

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LCX

Support person present: No

1. My name is LCX. My date of birth is 1984. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born and stayed in the Paisley area along with my mother and father. I was the oldest of seven children. There is twins and and then I did have another sister but unfortunately she died soon after being born with pneumonia.
3. My father was a labourer and my mother spent her life bringing us up. We moved to different houses in Paisley, mainly in the area. There was a lot of drug taking and violence in the house. My dad was always after any money we had in the house. This caused mum to go to social work and ask for financial help. Sometimes they helped us out, but on the last occasion she took myself and with her to the office. When they refused to help out again she just left us with the social workers and told them they could look after us.
4. The social work then placed us into foster care. I was only three years old then and did not know how long I would be in care as I was so young. I ended up being in care at different placements for about ten out of the next fifteen years.

5. After being home a couple of times the social work organised for the twins, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] along the rest of us to be placed into care. Initially they were in different foster care, prior to them being adopted.
6. When [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were still being fostered they were staying with a couple, Ruth Johnston - GFD [REDACTED] from the [REDACTED] area. The boys were being mistreated and eventually that woman was prosecuted. One of the things the people made them do was the kids were to sleep in the bath. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] told my mother, who went to the social work. To start with nothing seemed to happen to [REDACTED] Ruth Johnston - GFD but then some other kids who had been in there before were spoken to and there was enough evidence to have them charged. [REDACTED] the woman was. I think she got community service.
7. When [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] left the foster family they went for adoption. That couple, [REDACTED]'s also took [REDACTED] and all three were adopted by them. I think [REDACTED] stayed with my mum. The couple's relationship broke down when the husband left the house to set up home with his secretary. The woman then took on another couple of kids, who were unrelated to each other and also looked after them.
8. The relationship with the woman broke down with [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] still kept in touch with the other girls. When one of the girls, [REDACTED] was a teenager she was in touch with [REDACTED] and was having some issues. [REDACTED] made contact with Mrs [REDACTED] and tried to tell her she was concerned for [REDACTED] Mrs [REDACTED] ignored [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went on to take an overdose. Although she survived she is now [REDACTED] as a result. That could have been prevented if she had just listened to what [REDACTED] was telling her.

Unknown foster care, Hunterhill, Paisley

9. [REDACTED] and I were sent to stay with a woman who stayed in a house in the Hunterhill area in Paisley, I can't remember her name. I don't remember any guy in the house or any other kids.

10. I remember my first night staying in the house and I was woken when I heard my sister [REDACTED] crying. She was in a cot and I went to look for the woman to help. When I went down the stairs and checked the house I could not find her anywhere. There was no one else in the house. I went back upstairs to the room and was getting panicky. I was trying to calm my sister and eventually I fell asleep.
11. When I woke up the woman was back in the house. We were there for a maybe three days or so when mum and a friend came to the house and took us home again.
12. I was back home for a few months but the atmosphere never changed, my parents had a very chaotic relationship. This time there was no physical but lots of mental issues between mum and dad. We were evicted from our house and the council had banned us from renting from them for a year.
13. I still wanted to stay at home but was back in care. I think the following tells of my placements, but I am not certain about the order or the exact dates. I do not have my records to confirm them. I think it was Carsewood, back home, Beech Avenue, back home, Carsewood again, back home, Woodlands, back home, Kibble day care, back home, St Mary's secure, Kibble residential, Gateside (Greenock) YOI, Kerelaw secure, Kerelaw open school, Geilsland. Geilsland was the last care placement I had after that I spent different times and places in the prison system.
14. Each time I left the care placement and went home it was the same chaotic life style in the family house. There were problems with drugs and domestic violence. There was no physical abuse from my parents but there was a lot of emotional abuse. If not between themselves, the police were constantly kicking open the door, for different reasons. There were also a lot of issues between mum and some of the neighbours. Those issues sometimes led to us being evicted as they classed mum as being an unruly tenant.

Routine at Carsewood Children's Home, Hillfoot Drive, Howwood, Renfrew

15. I still had not reached my sixth birthday when I was sent to Carsewood Children's Home. The first time I was at Carsewood I was only there for a few days. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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20. When I was back with mum the atmosphere was just the same. We were only back for a few weeks before the social work had us at a Children's Panel and it was decided I was to be placed again in care. I was then sent to Beech Avenue in Paisley.

Routine at Beech Avenue Children's Home, Beech Avenue, Paisley

21. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Beech Avenue Children's Home, Beech Avenue, Paisley

28. I left Beech Avenue and was sent back home again. I was only back a few weeks when once more I was sent to Carsewood.

Routine at Carsewood Children's Home, Hillfoot Drive, Howwood, Renfrew

29. The second time I went to Carsewood I was with my brother [REDACTED] We were in the home for around a year. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Carsewood Children's Home, Hillfoot Drive, Howwood, Renfrew

35. Once more I was back home with mum. The problems soon came back. The school were also reporting me for not being in classes for some of the day. I was soon back in front of a Panel and this time it was decided I would be sent Woodlands at Newton Stewart in Wigtonshire. I would have been about ten years old when I went to Woodlands and spent between eighteen months and two years there.

