weekend but at the end of the week the same female member of staff who ran the Duke of Edinburgh came to see me. She lifted up my T-shirt and saw the red mark on my chest. She said that I wasn't allowed to go home that weekend and wouldn't be allowed to do sport until it had completely healed. This was to hide it from my mum. I think she spoke to GLQ [REDACTED] the PE Teacher and they agreed that I didn't do sport. Another member of staff, but I can't remember who, told me that I wasn't allowed to tell my mum about the burn. I was told that if I told my mum there would be consequences and I wouldn't be allowed to go home at the weekends to see her.
88. When a lit cigarette was put down my throat I told a member of staff, but she just told me to go away. I was told it was just children playing. My throat was red and sore but she didn't care. She said that none of the children smoked so it was impossible for me to have had a cigarette put down my throat. I can't remember who this member of staff was.
89. I tried to tell staff at Linwood that I was being bullied and what was going on. I can't remember who all the staff were that I told. They just told me that I didn't understand. I am sure that all the staff knew that I was being bullied by the other children but they just turned a blind eye to it. They just said that kids were being kids.
90. When I was in one of my school classes I tried to tell a teacher. I can't remember their name. I told them about my throat being burned. They didn't say anything apart from that I would be nice and quiet for a while.

91. I was up in front of the headmaster on a couple of occasions. I told him what was going on. I told him about the bullying and the cigarette burns. He told me that he was powerless and he didn't run the school. He said he was just a figurehead and it was the care staff who ran it. He had to take their word for anything that happened before mine. Yet again I wasn't being believed. He knew I was telling the truth but he had to back his staff.

### **Leaving Linwood Hall School, Leven, Fife**

92. After the incident at Linwood when I was accused of 'flashing' my private parts, the staff wanted me out of the school as quickly as they could. I think they realised at that point that this was a good opportunity for me to get tested for autism.
93. I left Linwood in 1993 when I was fifteen and a half and from there I went back to Playfield House. This was about a month before the standard grade exams. My mum had been told that if I didn't go there voluntarily I would be sectioned under the Mental Health Act. I don't know if I was sectioned or not. At some point when I was at Playfield there were a couple of boys there who had been at Linwood after me. They told me that some of the teachers had told them about me, naming me, and saying that I had 'flashed' just to fit in. I found out that the teachers were telling children this right up to 1999 when the school closed.

### **Playfield House**

94. I went back to the adolescent unit at Playfield House. I stayed in Playfield House from Monday to Friday then went home to my mum's for the weekends. There was one member of staff I recognised from the first time I had been there. She didn't recognise me initially but I remembered her nickname which was 'Toot' because she used to always sound her horn when she drove into Playfield and every time she left.

95. There was a school class in Playfield and there were four or five other children who went to the class. Although I went to these classes I went back to Linwood Hall school to do my standard grade exams.
96. After that summer, when I had been there around a year, and was still in Playfield House, I was enrolled in a special needs course at Elmwood College in Cupar. I completed that course in the summer of 1994. We got taught cookery, and did maths and English and even worked on a farm. After I started that course I went back home to stay with my mum and lived with her after that. I occasionally got visited at home by the social workers but they just seemed to write me off by saying that I was at the college and everything was going okay for me.
97. When I was living with my mum I got a lot of hassle and was bullied by my neighbour. He was punching me when he saw me. One time he ran me off the road when I was on my bike. The police were involved but they said there were no witnesses. I told the social workers but they weren't interested. The police told me they had been in touch with the social workers and they had told the police that I was making it all up. They just told me that I had a terrific imagination. I was still at Elmwood college at that time.
98. I was still having problems with my step dad [REDACTED] and I was telling the social workers but again they weren't interested. After I finished my course I carried on living with my mum. At some point I went to Contact Point and Express Group. Because I was only sixteen I couldn't really get involved with them because they are both mental health groups for adults. I was referred to these groups by the social work department but they didn't want me there and they forced me out after about three months.

### **Life after being in care**

99. Social work subsequently referred me to another group called FACET which is a mental health group. I went there a couple of days a week between 1995 and 1997. There I did things like woodwork and pottery. The rest of the time I just spent at home watching videos. FACET then put me in touch with SAMH which is the Scottish

Association for Mental Health. I was with this group from 1997 to 1999. With them I was doing things like community gardening three days a week. I got some money for doing this but it was only enough to pay for my lunch. In 1991 after I left SAMH I went to Fife college and I got an HND in electrical engineering.

100. It took me eight years to get a flat. I needed help and support and it took all that time before I got one. The council wouldn't give me a flat until I had all the necessary support in place. Scottish Autism provided me with support. Circles Network eventually helped me get keys to a flat in December 2005. I was involved in some projects at college but have never really had any other jobs. In the last year I have been doing voluntary work at a local charity shop. It is closing in March 2020 so I am not sure what I will do after that.
101. I was diagnosed with Aspergers in 1992. I have high function autism. This means that facial expressions and emotions don't mean anything to me. I have an above average IQ but have difficulty recognising or describing any feelings or emotions. I don't really have many friends. Because of my condition I find difficulty keeping them.
102. I am still under the social work department and have been as long as I can remember. I still have a review meeting with them once a year. Every time I ask for referrals to mental health groups but they refuse to refer me. They have just recently cut the number of hours that I am getting support at home. I don't think that they try to help me.

### **Impact**

103. I have never been able to move on after I left Linwood. Social work have always held me back because they refused to refer me to mental health groups. I feel I have been left on my own since I left Linwood and only see a social worker once a year. All they want to do is cut back my support.

