

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

KWU

Support person present: No

1. My name is KWU. My date of birth is 1952.  
My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

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

2. My dad's name was . My mum was called .  
I was born in Aberdeen, where we lived. It wasn't  
, it was flats. I had brothers and sisters but I never met them.
3. When I was born, the doctor at the hospital told my mum and dad I had a bad illness in the body and a disability, so I was sent to the Royal Scottish National Institution, in Larbert. I was supposed to be getting help there. The doctors told my mum and dad they would be helping me all the time.

### **The Royal Scottish National Institution, Larbert**

4. When I first went to the Royal Scottish National Institution, I was in the baby ward. I was three years old. I stayed there until I was nine years old. My mum and dad took me there and went back home on the train. Two female staff took me down a big corridor to Block One, the old man's block. There were no other children in that ward.

When you went in the front door, the staff locked the door behind you. You couldn't get in and out.

5. There were two or three hundred patients in five blocks. Each block had three bedrooms. Block One was the old man's ward. Block Two was half and half, with kids. The children were in Block Three. Block Four was the baby's ward. Block Five was for people who could only go out and about in their wheelchairs. Those people were not allowed to go out in the grounds. The children didn't mix with the women, you weren't allowed to.
6. Later, they built new blocks across from the female wards. In the new blocks, there were four bedrooms in each block. In the women's ward, there were nine or ten women in each bedroom. There was a baby's ward with thirty babies and about forty children, who were nine to twelve years old.
7. There were big grounds with a high fence around them and two big metal gates. The gates were meant to be closed at night but sometimes they weren't closed. You weren't allowed to play in the grounds. There was a big dining hall that three of the blocks used. You were only allowed to go to the shop and the gym. The shop was in the same corridor as the dining-room. You were given tokens to spend. You had to be escorted to the shop and the gym by two staff members.
8. There was an emergency button you could press on the ground floor. There had been some arson, with fires happening. Two or three of the old men smoked in their bed and their beds went on fire. You weren't allowed to smoke in the ward. You had to go outside with a member of staff.
9. When I was in the old man's ward, there were only two staff, I don't remember their names. One of them, a man, was the boss and told the other staff member and the patients what to do. I don't think the staff were trained enough. Doctor Brown was the doctor in charge.

## **Routine at the Royal Scottish National Institution**

### *Earliest memory*

10. My earliest memory from the Royal Scottish National Institution is the day I was sexually assaulted by a patient. I had moved to the male block by then. I was three years old. The other people in the block were a lot older than I was.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

11. I was in a ward at the top of the building, in the attic. I slept in the same ward as men much older than me. Some were sixty to seventy years old. There were ten or fifteen beds in the room. You all had to be in bed by 8:00 pm, you weren't allowed to stay up. You were locked in the ward at night. There was a toilet in the ward, by your bed. There was no TV in the ward. All the patients were given a Largactil tablet at night. It made you sleepy. There were no staff on at night.
12. You were up at 6:00 am every morning. You went straight to the bathroom to get washed and then through to the dining-room. You went to school and back to the ward. The school was inside the hospital. You weren't allowed to play with anybody. You didn't have to do any chores.
13. Some wards didn't have toilets and folk would do the toilet on their bed. In my ward, three or four people wet the bed. The staff weren't happy with them wetting the bed and got very angry because they had to change the beds.

### *Mealtimes / Food*

14. I wouldn't say the food was good. The food you were getting wasn't really cooked right or good quality. You couldn't say anything to the staff about the food. If you refused to eat the food, the staff would force you to eat it. The staff forced your mouth open and put the food into your mouth on a spoon and held your mouth closed, until you swallowed it.

15. The cooks worked in the kitchen, off the big dining-hall. You had breakfast, dinner and supper. You were marched, going for your meal. You had to stand in a long queue for your meal. By the time you got served, there was hardly anything left. After the meal was finished, everyone in the dining-room had to get up off their chair and stand in a row, then walk in a line back to each ward.