Routine at Woodlands School, Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Galloway

36. Before I was sent to Woodlands on a permanent basis they sent me there for a couple of days for three to four hours in the morning. This was to introduce me to the place and perhaps help me settle more there.
37. When I was at Woodlands it was for slightly older children. I was about ten when I went there and the other residents were similar to me and up to about sixteen. I think there were maybe twenty five children there. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later Woodlands was all boys, Secondary Institutions - to be published later. The atmosphere with the boys was just like any normal school, sometimes we fell out and then afterwards we would be okay.
38. I think the place was run by a male but I only remember him being known as "KP". His deputy was Peggy Smith, Secondary Institutions - to be published later. I can remember some of the other staff there being LEB and Mary. They were care staff and worked during the day. We lived in upstairs in the units at night. LDK was also a member of the staff .
39. The home was for children with behaviour problems. The main building at Woodlands had lots of rooms in there and there was a flat on the top floor. The flat was used by the older children who were preparing for life after care. Sometimes at the weekend families were allowed to use it if they were visiting. If there were quite a few people coming and the flat was occupied then the bungalow in the grounds could be used as a weekend overspill.
40. The other two floors were known as the uppers and lowers. I was in the uppers. We all had our own rooms and in mine I had my own television.

Mornings and bedtime

41. The day to day routine at Woodland was the same as the other places that I stayed in. We were up in the morning, had breakfast and into the classroom.

School

42. The education units were in separate buildings beside the main one. At the school if we behaved, then for the last half hour we were allowed to do woodwork. I was allowed to build a pigeon hut and started to keep pigeons. During this time I also bred hamsters. When I left Woodlands I let the pigeons go.
43. The staff did try to provide some sort of education but they were limited to boys not playing up. This was much the same for most of the different places I was in. I really never considered this until I was an adult.

Leisure

44. There were activities that we were allowed to take part in. They included canoeing, woodwork, mechanics, climbing, walks in the woods and there was a couple of motor bikes we were allowed to be on whilst supervised. George Epsworth, who was in charge of the education, took us out in the van along with the bikes. We then got to ride a couple of laps in the open grounds. Once a month we were taken to the racing tracks. There were two tracks, one was a pro circuit and the other amateurs were allowed on. They would even show this to mum and dad where we were going on the motor bikes.

Trips and holidays

45. When I stayed at Woodlands we were taken away for a short holiday during the summer holidays, one of those trips I was taken to was Butlin's, Skegness.

Visits/Inspections

46. The social work only came to see me when it was time for any reviews or Panels. I saw them a lot less at Woodlands, but then there was less need as I was going to be there for a while and there were no changes taking place. I don't remember there being any inspections carried out while I stayed there.

Family contact

47. If I had behaved when I was in Woodlands I did get out for visits. The van would be used to go to Edinburgh or Glasgow. I would be taken out with some others in the minibus and dropped off.
48. When I was at Woodlands for about a month and had settled I was allowed to go back to Carsewood for a night or even a weekend. This was to allow me to see my mother as Woodlands was too far away for her to visit. I would go back to Woodlands the next day. Eventually that changed where I was allowed home to stay with mum. The reason was it was costing money to keep a place for me at Carsewood, when I was not actually staying there.
49. There were facilities available at Woodlands for family to visit there. They had a bungalow in the grounds that was used for those visits and if someone stayed some distance away they could stay in the bungalow overnight. The staff would also help by picking some families up in the minibus and bring them to the bungalow. They would drop the family off after their stay.
50. When it came to my time to leave Woodlands the staff helped build up my relationship with my mum and when she came to the bungalow. I was allowed to stay there for the few days with her. The staff might have helped with trying to give us advice about how we could get on better with each other.

Abuse at Woodlands School, Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Galloway

51. One day I was in the kitchen at the home for some reason. The kitchen was in a u-shaped design. While I was there LDK, a staff member, came in and told me to get out of the kitchen. I wasn't finished what I was doing and told him so. LDK tried to manhandle me by grabbing me and trying to force me out. I struggled out of his arms. He then punched me right in the face. As a result he broke my nose and it was bleeding heavily. I was never given any treatment by him. LDK told the other staff in the home that as I tried to run out of the kitchen I had run into him.
52. I told my mum and dad when I was next home. I was constantly picking at scabs on my nose and mum was asking why I was always at my nose. I told her what happened. They immediately took me to the local hospital in Paisley but because of the time delay there was nothing they could do. They also took me to the police station and reported the matter to them. I never got told what the result of that inquiry was.
53. My dad wanted to punch LDK lights out. He didn't follow through with that but before he was allowed back to see me the staff made him sign a contract that he was allowed to visit me but only on the understanding he did not take any revenge on LDK.
54. LDK was in his thirties. I never saw him do it to anyone else. The home did not take any action against LDK and neither did the social work department. After the incident he continued to watch over me, but I was never hit by him again.
55. This was an opportunity to move me but they never did. The home was one of two different care homes. It also covered Merton Residential School, which was a smaller unit. The manager could have taken the decision to transfer me there.
56. If LEB a member of staff, had to restrain any of the children, he was much quicker at jumping on you, than most of the staff would. The other staff were much more relaxed. His demeanour was more aggressive. He was the same with other residents as he was with me.

