

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PSB

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is PSB. My date of birth is 1958. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. When I left school I did an apprenticeship in electronics, shortly after that I worked with the elderly. Then I worked at Algrade. After I was released from prison, I did a joint honours degree in Sociology and Psychology. I was awarded a first. I am now retired.

Algrade Trust, Humble, East Lothian

2. I worked at Algrade Trust. During my time there, Algrade Trust looked after vulnerable persons. The majority were adults with learning difficulties. I call these adults 'residents' in this statement. Algrade started off as a children's village before I worked there. Then it became Algrade.
3. My first impression of Algrade Trust was a warm welcome at the initial visit.
4. There were four elderly women in charge of the establishment. They were called Betty and Mina Waugh, Jean McRae, and Rosa. There were not many staff in the establishment. The culture of Algrade Trust was that it was very organised, with a strong emphasis on Christian values which was 'over the top'. My first vision of Algrade was it was Christian, but the emphasis was more on the religious part. They could have done more with the residents. They didn't let the residents prosper. They would get the old ladies to knit their clothes rather than take them to Marks and Spencer.

They bought scooters for the residents but that was for show, for when the social workers came. One time the scooters were out on display for a social work visit. The residents were only allowed to go down the hill on them and back again. The residents weren't out on them very often at all. Once, we went for a longer journey and I followed the residents.

5. I would describe the attitude of the staff towards the residents as not allowing the residents to grow both physically and emotionally, although not all residents were always treated as such. Betty treated one resident with more compassion partly because she had a heart murmur, The women in charge insisted that the residents referred to the staff as 'Auntie', for example 'Auntie Mina'.

My time at Algrade Trust

6. I worked at Algrade Trust for roughly ten years, from about 1986 to 1996, from the age of 28 to 38. I had no actual job title. My marriage broke down and I was in bits. My house was ransacked by people I thought were my friends. A friend invited me to go to the church at Pathhead, Midlothian.. I met the old ladies who ran Algrade at the coffee lounge there. They took to me. I was offered a position editing Christian videos from America which were handed out to people and shown at church services. Eventually they asked me if I would work with the residents at Algrade. I worked in Christian video as well as keeping an eye on male residents. I worked more often with the Christian videos. I didn't apply for the position, and I didn't have to give references. I did not have a probation period, or any formal qualifications needed for the role.
7. My line managers were the four ladies in charge of Algrade, Betty, Mina, Jean, and Rosa. They resided on the property. I saw them every day, however there was no appraisal or monitoring of my performance during my time there, that I knew of.
8. Algrade Trust provided me with no training whatsoever and I learned skills through performing day to day tasks.

Structure and recruitment of staff

9. Betty and Mina Waugh, Jean, and Rosa were in charge of Algrade. You didn't go to Mina for much, Rosa was the 'lady' and looked after the furnishing of the houses and the girls. They spent most of their time at the Church coffee lounge in Pathhead. Jean was the headmistress. Betty was the boss. There was an older woman called Beatrice who looked after the girls' cottage and made clothes for the residents, and her husband Jim did who handyman work. There weren't a lot of full-time staff, only about five and there were others who came in part-time. There was a lady who in came during the day to do laundry. There were four cottages, and each cottage had one member of staff, sometimes. The people who worked at Algrade were all Christians involved with the Church.
10. The leadership style of the ladies was to lead by their Faith only, no matter what. Their heart was in the right place, but they wanted things done their own way. They were adamant about that. I wasn't strong enough to say no to them, staff would be in tears. The ladies would stop speaking to you and there would be a bad atmosphere. With hindsight, I think religious organisations are often like that. Near the end of my time there, I did start to stand up to them because I had had enough.
11. I was not involved in the recruitment of staff at Algrade, and I don't have knowledge of any recruitment policies.
12. Volunteers were church minded. I wasn't aware of full-time or part-time volunteers, apart from one couple who lived in Humbie. They came down and helped, the lady with the girls and the man with Christian video, driving, and odd jobs. I don't remember their names. Vetting was not done, it was the exception because of Faith. If the ladies thought people were Christian then they thought they were alright.
13. I don't know if any references were obtained by Algrade from former places of work. I have no idea about referees, the staff weren't told about this.
14. I never managed any member of staff. If they did ask, I would help and so would they.

Training

15. I did not train people. My own training was on a day to day basis, where I was training myself through working in that environment. It is not a very good way but that is how it was.

Supervision/appraisal/staff evaluation

16. I did not supervise or appraise staff as there was no structure in place, nor paperwork or the like used in supervising staff, appraising staff, or evaluating staff. There was no policy that I was aware of.

Policy

17. I did not have any involvement in, or responsibility for, policy in relation to the care, including residential care, of residents. There was no policy that I was aware of.

Strategic Planning

18. I did not have any involvement in, or responsibility for, strategic planning in relation to the establishment.

Residents

19. Residents were placed at Algrade by family and the social work department. I am not sure about the process of placing residents.
20. I have no knowledge about any assessments carried out before a resident was placed at Algrade or what staff may have done with such assessments.
21. Residents stayed permanently at Algrade. Rose and Park were cottages for male residents and Ravelston and Sharon, were for the girls. Petty Cottage was for the girl and her sister who did the cooking. I was in Rose Cottage.

