

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KCW

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is KCW. My date of birth is 1979. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Edinburgh at the Simpsons Memorial hospital. I believe my surname was KCW then. I was adopted when I was four years old. I have no memories from before I was adopted. I read in my adoption papers that I was abused as a baby and was in Edinburgh sick kids and Yorkhill sick kids for a while with a brain injury and six or seven fractures. My adoption papers said I was then fostered with the .
3. My adoptive parents were and . We lived at . I can even remember the phone number. I lived with my brother who was also adopted. was twelve years older than me. My parents were also foster parents and I had three foster brothers called and . They would come and go from our home and kept in contact even after they were sixteen.
4. I started school when I was four and a half at Juniper Green. School was alright then, I quite liked it. I did not have a lot of friends. I just stuck to one person.
5. Life at home was alright. My dad was a bit authoritarian. He was never a dad he was always a police man. He never left his work at the door. Him and my mum argued a

lot. One would move out and then come back and then the other would move out and come back.

6. My mum was diagnosed with cancer when I was ten years old. My mum explained that my dad was under a lot of stress as he was working double to keep us going. He was tired as he was working shifts. Mum was a nurse but that and fostering stopped when she got cancer.
7. I started Curry High School but I was skipping school to be with my mum for her cancer treatment. The truancy officer would come to our door but I would hide from them until someone more official came with a uniform. My attendance was low so that is when social work became involved.
8. At first my mum would get respite for a weekend or a week and I went into care so she could get a break and get her strength up. My dad was not bothered and took nothing to do with it. I went to a place in Morningside called Holy Corner. I think it was to do with the Church of Scotland. A lot of it was in the school holiday times. Secondary Institution
Secondary Institutions - to be published later
9. My mum died when I was twelve, she was cremated and a month later we moved to Ayr. My dad had family there. My grandparents, aunties and uncles. My mum and dad were from [REDACTED] My brother was older then and did not come with us.
10. We stayed in a caravan for a month and then got a house. I was upset and scared. It didn't affect me that my mum had died until we moved to Ayr. My dad took early retirement and had a part time job for a wee while but started drinking a lot. It turned out his family did not like that I was adopted. One gran spoke to us but I did not see the rest of them. We didn't get on.
11. I was about thirteen when I started running away a lot and getting into trouble with the police. The police were alright at speaking to you but I wouldn't speak to them when I had a police man for a dad. One time I was cheeky to a police officer in front of my

dad and he slapped me afterwards on the ear. He thought I was being disrespectful, which I probably was. He had rings on and the back of my ear was all bruised and swollen. My guidance teacher who I got on quite well with saw the bruised ear and social work became involved again. I remember getting half way out the gates at school and they were waiting for me. My dad got a police caution for that.

12. I had a social worker called Beverly Bone. She got me involved with another woman called Lynn Gilmour after I had the bruised ear. They asked if my dad had hit me but I said no, so I was allowed to go back and stay with him. Lynn was described as a place of safety for me and put me on the at risk register for child protection. I think my dad got in contact with them as well because I was running away all the time.
13. I was running away with other kids and by myself. I hated home. I hated Ayr. I hated my dad. I hated our house. I hated everything. I just wanted to go back home to Edinburgh where the memories of my mum were. I knew every nook and cranny in Edinburgh.
14. I went to Prestwick Academy at first but then I stopped going. I would wait until my dad had gone to work and then I'd sneak back into the house. I was taken to a children's panel as I was not going to school and getting into trouble. It was just petty crimes like shoplifting. My dad came to the panel. There were quite a lot of panels after that.
15. No one told me anything. All I knew was that if I did something wrong I was taken for a McDonalds. I never took much notice of what they said as I had heard all the lectures from my dad. It was easier to do things wrong than it was right. I learnt that I was rewarded with a McDonalds for my wrongdoing. The social worker was my meal ticket.
16. The children's reporter referred me to a psychologist in Irvine after I was caught shoplifting again. That psychologist was the only person who asked me how I was feeling. I was going to children's panels in Alloway Place and they told me I would end up in a youth offenders if I did not start behaving.