57. There was a class in the main building. The teacher there was really aggressive in his manner and the way he treated us. It was a much smaller class and if we did anything wrong he would sometimes ragdoll us about in the classroom. It wasn't just me because I saw him do it some of the others. I can't recall his name. He was about thirty to forty years old, slim to medium build with short hair.

Leaving Woodlands School, Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Galloway

58. While I was at Woodlands one of the differences I found were they catered for adolescents and everything was aimed at doing activities suited to children my age.
59. When I left Woodlands I was back home for around nine months. I would have been twelve years old then and I was attending Trinity High School but I was never given any proper education so I found that I had fallen so far behind the other pupils. As a result that after being there for about a week I was involved in a fight and I was expelled from there and sent to the Kibble as a day pupil. There were no issues when I was at the Kibble.
60. At this time there was an incident where along with different members of my family I ended up in court on serious violence charges. The court sent me to St Marys Kenmure Secure Unit in Bishopbriggs.

Routine at St Marys Kenmure Secure Unit, St Marys Road, Bishopbriggs

61. St Marys was run by a Catholic organisation rather than the local authority. Initially I spent five months on remand there and that was followed by nine months on a sentence. When I arrived I was in the old building which was a secure unit.
62. I think there were about twenty four kids in the unit made up both boys and girls. I think they were all of the age of criminal responsibility and I think that meant they would

have ranged from ten up to sixteen. There were a mix of people in St Marys, some as a result of having been in court, at a Panel or subject of neglect.

- 63. There was one fifteen year old female who had been locked up for a long time as she had been involved in a relationship with a thirty year old male. She was put in St Marys as a so called place of safety. I am not sure how it can be classed as a place of safety for her when she was mixing with people who were in there for very serious offences including murder.
- 64. There were different units and I was allocated Green unit. There were eight of us in that unit. The staff that I remember were Anita O'Leary, John McCallum and Dianne.
- 65. The living room and kitchen were on the ground floor. In the living room there was a computer which we were allowed to use. The bedrooms were up the stairs as were the toilets.

Leisure time

- 66. During the day if I wanted to I was allowed to go to my room and listen to my music. I was taken out near the end of my time at St Mary's to the swimming pool during one day out.
- 67. One of the female members of staff, I am not sure of her name, would sometimes bring her young brother to visit me as she felt sorry for me. We were allowed to ride around the grounds on mountain bikes.
- 68. Diane another female, brought in a foot massage machine. That was great as it helped us relax. Neither of those people would have done these things if they did not like us or trust us.

School

- 69. While I was staying at St Marys Kenmure, I was expelled from Trinity High School. I was sent to Kibble Education and Care Centre as a residential pupil.
- 70. There were teachers who would come into St Marys Monday to Friday. They would try to get the pupils to do some work and if they completed their lessons they were given computer time as a reward.

Visits/Inspections

- 71. The social work only visited or telephoned if I was due to appear at the panel or had a review coming up. Although I had a key worker they could not get involved too much as I was the subject of a court order and all its restrictions. If they were to visit they had to get permission.

Family contact

- 72. I only had one visit from my family during the time I spent at St Marys, the main reason being that most were also in custody in different prisons. I did get some visits from mum when she was out on bail, but as soon as she was serving her sentence there were visits, usually every three or four months. I am sure there was one time my aunt, her pal and my cousin visited me.

Discipline

- 73. Staff at St Marys were really good with the children. There was discipline but I never saw any violence. If you misbehaved it was usually a loss of privileges.

Leaving St Marys Kenmure Secure Unit, St Marys Road, Bishopbriggs

74. When it came to the end of my fourteen months in St Marys I was transferred to Kibble. This time it was on a residential basis. I was there for about four months.

Routine at Kibble Residential Unit, Stevenson, Ayrshire

75. When I was at Kibble there were eight or ten kids per unit and possibly six units in total. I was allocated Clyde Unit and spent the next three months there. The ages ranged from ten through to fourteen but there were probably more fourteen and fifteen year olds than any other age group. There was the odd seventeen year old there as well. There must have been a panel visit for a decision to be made sending me there.
76. I can't remember any of the names of the staff who were there.

School

77. The lessons at Kibble were the same as we did at St Marys. The facilities were good at Kibble. There was the odd issue with some of the boys but nothing specific. Everything to do with the school was much the same as other places.

Family contact

78. When I had been at Kibble for about a month I was allowed to have weekend leave. Sometimes I would cycle to my aunt's house and spend time there.

Leaving at Kibble Residential Unit, Stevenson, Ayrshire

79. Near the end of my time at Kibble my relationship with my aunt and uncle had broken down. During this time I had been sentenced to eighteen months and was under licence and a social work order. I then ran away and was out for about five days. I had

broken the terms of my licence by not being at my approved address. When I was out I was subject of a recall order and picked up by the police. I was sent to YOI at Greenock for a week. Also in the prison at that time were people subject to Immigration issues. They would exercise at different times but we could see them from the cell.