#### *Washing / bathing*

16. The bathroom had two baths. There were no showers. You saw the older men naked. You had no choice, you had to strip with the older men in the same room. The old men had a bath at the same time as I did. You had to go in the same water as the old men and you weren't allowed to change the bath water. There was a queue to get in the bath. The staff bathed you. You knew you weren't getting properly cleaned. The staff just did a bit here and there. Then you had to get yourself out of the bath and get yourself dried.

#### *Healthcare*

17. The doctors told my mum and dad they would be helping me all the time but I didn't get any treatment. There was no hospital in the Royal Scottish National Institution to take care of you. Once, when I was sexually abused by a patient in the bathroom, I put my hand through a window to shout for help and cut my arm. I showed my arm to the staff and the staff weren't interested in my cuts. The staff didn't give me a tissue or bandages, they didn't even help to put a bandage on. I still have a scar now on my arm. None of the patients were getting any help from the staff.
18. There were a lot of drugs that the staff were giving you all the time. You were given a Largactil tablet four times a day, in the morning, at dinnertime, at teatime and bedtime. You were out of it. When you got up in the morning, you were still drowsy. When the staff gave drugs to the older folk, they were knocked out every time. The older folk would be taken up to the ward. This was when the staff were trying them out with injections.

### *Leisure time*

19. I didn't have any friends. You weren't allowed to talk to the other children. You weren't allowed to go in the grounds to play. I was in the old man's ward, away from the other children. The only time you were allowed out in the grounds was if you were taking part in the football team. I started to play football but then I stopped it altogether.
20. There was a big gym, in the same place where the dining-room was. You weren't allowed to go in the gym by yourself, the staff had to come with you.
21. We didn't go out on any trips. We didn't go into the village. You weren't allowed back home and you weren't allowed any holidays.

### *Clothing / uniform*

22. You wore a grey and blue short sleeved shirt, with a jumper and short trousers. You had a body warmer jacket and you were given a pair of trainers. When you asked for a new pair, they refused to give you any more.
23. Sometimes, you had a ribbon round the sleeve of your arm. Folk asked why the staff put those ribbons on. The staff wouldn't tell you the truth as to why. When you were going to the gym or to watch the football at the football fields, you had to have the ribbon on all the time.

### *School*

24. The school was a very nice place. The teacher was good. You made table mats, did drawing, sewed and played with balls. There were nine children in the class. There was no playtime and you weren't allowed out into the grounds. You were kept in the hospital building. School only closed between Christmas and New Year.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

25. My mum and dad sent in birthday and Christmas presents. The staff dished out all my birthday presents amongst everybody.

### *Visits / Inspections*

26. My dad had no intention of coming to Larbert, so he didn't visit me. I never saw an Inspector there.

### *Running away*

27. Three boys ran away when they were thirteen or fourteen years old. They got to the station and onto a train. The boys had been meeting, talking and planning things. Some people would climb out the windows to get into the grounds and climb the fence to get away.

### *Discipline*

28. If you didn't go along with the staff's law, they put you into a strong room with a door. The only way you could get out of the room was if the staff let you out. On one side of the door, there was a handle you could open but you couldn't get out from the inside. The door was made of steel. There was no bed, so you had to sleep on the floor. There was no blanket or mattress. There was no toilet, so you had to do the toilet on the floor. I was put in the room two or three times, for three or four weeks at a time. You weren't allowed out for anything, such as getting a bath. I was in the room when I was three years old. I was terrified.

### **Abuse at the Royal Scottish National Institution, Larbert**

29. There was a lot of arguments, fighting and bullying between the staff and some of the patients. The patients would go to the staff for help and the staff told the patients they weren't there to help. The staff weren't allowed to sit and talk with you and you weren't allowed to talk to the staff. There were times I was upset and lonely but the staff didn't do anything.
30. The staff would sit at the back of you when you were eating your meals in the dining-room. If you didn't eat all your meal, forced you to eat it. You weren't allowed to leave anything on your plate.
31. The staff held you down on the bed. They were on top of the top half of your body and they held your arms down. They sat on your body and your arms and held your face down on the pillow.