17. The psychologist report said he was worried about my safety. I was taken to a place called Sutherland House for two or three weeks for a break. The social worker took me there and back. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
18. Things just spiralled out of control and I was sent back to the children's panel. My dad went completely downhill and never done anything in the end. He just lay there and blamed it all on my mum's death. That is when I was sent to Ladyfield Hospital in Dumfries.

Ladyfield Children's Hospital, Dumfries

19. A physiatrist recommended I go to a psychiatric unit for six weeks as I was self harming [REDACTED] I wanted to kill my dad and that was the last straw. I was thirteen or fourteen. I was happy to get away from Ayr and my dad at first. I think my dad was a bit upset but relieved too as he thought I would be safer there and he could get himself better. I don't think he ever did get better.
20. My dad took me to Ladyfield East at first for a day visit and then took me back home. They showed me around and I spent most of the day talking to doctors about the daily programme.

Ladyfield West Children's Hospital, Dumfries

21. When it was time for me to go to Ladyfield my dad took me. There were no beds at Ladyfield East and I was sent to Ladyfield West for a week. It felt a bit like death in the West. No one spoke to me. I think because they knew I was going to the East they didn't bother. It was a horrible atmosphere. I was only spoken to at mealtimes and for medication.
22. I remember another kid running away and the staff didn't take anything to do with it. They just sat in the livingroom having coffee. The only reason I remember this was

because he was tiny and he used his hands to speak. It wasn't like sign language, he just waved his hands around a lot.

23. Crichton was the main hospital at the top of the hill and Ladyfield East and West were the children's hospital at bottom. The West was for really young children and the East was for teenagers, maybe twelve to seventeen. There was also a portakabin which was the doctors unit.

Ladyfield East Children's Hospital, Dumfries

First day

24. I don't remember my first day much. It was maybe an hour or so drive from Ayr. I do remember Ladyfield East was a plain building. The patterned carpets annoyed me. I didn't like the pattern. There was a big livingroom, an office and a smokers room on the ground floor. There was also a wooden hut added on at the end of the livingroom that was like a wee school. They kept the medication in the basement and we ate there. There was a conference room for morning and evening meetings on the left when you walked in and a pay phone on the right. It cost twenty pence to use.
25. Up the first set of stairs there was a single bedroom, toilets and showers. There was also a fire door that we would use to run away. Up the second set of stairs there were four bedrooms. There was a nightshift room in the middle. My bedroom was up the second set of stairs and three of us shared. We each had a single bed.
26. KCN was SNR and KCM was SNR. I can't remember their surnames. KCN was older than the rest of them. KCM was always really made up and wore a scarf. Her and KCN did different shifts. There was also KCL and KCO. KCO was skinny but muscular. KCL had camp mannerism and looked like he wore lipstick. They were all the worst.

27. The nicest staff member was Laura Tait. She was a bit of a hippy and I remember a lot about her. Jessy was Laura's mother in law and lovely too. There was also Lou Sandercock. We used to take the micky out of her as she had a strange accent. Vanda Hamilton was the nightshift worker. Lynn Cudahy was nice too. I think they were all nurses but I am not sure. They wore normal clothes and a name badge. They were all the good ones.
28. There were also two staff workers called Justina and Josie. I just remember old Josie was not allowed to deal with any injuries. They were alright.
29. It was ok for the first month or so at Ladyfield East. It was like the kids had taken over the place. It was good getting to do your own thing but it was loud and noisy. There was a lot of shouting and bawling. I think there was about twelve children. It changed a bit when I first got there but the longer I stayed there the children didn't seem to change.

Mornings and bedtime

30. We were woken up with the light coming on and someone clapping or shouting and we went for breakfast. Every morning after breakfast our rooms got inspected by whoever was on. We could watch television for maybe ten minutes and then there were meetings every morning at nine o'clock. It was just about who had a pass to go home or to go into town by themselves. I never got a pass. The doctors would sometimes come across, doctor Gardner and two doctors called Powel. They were husband and wife. After the morning meeting we just got to chill out or go for a cigarette.
31. Evening meetings were normally done by Vanda before bed and it was just about what you had been doing, what was good and bad and to make sure everyone was there. I think Vanda got more out of people than at the morning meetings. Sometimes she had students with her. She made it more fun. It was more informal. No one had to do the writing or the reading out of the last meeting.