80. I soon found out that life and atmosphere was much worse in the jails than it ever was in the different homes. When I was in the Youth Offenders I had to call the staff "Sir" or by their second name and when I later went to jail it was "Boss" or by their first name.
81. During that week I got in bother and was put in the digger (solitary cell). They took my clothes from me, leaving me in my boxers. When I came out rather than being given my clothes back I was handed a prison t-shirt which did not fit me. I was also given a pair of denims that were all frayed at the bottom and too big for me. I had to use some cellophane as a home-made belt to hold the jeans up. When it came to a visit I was given a row from one of the staff with the way I was dressed. I tried telling him it was because they had taken my clothes, but he wasn't interested.
82. In Greenock we still had to do slopping out in the mornings. There were also times when we were supposed to have visits, but they were cancelled with no notice or reason given. On some occasions this was the same as our meals, sometimes our canteen slips would go missing and we would not get anything.
83. After having run away and being in Greenock YOI I wanted to go back to Kibble but the decision made was that I was to be sent to Kerelaw Secure Unit. It was around the [REDACTED] time and I was still fourteen.

Routine at Kerelaw Secure Unit, Stevenson, Ayrshire

84. I was picked up from Greenock by the staff from Kerelaw and transferred there. Like St Marys, Kerelaw had two separate sets of buildings, one for secure and another was an open unit. The secure and the open each had three units and each unit had eight

children. Two of the units were mixed boys and girls and the third one was supposed to be for boys involved in sex offences. The system obviously did not want those type of inmates mixing with girls. It was often there were spaces in that unit with less sex offenders having been detained. That was the unit where I was sent. The ages of the kids there were the same again, teenagers up to sixteen.

- 85. The building was an old dark rough cast grey house from the 1970's/1980's. The upstairs were separated into three sections with rooms in each of them. Each person had their own bedroom. There was a gymnasium which was shared with the open unit. It was always a bit vague when you were allowed to use the gym. It was up to the staff when you were given access, there was no set routine.
- 86. There was a fence around the grounds so you knew you could not get out. The fence was not built properly because one time part of it blew down with some high winds.
- 87. Once more the day to day routine was the same as all the other placements I had been in.

Leisure

- 88. One of the things that I did learn when I was in Kerelaw was one of the staff, I can't remember his name, taught me how to play cribbage. We might bet against each other for some cups of tea to add some fun to the game.

Visits

- 89. With regard to the social work it was once more only if there was a review or a Panel. If someone was getting near the end of their sentence then there would be more contact, part of this was because they would have to carry out checks on any addresses you were going to, to see if they were suitable. I had the phone number for their office if I needed to speak to them.

90. These arrangements I later found out were not as good as in prison life. When in custody at a prison you were allocated a personnel officer. That officer would be your main point of contact and the officer would prepare any reports on you that were required.

Family

91. I did get a visit from my mother and she saw that by that time I was emotionally damaged as I had spent nearly two years, either in secure units or in prison, without any family contact.

Discipline

92. There was never any violence during my time either against me or to any of the occupants in the secure unit. If we did anything wrong it was loss of privileges, like my television being taken away. It was an intense atmosphere in the secure side. It was made that way by the way the staff treated you. If I was arguing or misbehaving one of the punishments was I might have been put into the cell for a while.
93. On the other side if you had behaved and gathered some good points with the staff you were given a choice of the classes you wanted to be in on a Friday.

Abuse at Kerelaw Secure Unit, Stevenson, Ayrshire

94. At Kerelaw the punishment cell where we might be sent if we had misbehaved particularly bad. It did not have to be anything bad to be placed in the cell, even minor transgressions could see you being put in the cell.
95. The problem was that someone had carried a dirty protest and smeared faeces all over the inside of the door. The staff never cleaned this off. Every time one of the kids was sent there, they had to put up with the dirt. If that ever happened in a prison there

were trained people who would come in wearing proper clothing and have the place cleaned and disinfected. This would be done immediately.

96. Another time I was put in the cell and the window, one of the long thin windows was not closing properly and it was freezing in the cell. I had no clothes other than my boxer shorts as the staff took my clothes off me before I went in. When I came out I found they had taken scissors to the laces on my shoes. That never helped the atmosphere with the staff, not only did I get punished by being put in the cell, but they went for my clothes when I came out.

Leaving Kerelaw Secure Unit, Stevenson, Ayrshire

97. At the end of my time at Kerelaw Secure I thought I would be going back to St Mary's but I found out that they did not want me back there. The Number One, Paul Johnstone, decided I would be moved from the secure to the open side. There was no plan or anything, I was just moved without any notice.

Routine at Kerelaw Residential School, Stevenson, Ayrshire

98. The open unit at Kerelaw had four units, two for boys and two for girls. Each of the units probably had about fifteen occupants. The ages were the same as the secure unit where it was teenagers up to about sixteen. I was fifteen when I moved to the open unit.
99. The atmosphere was not as caring or loving in how the staff approached the children they were looking after. The children were always in fear of the staff. I think the open unit was worse than the secure side. The problem was if someone was scared they never knew who to approach to try and sort out any issue.