### *Peer Abuse*

32. I started being sexually abused when I was moved to the men's block. I was three or four years old. One of the patients saw me coming into the block. I can't remember his name. He was about thirty or forty years old, 5' 2" in height with black hair. He wore jeans and a shirt. The patient went into the office and put on a white staff coat. I didn't know he was a patient. He was acting as a member of staff. He filled up one of the baths to the top with cold water. The patient put my head under the water. I got away from him. I climbed up the rails in the bathroom to the window, smashed the window and cut my arm. I shouted for help. Nobody came to help me.
33. I got away from the patient, out of the bathroom. I got to the attic where all the beds were, in the ward. The patient managed to find me. He pulled me out from under the bed and sexually assaulted me. The patient put his penis in my back end. It made me not well. This happened to me five or six times in the time I was in that ward.

34. The same patient used to steal money from folk. The staff found out about that. The patient was put into the Royal Scottish National Institution because he was detained there on a court order. He came into the ward with handcuffs on and was there permanently.
35. Sometimes the headmaster at school would cane you, across your back. You would be sent to the headmaster because you weren't doing your work right in the class. That didn't happen to me.

#### **Abuse of others at the Royal Scottish National Institution, Larbert**

36. I don't think some of the old men got the proper treatment from half of the staff. The staff would put the old men in a room and lock them in.

#### *Peer abuse of others*

37. With every new person that came into the old man's ward, the patient was there with this white coat on, waiting to get them. The patient was abusing a lot of folk. He was doing it to old men as well. He would fill the bath with cold water, put them in it and put their head under the water. Then he would sexually assault them. The patient was getting away with it all the time.

#### **Reporting of abuse at the Royal Scottish National Institution**

38. I told the staff about the patient sexually assaulting me but they weren't interested. They were taking the patient's side all the time and making me out to be a liar. The staff asked me who the patient was and he didn't get to wear a white coat again. Other folk told the staff they were being sexually assaulted by this patient but the staff weren't interested.



### **Leaving the Royal Scottish National Institution**

39. When I was a wee bit older, about nine years old, my dad visited me. My dad brought a radio for me. When the staff opened the ward door, a patient ran up and snatched the radio out of his hand. My dad took me back home after that. He tried to tell the staff about the radio but none of them were interested. My dad and I travelled back to Aberdeen on the train.

### **Staying with my dad in Aberdeen**

40. I was staying with my dad in Aberdeen. Doctor Drummond came to my father's house, from Ladysbridge Hospital. The doctor asked my dad if I would like a fortnight's holiday at Ladysbridge. The doctor asked me and I said, "No." My father agreed with the doctor.
41. I was taken unwell and my dad phoned an ambulance. I had food poisoning. I was taken to Ward 8 at the City Hospital. I was transferred from there to Ladysbridge, in an ambulance.

### **Ladysbridge Hospital, Banff**

42. I went to Ladysbridge Hospital when I was nine years old. I stayed there until 1989 when I was 37 years old. The hospital was closing then. I didn't know why I was staying at Ladysbridge. Nobody told me why. Even my father didn't tell me anything about the illness I was supposed to have. Ladysbridge wasn't a nice place to live in.
43. There were eight wards altogether. Two were female wards called Devon and Fife. There were 52 patients in each of those wards. There were six male wards. One was called Moore Ward. Four wards with 42 patients and two smaller wards with 19

patients in each. In the smaller wards were patients who'd had strokes and couldn't move or feed themselves.

44. My ward was called the Sick Training Unit. There were three wards with people like myself. The people in my ward were all different ages. The ward across from the Sick Training Unit was a baby's unit.

#### *Staff at Ladysbridge Hospital*

45. The head doctor was Doctor Cook. There was Doctor Drummond. Other staff were PHH and Bob Robertson. PHH was a member of the charge hand staff. They were at Ladysbridge when I was a child. They were stricter. PHH was always knocking us out with injections. Sometimes he would get PHH to come over from head office to the ward to knock you out. Neil Munro was the social worker. Some staff wore blue uniforms and some wore grey jackets and trousers. You had to call the staff 'Sir'. You said, "Yes, Sir. No, Sir."