Mealtimes/Food

32. We ate in the sitting room in the basement. Everything was made at Crichton Hospital and slopped up to us. There was always a variety but if you were vegetarian you were screwed. I had an allergy to fish but there was always another option. I can only remember the chocolate mousse as it reminded me of my childhood. My mum liked them when she had cancer. The food was ok and I had enough to eat.
33. We had nothing to do a lot of the time so we would sneak into the kitchen and mix up the meals to annoy the staff. You did whatever you wanted to do. One time we mixed the juice with bleach but we admitted to it.

Washing/bathing

34. There was a shower room across from the single room up the first set of stairs. You could go for a wash whenever you wanted but I was quite lazy and slept through my shower time.

Clothing/uniform

35. We wore our own clothes from home. We each had a wardrobe beside our bed. We would get a £50 grant to get new stuff if we needed it. It was like a summer and winter thing.

Leisure time

36. There was a large separate hut out the back with a pool table in it and some footballs. I didn't really play pool. Laura would open that up when she was on. When we had free time we would smoke behind there. Some children were allowed to smoke in the smokers room if your parent had given permission, but my dad had not. I got on alright with the other children. We did not do the same things together every day. Sometimes you would just pass them in the building.

37. We went for walks and did arts and crafts and stuff like that. A lot of activities that were meant to happen didn't if the staff didn't want to. We would just end up cleaning staff cars or something like that. It depended who was on. Laura and Vanda were the only ones that did anything but Vanda was on nightshift a lot.

Trips and holidays

38. We would go up to Crichton, the main hospital for swimming.
39. One day KCM was on with Laura and Jessy. Laura got the minibus and decided to take us abseiling. The minibus was from the West but we got it now and again. Laura's man had abseiled and he came with us. It was enjoyable. I was sitting waiting for my turn and Jessy gave me half a cigarette and said don't tell anyone. She always said I could talk to her the same as Laura. It sometimes felt like they were fishing to find out what was going on. It was as if they knew something.
40. Five or six of us went on holiday for a week once up to the west. Luckily I went with the better staff and it was good.
41. The only time I remember that was great was when we were taken to a continental market one day and we got to do whatever we wanted.

Schooling

42. We were meant to go to school but no one ever did. Some of the teachers would open it up, but some didn't. They would just let you watch television.
43. There were a couple of children there who were violent so as soon as they kicked off they shut the school. People would cotton on to that so they would do it so we didn't have to go. I think I was maybe in the classroom once. I went in and a guy threw a chair and we were told to leave. We never got an education in Ladyfield.

Healthcare

44. There was a lot of self harming. If your room had a lot [REDACTED] you had to sleep somewhere else until it was cleaned up. I remember having to sleep in with the boys a few times. It happened a lot.

Work

45. On the weekends we had a lot of chores. We had to clean the office, the smokers room and Hoover. If we didn't do it right the first time we were asked to do it again. I never saw cleaners at the unit.

Birthdays and Christmas

46. I don't remember celebrating anything in there. I can't even remember a Christmas. We never really celebrated Christmas at home either after my mum died.

Review of care

47. I did not see any social workers while I was at Ladyfield East. The psychiatrist there just kept extending my stay and I ended up there for two years. I never had a say at all. I was never at the meetings. My dad was sometimes at them as I would see his car out the window and then it was away. It was heart breaking as I never got to see him. They decided it was better if I never saw my dad at all. I just got a piece of paper telling me how much longer I was staying and my dad's signature was on it.

Family contact

48. I never got a pass to see my dad or to go home for an overnigher. My dad would drive down every week to see me and they wouldn't let me see him. I hated them for that. I didn't get on with my dad but he came down so many times to see me and he thought I did not want to see him. I think in the two years I was there I saw him once or twice.