Mornings and bedtime

100. Most of the regimes I witnessed were much the same, after getting everyone up it was down for breakfast. Then we did any school work for the day. After school in the afternoon there was time to play. We had our tea in the evening and maybe something in the evening. The places had this basic routine but that must have been similar to what happens in most families.

Leisure time

101. As in the secure unit if we had behaved the staff would take us out in the van and we could go to Laser Quest and the amusements.

Trips and holidays

102. I can remember we were taken to Alton Towers for a week's holiday. We usually slept in the tents in the campsite area. It was usually three or four of us boys and two members of staff. Another place we might be taken out for the day would down to Saltcoats or Ardrossan.
103. Each unit had a Ford Galaxy or a minibus available. When we went out one member of staff would sleep in the motor and the other member of staff would sleep in a tent.

Christmas/Birthday

104. In most of the places I stayed in we might be given some money on our birthday. When it came to Christmas most of the kids would have gone home to their family. I did get home a few times. I seem to remember that if I was not at home, that all the homes tried to make an effort for Christmas. We might have been given some money and they would put on something nice for the Christmas dinner. They might even get us a Chinese meal and maybe a film from the video shop. It is hard to replicate what you see being advertised on television. In the prisons they did put some decorations up and you would be able to listen to the Christmas songs on the radio.

School

105. Education in the open unit was much less formal. If you wanted you were allowed to leave the class. There were too many distractions and that made you want to leave the class and go and do something else, like snooker or pool.

Visits/Inspections

106. There were inspections carried out here. If the Inspectors were due to arrive the staff chose who had done really well in classwork and show that person's work to the inspectors.

Family contact

107. Mum had visited me at the open unit and things got better with her. She was allowed to take me out for an hour's access and we would go to Pizza Hut or McDonalds. When I had built up enough trust I was allowed home for a night and then eventually for the weekend. The staff gave me money for the train and I travelled on my own to stay with my mum. I was really happy to see my family again but it did not happen enough. At Kerelaw this was only when I was in the open unit. Social work would not help when I was in secure because of the court orders.

Discipline

108. There was one time I was in trouble with the staff where I fell out with one of the other boys. I got into a fight with him. As a punishment they sent me to Kerelaw Secure Unit for one night. Sometimes I would see either the start of the staff restraining kids or sometimes the end of it.
109. Sometimes you would see that someone in the unit had bruises and it was not from any fall out with other boys, it was from the staff. You never questioned what happened

as there was no one to speak to as the other staff did not accept they might have been in the wrong.

Abuse at Kerelaw Residential School, Stevenson, Ayrshire

110. One of the times I was coming back to the home having visited mum. This would have been in 1999/2000. When I was in the home me and one of the other boys decided we were going outside. We climbed out of the window and went to smoke some hash near the burn at the back of the unit. We went back inside about nine o'clock.
111. The night shift staff told the day staff we had absconded for two hours. As I was going to the showers and was only wearing my boxers and carrying my shower gel. Two of the day staff, **LED** and **LEC** approached me in the laundry room while I was collecting a clean towel. They blamed me for the other boy absconding saying I had bullied him and **LEC** suddenly shoved me. I stumbled back and dropped my shower gel. I bent down to pick it up and that was when **LEC** smashed his shoulder into my face and burst my nose. **LEC** did it but **LED** never said anything and did not try to stop him. Because I never reacted they did not know what to do. They were waiting for me to kick off so they could inflict more pain on me. Because I did not react they walked away. I had to use the towel to stop the blood and was walking down the stairs passed some of the other boys.
112. After my shower I telephoned my lawyer who then contacted the police. The police came to the home and I gave a statement. I was moved to another unit but still saw **LED** and **LEC** when we went for our meals. As a result of my complaint there was no action taken against either of them. There was no proper investigation by any of the other managers.

Leaving Kerelaw Residential School, Stevenson, Ayrshire

113. I was in Kerelaw open unit for nearly a year. Just before it was time for me to leave the social work were looking at different places for me to be sent to. One of the places being considered was Aycliffe in England. They did not want me there and I was told there was no room at Rossie Farm, another place being considered.
114. In the end I had been arguing with someone at Kerelaw and I was taken to the office. I was then told that I would be leaving and would be going to Geilsland School in Beith. The staff said that one of the reasons I was being moved was for the safety of one of other residents who had told them he was upset with me and he was threatening to commit suicide. The issue from my point of view was it was just an argument between two boys. I think the staff were looking for any excuse to move me out. Previously a manager, I think his name was [REDACTED] had quoted that the only reason I was in the open side was to give me enough rope to hang myself.

