

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

GLP

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GLP. My date of birth is 1982. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

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

2. I was born in Dunfermline and for the first three months I stayed in the family home in Inverkeithing. In the house there was my mum, and my father, . Also in the house was my older brother and we were joined a year later by my brother . As the family grew we moved to another house in Cowdenbeath.
3. When I was between the ages of four and five my mum and dad split up. For the next year my brothers and I went to stay with my dad when he moved to Lanarkshire. After that year with dad I moved back to stay with mum, who was now in Rosyth. When I was staying with mum the atmosphere between her and me was not great. She was always showing preference to my two brothers and she looked at me as the outcast. I was also having some arguments with mum as I did not like that she was seeing different men. Mum was looking to have me placed into care as soon as possible. At this time I was not getting on well at school and was expelled for fighting with a teacher.
4. The social work were involved with the family during this time and Helen Cameron tried to help with the problems in the house. Helen worked in the Cowdenbeath office and remained my social worker throughout my time in care. My mum was still not happy and between her and Helen, they came to the decision that I was to be deemed out with parental control.

### **Ovenstone Residential School, Pittenweem, Fife**

5. I was about eight years old when Helen Cameron, moved me from mum's house to Ovenstone. I stayed at Ovenstone for about three years, until I was old enough to be going to the High School.

#### *First day*

6. When I arrived I saw that the main residential building was very large. To the right of the main building was a separate smaller building where the school was. It was only boys that were in the home when I stayed there. I am not certain about ages but they were all of primary school age. I am also not sure how many stayed in the home, but there was anywhere between twenty and fifty.
7. I can't remember who was in charge of the home but the staff were made up of both males and females. One of the teachers at the school was Angela Munn, who was from St Andrews. Vivien Richardson was another member of staff who looked after the residential side of the home during the day time.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

8. The routine during the day was we were woken by staff and after getting a wash, we made our way to the dining room for our breakfast. After finishing we were in the school until lunch time, where we were back to the dining room for our meal. After school we had some free time, before our tea.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

9. I can't remember much about the food we had at the home. The only thing I remember is that we all ate in the dining room.

### *Leisure time*

10. I can remember one Saturday when I was on home leave, Angela Munn, a teacher, picked me up at my house, along with her husband. They took me to watch a football match at Ibrox. Despite being a Celtic supporter I still thought that was a nice thing for them to do.

### *School*

11. There were between six and eight pupils in each class, which was separated by age. I never really enjoyed being in the classroom at the school. I preferred to be outside in the park playing sports, especially football. There were also bicycles available, which I enjoyed. The school put us through our cycling proficiency while we stayed there.

### *Healthcare*

12. I did not see any doctor or dentist when I was at Ovenstone and cannot remember any reason for me to see them.

### *Visits*

13. I think, Helen Cameron, my social worker visited me at the school.

### *Family contact*

14. When I stayed in Ovenstone I was allowed home at weekends. I would spend my time with mum, but she was always glad when I was going back to the home on the Sunday. I did not see much of my dad as he was always working. During the home visits I would also see my brothers.

### *Discipline*

15. There was a male member of staff who covered the night shift at the home. I don't remember his name. Quite regularly he would say that I was being disruptive in the dormitory. I wasn't, but there were other boys who were. He made me move to a separate room, where I slept on my own.
16. When I stayed at Ovenstone I was never physically hit or abused by any of the staff.

### **Leaving Ovenstone Residential School, Pittenweem, Fife**

17. When I was at the age of eleven maybe twelve and due to change to the High School, I was told that I would have to leave Ovenstone. I was told that the next place I would be moved to was Linwood Hall in Leven. Linwood Hall is [REDACTED] to where I am staying now and on a daily basis it brings back the memories of the all the bad days in there. I have even tried walking around the building just to see if that would help get rid of the memories, but it never helped.

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

18. I am sure that it was during [REDACTED] that I was moved from Ovenstone to Linwood Hall. I think I was taken there in the school bus. I don't remember there being any induction when I arrived.

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

19. [REDACTED] GLQ [REDACTED] GLT [REDACTED] GLU [REDACTED] HPH [REDACTED] and Charles Paterson were some of the staff I can remember at Linwood Hall. Charles was one of the staff who was good to me and did not seem to like how the others treated the children.

Sometimes if the staff had used restraints on me or were angry with me, Charles would take me outside for a cigarette, to try and calm everything down.

20. I am not sure how many kids were in my dormitory but the boys were kept separate from the girls.

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

21. We would be woken by staff in the morning. As long as I had not wet myself, I would get washed and into the dining hall for breakfast. We were in the school for around nine o'clock and apart from lunch, would be there until finishing time around three thirty. In the afternoon we would have some free time before tea. All were in bed for around nine o'clock.