49. Phone calls were monitored and you could never phone out without permission. I was never allowed to call my dad. I did not know his number anyway.

Discipline

50. You weren't allowed out of the unit grounds. I remember a boy called [REDACTED] going out for cigarettes once and he was made to do the lunches for the day and got his lunch last after everyone else had eaten.
51. They couldn't take away any privileges as we didn't have any. The only privileges you got were to go home or call home and we never even got that.

Running away

52. I ran away a few times and the police were involved. The fire exit was the only door not locked so we used that. The police were ok with you. I always felt like I couldn't say anything to them as they would just pass it on to the unit. I think they were just fed up with us. It happened a lot at the West too.
53. You took your risks running away as you did not know who was going to be on when you got back. I remember one time getting back and Laura and Jessy were on. I was relieved.
54. Once me and [REDACTED] ran away overnight. It was the night after we heard [REDACTED] roommate, [REDACTED], being abused. We spent the night walking about Crichton and slept in a shelter beside the staff accommodation. We were heading back the next day when the police stopped us. Old Josie got us at the door. She was alright about it.

Abuse at Ladyfield East, Dumfries

55. Ladyfield East was a nightmare. You wouldn't have put an animal in there. A lot of the staff were good but some of them were bad. KCM wanted [REDACTED] it like a nunnery. She was horrific. She wasn't religious it was just whatever she told you, you did or you were punished.
56. I cut myself once and KCM gave me a bowl of vinegar and water to put it in. It stung like hell and just brunt it. We were in the smokers room. KCM was having a cigarette and I went in to show her. I smoked her cigarette when she went for water. Josie was there too but she wasn't allowed to deal with injuries so KCM had to. She hurt me quite a lot of times. It did not matter what you did, you were always wrong.
57. I went to a wee shop one day at Castledykes Park to buy sweets. They used to sell us cigarettes in there even though they knew we were underage. I bought the sweets that had the lick on tattoos in them.
58. I was with my friend [REDACTED] and he was mouthing off about the tattoos when we got back. I had a hoody on and KCM grabbed me by the hood and I landed on the floor. I mouthed off about something and she punched me to the stomach and I was almost sick. It was really sore. She said I was like an insubordinate child or something like that and I had to go by her rules.
59. I showed her the tattoo and she said they were not for children and it was a stupid thing to have on my body. She went and got some big cooking matches and used the rough part of the box to scrape it off. She took my skin off too. I still have a scar. There was no point in trying to explain to her that it was temporary. She was always angry and never listened to anything. She was a horrible piece of work.
60. I don't know what happened to [REDACTED] I never saw him for a few days after that.
61. I never told anyone about the abuse from KCM as the only one [REDACTED] than her was KCN and he was even worse.

62. KCN and KCO were the most sexual with male and female in the unit. We heard KCO sexually abused [REDACTED] once. [REDACTED] was lovely. I didn't see it but you could make your own assumptions. That was KCO way of punishment. I don't know if KCN was involved.
63. I was sexually and physically abused by KCO six or seven times. If you were upstairs and everyone else was downstairs he would use that time to do what he wanted with you. He raped me. Him and KCM also used to cut us with knives to our arms to make it look like we had self harmed. It meant me had to stay in the unit longer. I also have cigarette burn scars from KCO and KCM. KCO was my keyworker so it meant we had to do one to ones and he got me alone.
64. We'd all gone upstairs and we heard [REDACTED] screaming in his bedroom. His bedroom was next to mine. They told us to go for a cigarette and we knew it was something bad if they were letting us do that. He tried to kill himself that night. He was the same age as me about thirteen, fourteen and shared a room with [REDACTED]. It was up the second set of stairs, first room on your right.
65. KCO, KCN and KCM would lock us in the activity hut with a padlock when they knew our parents were coming to see us. KCN would bend your hand back and put your arm behind your back. It was like a restraint technique. You either walked with them or it was sore.
66. He would walk you out like that with KCO or KCM and they would say keep your mouth shut and it won't be for long. It felt like hours. It was probably so my dad did not see me covered in bruises and fag burns and they could do whatever they wanted to do with me. If my dad saw them he would have taken me right out of there. I had a lot of injuries from the same three people. It must have been noticed by doctors and other staff but it was turned a blind eye to. It didn't matter as it always came down to self-harm and that we were liars and manipulators. Everyone in that unit had a personality disorder and it always came back to that.