Routine at Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire

115. I was fifteen when I went to Geilsland. This was supposed to be a temporary placement but I ended up being there for nine months. The home was run by a church, possibly the Church of Scotland, it was definitely not the council. I would be guessing but I think it might have been the staff from Kerelaw that took me to Geilsland.
116. The main building had the offices and each of the units were in there own separate buildings. I had a woman who was allocated as my key worker, I don't know her name.
117. There were three or four units with ten or twelve children in each. It would be no more than fifty maximum. It was older teenage boys in there, with the youngest being around fourteen and up to sixteen or seventeen. The boys were from all different backgrounds but mostly from the childcare system. One of the units there was where people who had been involved in sex offences or had some mental health issues. I was allocated Cunningham unit, but I am not sure of the names of the others.

Morning/evenings

118. The regime at Geilsland was much the same as any other placement I had. You were up in the morning, showered and having breakfast. We then went to whatever classroom work the home had organised. We broke for lunch and back to schoolwork in the afternoon. When we finished school we had a little time for ourselves and play football, snooker and generally fill some time in before our tea. There was free time in the evening, sometimes we were taken out, other times it was play games, watch television, before going to bed at night.

Leisure time

119. The staff allocated to our unit stayed with that unit. If they were taking anyone out, it would only be kids from their own unit.

School

120. As well as normal classes there were classes for woodwork, electricians and mechanics. In the normal classes there was not enough stimulation and in some of the classes the boys would be playing cards. During those lessons some of the teachers would have their own private project and would be doing that and just keeping an eye on what the children were doing. The teachers were happy there and there were no problems. This allowed them to do their private project.
121. The teachers came in from the outside and were all qualified in the topic they were trying to teach us.
122. By this time I wanted to leave the place and thought if I was paying a bit more attention it might help me get out of there.

Religious instruction

123. We all had to attend chapel once a week. When we were there we could get to see and speak with kids from the other units. We were only there for about half an hour and then it was back to our usual classes.

Family contact

124. I think the only visits, before I was on more permanent home leave, would have been around the times for Panels or reviews. They could just come down without appointments. I never felt the need for them to visit as the atmosphere was better and I preferred to see them on the outside.

Discipline

125. I can't remember anything specific about the discipline at Geilsland but it would have been along the lines of loss of privileges like home leave. There was no restraining and more talking through any issues.

Leaving Geilsland School, Beith, Ayrshire

126. Towards the end of my time at Geilsland I was there more on a voluntary basis. I was home for six days a week. I would be in Geilsland on a Thursday and leave with everyone else on the Friday. This arrangement had been encouraged by the staff who were helping in building up the relationship between mum and me. I spent a lot of my time with her back in Paisley.
127. When I had left Geilsland completely I was back staying with mum. Not long after being home I got into trouble again. I had been at a house and bought some hash and was chased into a school where I was picked up by the police. They told me I was being charged as a known thief intending to break in. I was buying hash so there was no intent to break in anywhere and they had chased me into the school.

Life after being in care

128. I was having difficulty as I did not know how to do things for myself. I had never been shown what I would need to do as an adult.
129. The package available to me for when I left care did not really exist. There was supposed to be a woman to help bridge the gap between being in the homes and getting my own place. There was a place found for me and I was due to move in there, but when I ended up on remand they let the place go. I was told that they did not know how long I would be in custody and they could not have a place lying empty for too long. They re-allocated the place to someone else. It felt it was easier for me when I was in jail. I would have been given a roof over my head and was fed on a regular basis.
130. I was back in Greenock prison on remand I managed to get High Court bail but when I was released I had no benefits and no address as I was not allowed to be with mum. She took me to the homeless people. I was put up in a hotel in Queen's Park for a while.
131. There was a time when I was late back to Queens Park and a cleaner had disposed of my property. That included all my personal papers, toiletries and phone charger. I was moving about then for about two or three months but when I was allocated my first house that was when I ended being given eleven years for culpable homicide. I was sixteen at this time.
132. Prior to going to Greenock prison I was taken to a Children's Panel. They asked if I wanted to have my supervision order extended. I felt there was less protection for me and I wanted to be transferred to the prison system. I knew because of the murder charge that that was where I was going to end up anyway. This was in [REDACTED] 2001.

133. I then spent the next few years in different prisons. I was back in Greenock, then Barlinnie, which was the worst of them all, back to Greenock, Barlinnie, Polmont, Dumfries, back to Polmont, where I spent my eighteenth birthday. I also spent time in Shotts when I was nineteen, Kilmarnock, Perth, Gateside (Greenock) and back to Perth.
134. When I was in Greenock it was common to be mixed in with the older prisoners. Barlinnie had a separate wing which was for sixteen to twenty one year olds. Polmont and the others were just for over eighteen's.
135. There were lots of psychological issues with some of the regimes. They were interfering with my mail, sometimes not giving me letters that were sent to me. The abuse in prisons by staff was much more regular and consistent. The general public don't believe or understand what we are subjected to and they have more sympathy for the prison staff.
136. There are a lot complaints made against staff in prisons but they have such a strong Union who help keep things under wrap. There were many times when people had injuries, but they could not report it as no one would believe them, in particular the Governor, who always believed the staff first and would protect them.
137. It was also quite common that when you moved around the prisons if they got to know you had previously made a complaint about any staff, then you were given a hard time by the other staff.
138. I had an issue with a prison officer when I was in Polmont. There was a problem when I had handed over a newspaper to the guy in the next door cell. The prison officer got annoyed and was arguing with me. The next morning he came into my cell. He asked if I thought I was a hard man and it was time for a fight. I wasn't getting involved in that. Apart from that he was quite a big guy and could have inflicted a bit of damage. When he left the cell, I saw there were four other officers standing and waiting to join in if necessary.