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

22. Food was not very good while I was at Linwood. Some of the meals were served to us cold. It never bothered the staff. There were times if the staff were upset with me, they would not allow me to have my meal and would send me to my room.

#### *Leisure time*

23. In the early days at the home the staff had access to motor bikes and we would go riding them up in the old Bings near Leven.
24. Some of the leisure time the staff would take us kids out for a while in the minibus. I could not go because of my problem with wetting myself and was too scared and embarrassed to sit with the other kids in the minibus. I just had to stay back at the home.
25. Even when I was playing football the older boys would not mix with me. As we played they were always trying to trip me up.

### *School*

26. At Linwood there were more classes than we had at Ovenstone, but the size of the class groups was the same, between six and eight in the each group. The classes were a mix of boys and girls.

### *Healthcare*

27. There were no visits to the doctors or dentist. I do not recall any treatment after the swimming pool incident, described later.

### *Work*

28. We would be asked to clean up after ourselves, but there were no allocated chores.

### *Family contact*

29. When I had weekend leave at Linwood my mum did not want me to come to the house and sometimes I would spend time at my dad's. If I was not staying at Linwood I would be sent to a foster family for the weekend. That would not be the same family, but different people. Later I would be sent to a place called Rimbleton.

### *Running away*

30. I did try to run away a lot, but I never went far and would just hang around the local streets. Sometimes I was so hungry I might have stolen some food from shops.

### *Bed Wetting*

31. At Linwood Hall, with all the abuse happening to me, I suffered from bed wetting and sometimes I wet myself during the day. I would change my sheets but the staff would tell other staff and the other kids that "Pishie" had wet the bed again. As if that was not enough they would throw the sheets down on the floor.

32. On the many times this happened the staff would not allow me to go to the bathroom to get cleaned up and insisted I go down to the dining hall for my breakfast. I was obviously still smelling from having wet the bed and no one wanted to sit beside me.
33. If I had wet myself during the day I would try to get washed up. I never had many sets of clothes and sometimes even if the staff allowed me to get washed I had to put the same clothes back on. When I was being restrained by the staff I could hear some of them calling me "Pishie".
34. I can remember sometimes when I had wet myself during the day that the staff would make me stand outside the building in my soiled clothes. I would have to stay there until they dried. I was then made to walk around the rest of the day in those clothes.
35. There were times as I would be walking along the corridor that some of the staff would stand to the side, right into the wall, they would be calling me "Stinkie" as I walked passed them.

#### **Rimbleton House, Rimbleton Park, Glenrothes**

36. When I was about thirteen, maybe fourteen, Linwood Hall stopped being a residential school and I would spend the nights at Rimbleton House and back to Linwood in the morning. At the weekends I could not go home to mum so again spent my weekends at Rimbleton. The social work would pay for a taxi to take me from Linwood to Rimbleton each school day and pick me up the following morning.
37. At Rimbleton House there was a member of staff there, Dave Pipe. He used to work at Linwood but he had left there as he was unhappy with the way some of the staff treated the children. When he was at Rimbleton I always found he was a good guy.
38. After a couple of years I had a change of heart and found that I wanted to try and change a few things and see if I could get through the weeks without getting into



trouble. This worked for me and when I was about fourteen instead of going to Rimbleton House I was able to go and stay with my dad at weekends.

### **Abuse at Linwood Hall, Leven, Fife**

39. We used to go to Leven swimming pool with [GLQ], staff member, supervising us. One of those days when we were in the changing rooms, me and some of the other boys were playing about and hitting each other with wet towels. [GLQ] came over to us and started shouting and swearing at us, telling us to get dressed. My pal who I was mucking about with got dressed and left the changing room. I was standing near to [GLQ] and without any warning he stuck the head on me. I was shaking as a result and not knowing what I had done wrong for him to do that. He turned to me and said "Never mind son, just do as you're told the next time".
40. Another of the sporting activities we did was football and [GLQ] was also the football coach. We were playing against Melville House and I had taken the ball on a run but lost it. The team were annoyed with me and they started shouting at me. The next thing I was aware of was [GLQ] had rugby tackled me and jumped on my back. He was using some sort of restraint on me. I know the difference between a legal restraint and what he was doing. He was forcing my arms up my back. He got me down to the ground and was pushing his knees into my back. I was screaming in pain and throughout this he seemed to be enjoying hurting me.
41. When [GLQ] had jumped on me he was not aware that my cousin, [REDACTED] was playing for Melville. He tried to help, but was not strong enough to take [GLQ] on. One of the staff from Melville House grabbed [REDACTED] and took him away.
42. [GLT] was [SNR], or similar, of the home. I can't remember what he thought I had done wrong, but one day he was trying to use a restraint on me. As he did that he banged the back of my head off the floor. I can recall other times again while he was trying to use a restraint on me he would have me on the floor lying on my front and was pushing my head with his knee as hard as he could into the floor. All



these was not for being violent or anything, but for misbehaving, like most children do as they grow up.