#### **Routine at Ladysbridge Hospital**

##### *First day*

46. I was taken to Ladysbridge in an ambulance. I was nine years old. I didn't know I was going to Ladysbridge. There were two members of staff, PHH and PHH. When I realised I was going to Ladysbridge, I got agitated and managed to break one of the ambulance windows with my foot.
47. The ambulance stopped at Woodlands in Cults. Four staff from Woodlands came into the back of the ambulance and held me down. Two of them were sitting on top of me. PHH made up a syringe with paraldehyde. They gave me an injection of paraldehyde and knocked me out to sleep.

48. When I got to Ladysbridge, I was getting up to go the toilet and saw there were four staff still hanging about in the ward. Every time you got up to go the toilet, those four staff were right over to your bed, holding you down again, to give you more paraldehyde, to knock you out. I was getting 100 milligrams of paraldehyde. I know that because the bottle was a 10 cubic centimetre bottle and it filled the whole syringe. The staff were giving you paraldehyde all the time.
49. You weren't even allowed to go the bathroom to get a shower. Each time you got the injection of paraldehyde, you had a feeling of burning in the back of your throat. You felt the taste of it. It carried on like this for years, until Ladysbridge closed down.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

50. In the big wards there was only a space of about a foot between the beds. You couldn't get out of bed to go to the toilet. The toilet was down the stairs and opposite the night staff desk. Every night, every ward was locked at 7:00 pm. The ward was locked all night until the morning staff came on duty.
51. You were up at 5:45 am every morning. Once you got out of bed, you had to go to the bathroom and wash your face. When I was older, you had to shave yourself. Then you went back in the bedroom and dressed yourself.
52. There were nine or ten patients died in Ladysbridge when I was there. My bed was inbetween two patients in the ward. The two patients passed away and I saw the staff put labels on their toes and all that. I saw the patients being taken out of the ward to the mortuary across the road. The mortuary was part of Ladysbridge.

#### *Mealtimes / Food*

53. The meals were brought to the kitchen on the ward, on a trolley. The meals were dished out from there. You didn't have any choice of what you were served with.

#### *Leisure time*

54. You had to spend all your time in the ward. You weren't allowed to go out of the ward into the grounds, to walk about. The only thing you had at Ladysbridge was your church service on a Sunday and your club after church. The church was at the back gate. On Monday and Tuesday you had social club from 5:00 pm until 6:45 pm, when you had to be back on the ward. On a Thursday there was the pictures. The films were shown in one of the big halls, in the staff canteen.
55. There was a football field but no-one used it. One of the patients had their own music. They were told to switch it off and weren't allowed to play it again. You weren't allowed to go into Banff to walk around the shops. You weren't allowed to join in the entertainment with the patients. There were no games. There were story books.
56. I started smoking when I was nine years old. You had to be twelve or thirteen years old before you were allowed to buy cigarettes. There was a shop that you could buy them in. I got cigarettes from my cousin, [REDACTED], who came into the hospital as a patient. [REDACTED] came in for a couple of weeks holiday to let his sister and brother go on holiday. He had a problem with drinking alcohol. He spotted me and we sat together and had a cigarette. [REDACTED] left Ladysbridge after that.

#### *School*

57. I got the belt at school. The school was in Ladysbridge. The staff didn't allow you to learn. I taught myself to read and write. If you did anything wrong, you were taken downstairs and not allowed to mix with the other children.

#### *Healthcare*

58. The staff were knocking you out with paraldehyde all the time. Every time you tried to protest, the staff would inject you with it. I was still being given Largactil.
59. You weren't allowed to speak to a doctor. If you got a doctor and complained about a member of staff, the following day you would find that the doctor had told the member of staff what you had said.

#### *Visits / Inspections*

60. There were a lot of folk visiting but I never got anybody to see me. I went home to my mum and dad's for one day and then went back to Ladysbridge. I did that about three times. I had to be back at Ladysbridge before 9:30 pm. If you weren't back, they would start a search to look for you.

#### *Discipline*

61. There was a board on the wall in the ward, in the office. There were tokens in different colours. If you got four black tokens, you couldn't get any money for cigarettes or anything. You got a black token if you didn't behave. You knew yourself what colour of token you were going to get from the staff. The staff decided which token to stick on the board. The colour you got was based on your behaviour and your attitude to the staff.