139. I did have another issue when I was in Polmont. I had an argument with one of the prison staff and ended up fighting with him. I was charged with that and have still to appear at court for that. Six months later the same officer started an argument with me and I ended up being interviewed by the police. They wanted to charge me with four assaults on prison staff. I tried to tell them that on this occasion there was no assault by me and tried to tell them how and why he approached me. When I was finished speaking with the police I went back to the hall. As I walked back into the hall the officer said in front of everyone that he was surprised I was a grass by speaking with the police. I was trying to say that he was the one that fabricated an assault charge on him and two colleagues. But by him calling me a grass that was going to cause me more trouble with the other prisoners.
140. I also saw one prisoner who had just been brought back to Polmont after having given the police the slip out of his handcuffs. When he arrived back an officer demanded he go up the stairs. He took him to the shower area and we could hear them fighting. You could hear the chairs getting thrown about. When the prisoner came back down you could see he was heavily bruised.
141. I was released on licence from the eleven year sentence when I was in Perth in 2006. I was only out six weeks when I was recalled. During that time again I had no support and had no papers for any identification I might have needed for work or benefits. That was the year my dad died.
142. When I was recalled I had to complete the remainder of my sentence. I then spent a couple nights in Greenock, Glenochil for a short time, one week in Shotts, two weeks again at Glenochil, three years at Edinburgh, and nine month at Addiewell, one month at Perth and back to Addiewell where I stayed until my release in 2012. Again when I left there was no support and I had no permanent house.
143. I was out for about six months when I was sentenced for a second time to twenty two years, this was in 2012. I began that sentence in Barlinnie, then Peterhead and I have been in Low Moss ever since.

Impact

144. About three quarters of children in care end up being caught up in the prison system. Sometimes that is not just the care system but can come from other things happening in their lives. It also depends on how children react and how they get on with the staff caring for them. I know from my time in prison I have seen many of the people I was in care with in the different jails. It needs more to help the kids get out of the hole before it gets too far.
145. If you are punished in the home environment you accept that more because that relationship is built on respect and trust. In the care system there is not the same mutual respect because you don't have the long term relationship.
146. I have not had any treatment or counselling. The prison has offered help from the priest in the jail. At the moment that is not something I would like as I would prefer if I was getting counselling it is from a proper nurse/counsellor. On the outside you have more protection about it being kept confidential. Inside the prison system if you say anything people find out easily, very soon after.
147. I am currently on prescription medication to help with my anxiety and depression. I have not had any time in my life to look at any trauma I may have suffered.
148. I have not seen a dentist for eighteen months. I have lost eight teeth from poor health and hygiene. If you needed any fillings you might have a big queue of people waiting for treatment. It would be better if they deal with one person, provided all the treatment needed and take on the next person. The way it is just now if you need three fillings you have to have three appointments.
149. In prison you never feel safe and with Covid restrictions I feel anxiety levels have increased. We are living on a weekend regime, which means later in bed, but locked in cells overnight much earlier than would be normal.

150. Because of my time in care I have never passed any exams, never had my own house, never had a driving licence and never been on a holiday abroad.
151. If I ever got parole I would still have difficulty as I have no formal ID papers. I will probably leave jail without having been shown how to look after myself. I would have hoped that some of the life lessons I should have had when I left the care system, might be given to me when I leave the prison system. I would hope that the prison system could take that on board for all as it would help in the rehabilitation process and stop people getting involved in crime to support them when they are on the outside.
152. I get on with some of my family but don't get on so well with others. They are much the same in that they get on with some of us and not with others,

Reporting of Abuse

153. In 2005/2006 when I was in custody at Perth Prison the police came to see me. They told me they were making enquiries about different incidents about that happened in Kerelaw. I told them about the incident in the laundry room and that I have never been told anything from their enquiry at that time.
154. When I was staying in Kerelaw I was aware of some of the staff John Muldoon, FSR LEJ I don't know his surname. Elaine Graham and Matt George. Although I did not have any issues with them I am aware from reports in the media, that they were involved in abuse involving some of the residents under their care. I was interviewed by the police about those members of staff.
155. John Muldoon was the manager of one of the units and had been investigated for abusing boys and girls. He was accused of touching some of the young girls in an inappropriate manner. Another allegation was that he had put a shotgun into the mouth of a boy he was abusing. Despite the boy giving a description of the gun the police did

not believe him, but that changed when they found out he had a licence for a shotgun and it matched the description given by the boy.