43. Another time I was being restrained was by another member of staff, **GLU** who told everyone I had tried to hit him. I definitely had not tried to hit him or any other staff.
44. **HPH** was another member of staff who would regularly use restraints on me.
45. One of the days I was being restrained there were three or four of staff involved. I was being held face down on the floor. Somebody was holding my head against the floor, along with possibly two others, one on each leg, and someone was pushing a knee into my back.
46. On almost a daily basis I was being restrained by different members of staff, but I was never aware of the reason where they could justify restraining me and pushing their knees into my back with their full weight. A lot of them would say to me "It's no wonder your mum and dad don't want you".
47. There was a female member of staff at the home, **GLS** who had long brown hair. I don't remember her last name but she was only about seventeen years of age and a student. I found some of her behaviour to be inappropriate in the way she would stroke my hair. One of those times, when I was about thirteen, we were in one of the upstairs rooms, away from the reception and staff area. As she stroked my hair she leaned in and kissed me. That was how she behaved with me but some of the older boys would brag about having had sex with her. If that was a guy doing those things everyone would be up in arms about it, so how is it okay for a woman to do it?

### **Reporting of abuse at Linwood Hall, Leven, Fife**

48. I could not report any of the abuse as most, but not all of the staff were involved in some way, either physically or mentally. I did try to tell Helen Cameron, my social worker, but her attitude was I was misbehaving and therefore deserved it.
49. There was a police officer who stayed just over the back of the home. I only remember his first name as Mike. He is retired now but still stays there. He was quite friendly with me and some of the other boys in the home. Sometimes he would let me and some of the others visit him in his house. One day when I went to see him I told him about how the staff were behaving against me. He said there was not much he could do as it was my word against theirs.

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

50. When I was fifteen I was told that I was to be moved from Linwood. I am not sure if it was because I had made the improvements or because there was not going to a place for me. I am still not sure, but not long after I moved out Linwood closed down. I was transferred to Geilsland School in Beith.

### **Geilsland House School, Beith**

51. When I moved to Geilsland School I was placed into the flat for older boys. I had my own room and during this time staff were supposed to help me getting ready for being in the adult world.
52. The staff also showed us how to complete different forms. This was so when we left we were able to apply for housing and any benefits. I was taken to a career office but that did not help me.

53. I am not sure how many kids were in the home but they were all boys and of High school age.

### **Routine at Geilsland House School, Beith**

#### *Mealtimes/Food*

54. I don't remember a lot about the food other than it was okay. In the unit we all sat in a small dining room and had our meals together. The staff cooked all our meals.

#### *Leisure time*

55. There was plenty of grounds outside for us to play when we had some free time. I liked to play football there. There was one member of staff, John Traynor, who was really good to me. He was an ex professional footballer, who had been a goalkeeper for Ayr United. He would let me practice taking shots against him while he kept goal.
56. When I had been at Geilsland for a little while I was given a day pass. This meant I was able to go to Glasgow for the day and had to be back at the home at night.

#### *School*

57. The school lessons were held within Geisland and were normal class work. They did offer additional education for pupils to learn some trades such as being an electrician.

#### *Healthcare*

58. For my issue with wetting myself, I was given an appointment with the local doctor in Beith. I don't know his name but he prescribed me a nasal spray, I am not sure of the name of that medication, but it did help me.

### *Family contact*

59. When I was at Geilsland for a few months and trust had been built up, I was allowed weekend leave to stay with my dad. If I misbehaved one of the punishments would be that my weekend pass would be cancelled.

### *Running away*

60. I did run away, not long after I had been assaulted when my nose was broken. Me and another boy from Glasgow ran away together. He made his way to Paisley, while I made my way to Fife. I was away about eight days. I knew I couldn't go any longer as I had no money. I went to the social work at Cowdenbeath and asked if Helen Cameron would help me and give some sort of grant. Instead she phoned the local police station which was situated across the road from their office and I was taken back to Geilsland. I don't remember if anything happened but I probably had a loss of privileges,

### *Bed Wetting*

61. I was still having issues with wetting myself, at night and during the day. There were different members of staff who would call me names like "Pishie". It wasn't just the staff but some of the other children in the home.
62. If I did wet the bed I washed my own sheets. The problem was if one of the other children in the flat found out they would make sure to tell everyone else in the home.
63. If I did wet myself I was allowed to have a shower or a bath to get myself cleaned up. The only problem was I didn't have enough clothes and the staff would not help me and it meant I had to sit the rest of the day in the wet clothes.