#### **Abuse at Ladysbridge Hospital**

62. If you gave the staff backchat, they would twist both your arms up your back and take you to the bedroom. The staff would get you on the bed and call in the rest of the staff. There would be one sitting on each leg and one sitting on each arm. One would even be sitting on top of your head, with your face facing the pillow. You can't breathe when they have your head down on the pillow. Other staff would come in and they would knock you out with an injection of paraldehyde. The injection was in your hips.

63. Anytime you did anything wrong, a member of staff would get you. They didn't say anything to you. The member of staff went into the office and phoned across to the main office to call PHI to come across. It was PHI who did the injection. The injection would be five times in each hip before you were knocked out.
64. A patient told me to be very careful because PHI was passing things on to PHI. If PHI saw you doing anything wrong, he closed the door and phoned someone to come across. All of the patients were getting the same treatment.
65. Members of staff restrained, hit, slapped and punched patients. The staff were called PHI, Sandy Buchan, Derek Benzie and Ginger Thomson. I saw adult patients being slapped and hit around the face but not children.
66. The patients were force fed. The staff would order the food. You were not allowed to refuse anything. If you didn't like it, you had to eat it. All the babies there were force fed milk from a bottle. I saw it myself. The block I was in was facing straight across to the baby ward. Some of the babies weren't looked after. The staff weren't changing the nappies. Three or four young kids died in their cribs. That's when they started removing the babies from Ladysbridge to Woodlands Hospital.
67. In the Devon and Fife wards, patients were abused by staff. PHI's wife worked in the Devon ward. Patients got on to her for threatening them. She called in her husband and staff from other wards to come into the Devon ward to knock all those patients out.
68. Some people were paralysed down one side. They were asking the staff for help but weren't getting help. The staff said it wasn't their job to help you with anything. With a lot of the old folk, the staff did not call the doctor to get them help. There were about fifteen people who died in Ladysbridge.
69. You couldn't complain to anybody at Ladysbridge. The doctors always took the staff's side. You were always being the bad one. A lot of patients were complaining about the paraldehyde.



### **Leaving Ladysbridge Hospital**

70. A boiler man was checking the boiler rooms on each ward. He saw what the staff were doing to the adult patients on each ward, forcing them to eat and slapping them across the face and he blew the whistle on it. He wrote a letter to the Mental Welfare Rights people. They received his letter and came into the hospital. The Mental Welfare people actually saw what was happening to the patients. After they came in, they told the doctors the place was to close down. I left Ladysbridge because it was closing down.

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

71. I was living in a hostel called St Albans for five years. I've been in my own house for almost four years.

### **Impact**

72. In 1971, my dad died when I was in Ladysbridge. I was in the ward and heard the phone call. His name and my name was mentioned. That's how I found out he had died. I asked a doctor if I could go to my dad's funeral and he said I could. I went to the funeral with a member of staff, Sandy Buchan. The family didn't want me to be there. My brother [REDACTED] asked Sandy to take me back to Ladysbridge. I was told by the family that they didn't want anything to do with me and I was to keep away from them all. My mum died in 2000.
73. I sometimes have flashbacks and I can't get a proper sleep.
74. When you were down on the farm in the summer, your face and body would get burned with the sun because of the Largactil. When you went back to the ward, sometimes they'd give you calamine lotion. I don't take Largactil now.

75. When I came back to Aberdeen, I didn't feel it was my town. I find it hard living here.

### **Records**

76. There is a folder of my records. It's about a foot and half high. It's held by one of my doctors or my care manager. Everything about me is in it.

### **Support after leaving care**

77. I have two carers helping me look after my house. Sometimes you can't trust your carers. The carers will go and discuss things about you with other people. I see my doctor.


### **Reporting of Abuse the Royal Scottish National Institution**

78. Three years ago, I told one of my carers about the sexual abuse I had suffered at the Royal Scottish National Institution. She said I should report it to the police. Me and my carer went to the police at Bucksburn. I spoke to Detective Inspector Davidson. The police wouldn't do anything.



### Lessons to be Learned

79. Children shouldn't be put into places like The Royal Scottish National Institution or Ladysbridge Hospital. They should be with their parents. The things that happened to me shouldn't happen to other kids.
80. 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.   
KWU

Dated 17/12/20