67. They would tell our parents we had run away and didn't want to go see them which was lies. They would let you out after your parents left and then call them to say you were safe. They would always do it when they knew my dad was almost home and couldn't turn back. If they let you out before the two hours were up they didn't have to report you missing. The hut had no windows in it and a slide lock. You needed the wooden doors open for fresh air. It was KCM and KCN that did this mostly but KCO did too.
68. I didn't really talk about this with [REDACTED] but I think it happened to him too. I think he was in the hut with me sometimes as we stayed in the same direction. All we ever spoke about was going for a cigarette.
69. Later on my dad told me that they told him I wanted to stay in care and I didn't want to go home with him. He just thought it was because he was always drunk and I was scared of him. When I told him what happened he couldn't forgive himself and said it was his fault. He never knew the real truth about me getting raped and battered off these people. I just told him I hated him and didn't want him as my dad and he died thinking that. That really upsets me.
70. KCL was known to be sexually abusive towards boys. One time we were at Crichton swimming pool he held me under the water. This was because I said his lipstick had come off in the water. I felt like I couldn't breathe and I have been scared of water ever since.
71. Towards the end of my time there Laura noticed that something was wrong. I kept shouting about suicide one night and KCM threw me a [REDACTED] so I did. I ended up in hospital to get my stomach pumped. A female doctor asked me outright the next day if I was being abused. I think it was because my arms were all cut as well. She was a young Indian doctor and lovely. I just remember crying and Laura walked in. She asked me what was wrong. She put her arm around me and asked me to talk to her but I couldn't as she would have to report it back to KCN and KCM.

Leaving Ladyfield East, Dumfries

72. [REDACTED] did eventually kill himself. He was getting raped by KCO and KCL. The unit was investigated and I was moved. I had been sent to Kerelaw for a few weeks and when I returned I was told I had seven days to gather up my stuff and leave. I think other people had already left as I remember seeing empty beds.
73. Laura and Jessy left before then too. Lynn was leaving as well. I remember some shouting and someone slamming a door. I saw Lynn and KCM cuddling and then Lynn left.
74. I was out of control in the end and had started fighting back. I tried to set myself on fire so Dr Powel or Dr Gardner decided I had to go somewhere else. I was taken away in a van that you couldn't see out of or in to. There was a place close to Ladyfield but they had no beds so they took me to Kerelaw.

Kerelaw Secure Unit, Stevenson

75. I went to Kerelaw secure unit for a couple of weeks near the end of my stay at Ladyfield East. When I returned there were people in suits with badges. I don't know the ins and outs of it all.
76. Nothing happened to me at Kerelaw. It was good there and I was treated fine. I do know that some of the workers from Ladyfield left to go to Kerelaw. I have a friend who was in Kerelaw and she ended up pregnant by one of the male workers. She was sixteen. He had worked at Ladyfield before. I know who it is but it is up to her to say. I knew her from when I stayed with my dad.
77. I know now that there was abuse at Kerelaw.

Ailsa Hospital, Ayr

78. I was sent to Ailsa Hospital in Ayr after Ladyfield when I was fifteen years old. I then spent most of my life in and out of there. My dad visited me a couple of times but he thought bad of me because of Ladyfield and could not handle the self harming.
79. It was great at Ailsa. There was a lunch club, a dinner club and group therapy. They helped with anger management and anxiety and it was really relaxed, even at the intense bits. There was always something every day. They didn't lay a finger on you. Even when they were restraining you they were light and they would try everything else first. It couldn't have been any better. The staff were really good. They always tried to keep your spirits up. You could just go up to the canteen and have a coffee with them.