104. My education could have been better if my autism had been diagnosed earlier. It was suspected for a while but wasn't properly diagnosed. My dyslexia was only diagnosed when I went to Ovenstone and things were sorted out for me. This didn't follow on when I went to Linwood, and things just got worse.
105. I think about my time in Linwood quite a lot, especially over the last five or six years. This was not a happy time for me. Sometimes certain story lines in television programmes bring things back to me. Because I have been refused so many things like referrals to mental health groups I have given up and don't bother now because I realise it is going to be a waste of time.
106. A few years ago a boy came to do some work in my house and he said he recognised my name. I told him I was at Linwood Hall. He told me that he was at Linwood Hall after I left and the staff had told everyone that I had been flashing my private parts. This upset me.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

107. I have frequently tried to tell the social work department that I was being bullied when I was in care. I was just told that I can't be abused emotionally or physically because I don't have the mental or emotional capabilities to understand abuse. I can't remember who the social workers were that I tried to tell.
108. As I got older it became clear to me that the social work department covered things up. They didn't want to admit the mistakes that they had made in the past. By mistakes I mean by not recognising my autism and realising why I was, in their eyes, being disruptive, and not believing that I was being bullied at school and not causing issues at home.
109. The incident where I was strangled with the barbed wire at Dunearn primary was reported to the police by my mum. Apparently the social work department told the police not to investigate it and that they would deal with it. I know that my mum spoke

to the mother of one of the boys who had strangled me and she said that neither her or her son had been contacted by the social work department or the school about the incident. The boy's mother had contacted the social work department and was told that as far as they were concerned the incident didn't happen. This was despite the fact that they saw the marks on my neck from the barbed wire.

110. I never reported anything else to the police. The social workers would just have got involved and told the police that I had a good imagination and had made it all up.

## **Records**

111. When I went to Playfield House on the second occasion when I was nearly sixteen, most of the staff had changed and they said they couldn't find any records to confirm I had been there before. They said that the social work department had never told them that I had been there before. Staff told me that they tried to get my records from the previous time when I had been there ten years earlier but were blocked from them. I never saw the social workers when I was at Playfield House because they obviously considered me to be someone else's problem.
112. When I was sixteen, at Contact Point which was one of the mental health groups for adults, I met a woman there who used to be married to my grandfather's brother. Her name was [REDACTED]. They divorced in 1968 or 69. Apparently in my records she is recorded as being my auntie, and if there were any problems at the centre with me, she was to be contacted first and not my mum. I have complained to the social work about this apparent data breach but they are not interested. All I know about this woman is that she used to be my great auntie. I complained about this 'data breach' and it is still being investigated.
113. I went to my GP to get my records when I was 38 and I was referred by them to Stratheden Hospital. I contacted Stratheden hospital and I saw a cognitive behavioural therapist and other experts and they have tried to get my full records but they have all been denied. They tried to find a bit about my history and the places I have been but

they were refused access to my records. I went through a period of being aggressive and I went to them for help. They said they couldn't help me because they couldn't find out anything about me from my records. Without that information they said they couldn't refer me to an appropriate group.

114. Circles Network are an organisation like the Citizens Advice Bureau but deal with people with disabilities and mental health issues. They help me communicate with the social work department and try to make sure my voice gets heard. They have tried to help me get my records. Because no one can get access to my files the Mental Health Department cannot help me. I have been told that they cannot get access to my files so there is no chance of me being able to get access to them if I tried. They have said that I cannot get access to my records because they are a danger to my own mental health. I think if I got my records this would prove that there had been a cover up so that is why they won't give them to me.
115. About ten years ago I tried through the Freedom of Information Act to get my social records but I was told by the social work department that under the mental health act it may be detrimental to my health for them to give them to me so I was refused.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

116. In the future I would like to see that where a child is diagnosed with possible mental health issues, that the social work department don't have the final say about that child. Before any decision can be made there must be consultation with mental health officers. There has to be agreement by both of these professions and the child given a say. There has to be evidence found from more than one place. I think the social work department have too much power.

### **Other information**

117. I think the social work department found placements for me at mental health groups just to get me out their way.
118. When I was about twenty or twenty one I met a social worker who had previously dealt with me. She said that she had tried to refer me to other mental health groups but her bosses refused. She had said that my records were like a minefield and nobody wanted to touch them. She told me that she had tried to see my records and most of them were missing. She said she was only aware that I had been at Linwood because the notes from one review meeting had been put in the wrong place. Another retired male social worker has told me the same thing. I can't remember either of these social workers names. One of them told me that when I moved from Kirkcaldy social work office to Glenrothes, six year's worth of information has gone missing from my social work files.
119. I heard around 2000 that the previous headmaster who had been at Linnwood Hall six months before I arrived had been charged and sent to jail. He was convicted of sexual abuse of children in Linwood Hall. I can't remember his name. He subsequently died in prison. When I was at Linwood Hall I heard that about a month before I arrived the nurse there had been raped within the school. It was never mentioned who the person was that raped her. Her father was a police officer and he was told not to pursue the reason why the incident was not being investigated. I later learned that it had all been covered up.
120. I feel that from the age of five as I went through various places in the social care system that social work started to cover up more things that happened to me. I have been told that I am too 'normal' for the autistic groups and too normal for the vulnerable groups. I have been stuck in the middle for a number of years. I have been pushed from department to department.
121. I have given up trying to get information from the social work department. About two years ago I asked them to refer me to join a mental health group. They refused and



said that my social work file was like a minefield and nobody wanted to touch it for fear of upsetting those higher up the tree in the social work department. The social work never believe me when I tell them anything. I have reported other things that I had seen to them. They have just told me many times that I have a brilliant imagination, and that I make things up just to get attention.

122. 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. <sup>KPU</sup>  .....

Dated. 9-1-2020 .....