156. There were complaints that [FSR] would have some pupils lined up against a wooden partitioning wall in the gym. As the boys stood there he would strike golf balls at them. If he hit them, he would give them a fag or allow them out for the weekend early. Again the police did not believe those boys but when they examined the ply board wall they saw all the marks similar to the balls having struck there.
157. Elaine Graham had a relationship with a fifteen year old resident and even took him away for weekends. She fell pregnant to that boy. She was eventually convicted and she was sentenced to three years in jail. I was even asked if I had been involved with her, but I wasn't.
158. Matt George was convicted of abusing several boys. He would encourage me and the other boys to go back to his house where the abuse took place. He did not abuse me but I heard one boy was blindfolded and raped. At the trial some of the boys were not strong enough to give their evidence and he was found guilty of only twenty of the eighty five charges and jailed.
159. I have not thought about reporting any of the incidents since I was an adult. I am not sure anything I would report from the past will be dealt with today.
160. It must be more difficult for people to abuse children in care with most having mobile phones. I hope this is the case.

Records

161. I have copies of my own prison records and want to get access to my social work records. My sister, [REDACTED] has tried twice to get our records but they have not got back to her to say how they are getting on or if there is any problem.

162. When she was fifteen I had built up the relationship with my sister [REDACTED]. She was eventually allowed to visit me. I wrote a letter to her which the staff at Geilsland refused to hand over to her. They told me that the letter was being placed into her records as it contained things that were not appropriate for her. They would not tell her what it was. I told her there is nothing wrong in the letter and it was only some family photographs. She have still not seen that letter as she can't get access to the records.

Lessons to be learned

163. There were times when an inmate was seen by the governor to have a black eye. The governor carried out an investigation into it and he was informed by the staff involved that the inmate had refused to get out of his bed and a struggle took place. That wasn't the case as he did get out of the bed and was upset and set the sprinkler off, which annoyed the staff and they punched him in the face. He told the governor his side of the incident but the governor refused to believe him saying his staff would not do that sort of thing. That just gave the staff the freedom to do what they wanted.
164. One of things I found out about relationships with staff while I was in care was if you had a dominant manager then that type of behaviour and atmosphere would be passed down to the other staff. If there was anyone with a decent outlook they ended up just following the dominant nature of the one in charge. These places need to have good managers willing to put better practises in place.
165. There needs to be more encouragement from care staff to help kids where the children have perhaps fallen behind with school work. People should recognise that and other issues and provide the encouragement to help them. There were some during my time in care who went out of their way for me and it made me appreciate what they were doing for me. On the other hand there were many who used their position to hurt kids.
166. You can't regulate what staff see as bullying as they don't see the whole picture. It comes down to staff having the right heart to look at all the information and taking it all under consideration before coming to the right conclusion. They should not be prejudiced from the outset. Staff are also prejudiced when something is said to them

or something happens to them. You see a difference where an inmate could have a fight and sustain a broken jaw and in comparison a member of staff could be shouted at. You will be treated more harshly for the shouting than being involved in the fight and someone being seriously hurt.

167. Foster care provides a better chance to build relationships and trust, like being in a family environment. Being placed into a children's home means you miss out on all that. On the other hand there are times when you are in a foster family that you are treated less than their own children and made to feel like an outsider. In balance I think I preferred the children's home as I don't think I could fit into someone's idea of what a family would expect.
168. The education system in the homes is too relaxed, where kids get to do a lot of what they want. Instead of being taught they are sitting playing games or watching television. If there was more respect maybe they could provide better education where you might learn some life skills. Perhaps there should be a reward scheme where you would be encouraged to work harder in the classroom. The one downside is where a child is constantly being moved from one place to another and no time to build up any relationship.
169. I have the mental capacity to take things on and can learn more. I will still leave the prison system with no paper qualifications, but will hopefully have some life skills.
170. The problem I had with the care system in comparison with the prison system was that when you are sent to prison you know when you would be released. That is never the case when you are in care, you stay until they decide it was time to go home or be released.
171. I accept that people in authority have in the past and will continue to make mistakes. It is just that being in authority they also have the power not to accept that and go on to use that authority to hurt people.

172. Perhaps if prison staff were more understanding then perhaps prisoners would be able to build up better relationships and get into less trouble. The prison system does not have anything in place to help long term prisoners. As far as they are concerned you are in their custody for so many years it is not worth spending money on you.
173. The reason for me coming forward to the Inquiry is to try and help kids in the future and to make sure these things don't happen again. I want to see improvements in the care system to help protect the children. As far as the prison system is concerned they need to treat people who are in custody between sixteen and eighteen much better. They need to consider that those people are still children.

Other information

174. Kids in the homes all have camera phones nowadays. The kids do wind staff up but they only start recording when the staff are carrying out punishments. They only show half a story.
175. One of the improvements that could be made is the use of cameras worn by staff at children's homes. I understand there are sensitivity issues but the overall sake of the children would benefit them as it may cut down the mistreatment of them. If used properly they would cut down the abuse of children. It would also cut down the number of malicious complaints made about staff.
176. Cameras should also be introduced in the prison system. They are already used by the private prison in Kilmarnock. It would definitely help the rest of the prison system as it protects both sides.
177. 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.. ^{LCX} [REDACTED]

Dated..... 3-2-22