Life after being in care

80. I got out of Ailsa and tried care in the community but it didn't work. I had my daughter in 2004 but was back in Ailsa by 2008. I mainly stayed in hostels but when I had my daughter I had my own house. I didn't really have a relationship with my dad.
81. I remember the Easter weekend they took my daughter off me. She had been away for respite and when I went back to get her they handed me this massive document. It said they were putting her up for adoption. I got upset and I wasn't allowed to see her again. I got in my car and sped away. I ended up taking my car keys to a police station as I thought I was going to crash and kill someone. I took [REDACTED] I had [REDACTED] That's when I ended up back in Ailsa hospital in 2008. My last supervised contact with my daughter was 12th January 2009.
82. I can't say she would have had a better life with me. Adoption was probably the best thing for her.

83. I did work for a bit when I was at Ailsa Hospital. I did dog walking and I helped out on a farm. I loved it but that was when I was going back to a place of safety. I could function. If someone offered me a job in the community for ten thousand pounds an hour now, I wouldn't do it as I would not be going back to my safety.

Impact

84. I don't like the community. It scares me. I like to know that there are lots of people around me. I was offered a house recently and I have done nothing but panic. I don't feel safe when I lose the security of an institution and having people around me. It just doesn't feel normal to me.
85. My relationships have been bad. I form relationships with bad people as I think that is better than having nothing.
86. The biggest impact has been with my daughter. My dad said I was like the green eyed monster but I just never let anyone near her. Because of my past and my supposed personality disorder social work were all over me like a rash. I couldn't breathe. I was always having to prove myself at court. I proved myself time and time again and I still lost. It was just wee child protection things all the time.
87. There was a fake doctor in Ailsa Hospital who wrote a report about me and resulted in me losing my daughter for good. She was involved with others people losing their children too. Her name was Zholia Alemi and she is now in jail. It turned out she had no qualifications to be doing her job. If a doctor can fake their way into a hospital, can imagine who is getting in children's home.
88. I blamed social work for a lot of the abuse at Ladyfield. I battled them. I always felt I was walking on eggshells. I broke in the end because being in Ladyfield went against me and I ended up back in Ailsa.

89. Being in the unit was a sacrifice. I was a kid and put my trust in them. I gave them my life and the power to destroy me. That's exactly what they did.
90. I am now forty one years old and I still take a deep breath to try and remind myself not everyone will violate or break me like the system did.

Treatment/support

91. I am now in a homeless hostel [REDACTED] in Ayr but I am not homeless. I don't want to be in the community. I have had a lot of support but I find it difficult to trust any support, especially if they let me down. I am being let down constantly just now.

Records

92. I have never tried to access my social work records. I have never thought about it. I don't believe anything in it would be the truth.

Lessons to be Learned

93. There were never any checks done when I was at Ladyfield. No one came in. No one inspected it. Someone like the care inspectorate needs to spend a day or a night there and get in amongst it. They need to actually go into them for a full week and work there. Not all abusers like to keep it to themselves, some like to brag about it.
94. I just think the whole system is wrong. I don't agree with locking children up. Family connections are important but also child protection. You might not want to share things but you need someone safe to talk to.
95. They gave us all labels of personality disorders. That was basically saying we were out of control arseholes. We had no choice of being listened to. We stood no chance.

All that label did was put a target on our head saying abuse it. I don't think kids that age should be labelled anyway.

96. [REDACTED] was just gay. When he was in there he was made out to be so bad but he just didn't know how to come out. There was nothing mentally wrong with him. He was scared of his parents and when he went into Ladyfield he was treated even worse.
97. Criminal record checks are worth nothing if the person hasn't been caught. There should be checks every month from someone independent and there should be training on how to spot abuse and deal with it. Someone independent should take you out and talk to you.
98. How can children say without saying? Maybe we could use sign language. Something to say help me. Two signs. I saw this on Tiktok once. Children could receive training too on how to ask for help.

Other information

99. 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. ^{KCW} [REDACTED]

Dated.. 13/04/22