### **Abuse at Geilsland House School, Beith**

64. One of the staff, GHS, was a bully. There was one occasion when he assaulted me and punched me in the face and I sustained a broken nose. He was one of the staff who called me "Pishie".
65. There was another member of staff, GLR, who assaulted me. One night he came to the room but I never heard him arriving. He said he was shouting on me, but I tried saying I never heard him. He then came right up to me and punched me in the ribs. He told me that I better keep my mouth shut.
66. After the GHS incident happened, when I had been at Geilsland for nearly a year. I was not taking any more of the staff hitting me and demanded to make a phone call. I phoned my dad and told him what happened. He told me he would come through and sort the staff out. I was persuaded that this might not be the best answer and could cause more problems. I decided to tell dad not to come. The staff just swept it all under the carpet.

### **Leaving Geilsland House School, Beith**

67. As soon as I was sixteen I was allowed to leave Geilsland. I think it was on my birthday that I was told I was leaving

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

68. Some time ago, perhaps eight years ago, I was contacted by the police in Glasgow. They told me they were making enquiries about incidents at Geilsland. At that time I was not ready to speak to anyone and refused to give any statement. I wish now that I had talked to them because it might have helped someone else.

69. When Linwood Hall closed they moved the unit and some of the staff to a new place called [REDACTED], based at Rosyth. In the last ten years I have seen GLQ [REDACTED] working there and can only presume he still is working there, looking after other kids.
70. During my time in care there was very little formal education and as a result I left care with no school qualifications. That put me in an impossible situation trying to get any job. I just felt like the authorities did not help me and I started rebelling against all types of authority.
71. When I left my time in care I was an angry young man. I found it really difficult to cope with the memories of the abuse and turned to drink and alcohol. Instead of being able to go out into the adult and have some sort of working life, as I would have done if I was not in care, my life turned upside down. I turned to drink and drugs and for the next many years, until I was about thirty, I spent most of that period in and out of the prison system.
72. I have a fourteen year old daughter. I was involved in a short term relationship with her mother, but that relationship did not work out.
73. In the last ten years I have been with my partner, [REDACTED]. She has helped support me through all my issues. Since we have been together, apart from a short spell in prison for breaching a drug rehabilitation order, I have been out of trouble.
74. Since about 2013/14 I have no longer been getting involved with the wrong company and I am currently on a rehabilitation programme, being prescribed Methadone. I am also prescribed strong anti-psychotic drugs. I am working to be strong enough to wean off the Methadone and begin my life drug free. I will have to continue with the anti-psychotic medication for some time yet.



## **Impact**

75. I remember very early in my time in care that my dad spoke with social workers and asked them to provide proper help for me. He warned them at that time that he could see that if I did not get that help that I would spend my life in and out of prison. Due to them not providing proper support that is exactly what happened.
76. I have no self-respect or dignity. I believe that if I had been given proper education and been looked after properly when I was in care I would be in a much better position in life. I am always asking [REDACTED] if I am smelling in anyway. I know in reality I am not because I spend so much time scrubbing myself. That is just me reacting to when I was young.
77. My memory is really bad and has been for many years. There are times I can't find my medication and get into a bad sweat worrying about it. I blame this from all the banging of my head by the staff at Linwood Hall. All that abuse had to have affected my brain function.

## **Reporting of Abuse**

78. Since leaving the care system I have never reported any of the abuse to the police or any other authority. The main reason is I did not think anyone would believe what happened to me.

## **Records**

79. I do not have any of my records from my time in care. It is something I have wanted but did not know how to go about this. Some of the places still exist or have moved to new premises or been rebranded. I will again speak with Future Pathways for some advice about getting those records.

### Lessons to be learned

80. I just want the abuse of children in care to stop and the social work to provide proper help. Perhaps if the social work had listened to me when I did try to report some of the abuse, they could have made me a different person. I don't want what happened to me to happen to any children currently in care.

### Other information

81. My partner, [REDACTED], saw a newspaper article saying that investigations were being carried out into abuse at Ovenstone. As a result I made contact the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. They provided some help by putting me in touch with Future Pathways. They too have already helped with some finances and are still helping me with some other matters.
82. At this time I have never had any counselling or spoken with any psychiatrist. I am hoping Future Pathways may be able to help me there.
83. Fife Council need to start some of the repair by starting to apologise for the abusive staff they allowed to be employed in the homes that they ran.
84. I hope by coming forward I can now move on with my life and put a lot of the abuse behind me. It has been good for me to come to the Inquiry and have someone listen to me.
85. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed <sup>GLP</sup> [REDACTED] .....

Dated 28/9/2021 .....