22. When I started at Algrade there were approximately fifteen men and sixteen to eighteen ladies there. The numbers stayed roughly the same during my time there. Their age range differed; however, the majority were eighteen years old or more. There was the odd younger child who was in respite care. There were only a few children in Algrade who the headmistress, Jean McRae, looked after. They were aged seven to ten years old or maybe older. They lived at Algrade before I did. They were mostly girls, and they went to the senior centre with the ladies.
23. Altogether, there were nine people in my cottage. [REDACTED] was Downs Syndrome. I'm not sure how old [REDACTED] was but he wasn't a young child. The others were older men. The younger children were mostly girls who slept upstairs in the other cottages, where the adult residents slept. I don't remember any male children being at Algrade during my time there. There wasn't a big turnover of children and residents. They went on holidays with their parents and then they came back. I didn't have anything to do with the care of the younger female children.
24. The ratio of staff or adults to residents was one adult to approximately eight residents, when adult staff were there and if the residents were not looked after by older residents.
25. The food was generally cooked by an older female resident who was in charge of the kitchen, with minimal supervision by management. Mina or Betty would tell the girl what to cook and check in with her later. They popped in to make sure everyone was okay and went away again. The food was quite stodgy and repetitive, that is, meatball bake and egg bake. The residents were fed but the food was not very nutritionally healthy. If residents didn't like the food, they didn't eat it. Certain residents were treated differently as to choices. The food could have been more varied.
26. Each cottage varied as to sleeping arrangements, but most residents slept in rooms of four to six residents.

27. I can only speak to the washing and showering facilities for male residents. There was an open shower that only showered one at a time and a bath. There was a guy in my cottage who was thirty years old. If I was away doing the Christian video work, he would shower all the residents in the cottage, including [REDACTED]. Physically the residents were fine, but some need help like having their back washed. If I was out of the cottage, the guy would come to get me if there a problem, such as someone cutting themselves.
28. Most of the residents' leisure time was spent watching videos on TV, as TV programmes were restricted. Female residents sat at the TV and knitted.
29. There was an organised trip for the residents once a year, to Biggar Residential Centre where they stayed for two days. On the odd occasion, the residents were taken out for a coffee but not much else was organised.
30. To my knowledge, there were no informal trips and individual staff members did not take individual residents away from Algrade, or to a staff member's home. Trips were planned and authorised only by the management, Betty, Mina, Jean, and Rosa.
31. Volunteers normally helped in the day to day running of the centres and, in the evening, they sat with the residents in the living room. There was an adult centre for the girls where they sewed. The male residents learned skills in the woodwork room.
32. If a resident had a minor cut or something similar, staff put a plaster on the resident. However, if a resident had any drastic health problem, the staff phoned or called upon the managers.
33. One senior girl worked in the laundry with elderly staff helping her. One or two residents were in the kitchen cooking and so on. Before meals, a manager came to the kitchen to check the meals.
34. I have no knowledge of vetting of any visitors or families, as the establishment trusted them as friends and the like. Sometimes, parents came to collect their family, and they took the resident for a holiday or for the weekend.

35. On the odd occasion, social work visited to have a look around the establishment and so on. As staff, we didn't do reports and reports were all done by managers.
36. I was not aware of any review of residents continued residence in the establishment, carried out by the establishment or others.
37. I cannot comment on the process for discharge of residents leaving the establishment, as I did not see any resident discharged.
38. I have no knowledge of whether residents were given any help or support by the establishment or other body when they were leaving or just after they left.

Living arrangements

39. I sometimes lived in Rose Cottage at Algrade. When I lived in the cottage, I lived in the same cottage as the residents but in a separate room. If there were no staff, on the odd occasion I'd stay in Park. The ladies bought three houses in Pathhead, next to the coffee lounge. They said one was for me to use if I wanted to get away from Algrade for a bit. I stayed there on the odd occasion but not often. I didn't have any holidays. It was too difficult because Betty made you feel bad and got the male residents to do the same.
40. Other adults in positions of responsibility had the same living arrangements as me, however the management had their own cottage at Algrade. In the winter, the management wanted you to use just one bar of the electric fire in the male cottage. The girls were allowed to use two bars, and the managements' cottage was warm, with central heating. I just put on two bars anyway.
41. All staff had access to the resident's residential areas, but they usually kept within their own cottage. Males and females were kept apart.

42. Overnight, there was one member of staff per cottage if they had staff. Residents were sometimes left without a member of staff.

Discipline and punishment

43. I was not aware of any physical discipline or punishment of residents or children within the establishment. The residents didn't fight physically and there were few arguments. You might take a resident to the cottage and sit down with them until they calmed down. On the odd occasion, I would phone the management to ask them to come up. Betty just had to look at a resident and they would stop what they were doing.
44. I did not know of any formal policy or conduct code in relation to discipline or punishment and I relied on word of mouth.
45. A more senior resident often stepped in when there was any dispute with other residents. I cannot comment on who supervised the behaviour of the senior residents.
46. I cannot comment on what type of behaviour resulted in discipline or punishment, as I didn't see any discipline or punishment in any situation. If a resident had to be spoken to, then this was done by the management. If residents were upset, I tried to console them as much as I could.
47. After residents were fighting, they would be separated if it was getting out of control. The residents would be spoken to and maybe separated from the others with a member of staff, if one was there.
48. I never disciplined residents in a physical way. I did talk to them to try to explain what was wrong. I never kept any record of residents being disciplined or punished.
49. No record or punishment book was kept by staff of when residents were disciplined or punished.

Restraint

- 50. I never saw any physical restraint used on children or residents during my time at the establishment, as most residents were usually quiet.
- 51. I have been asked whether residents were removed from other residents or placed in a room alone. If residents were arguing, then they were spoken to but not put in a room on their own.
- 52. Medication was rarely used. If it was used as a means of restraining, sedating, or calming a resident then I was not aware of that.
- 53. I never had to restrain the residents.
- 54. I don't know of any policies and practices, written or otherwise, relating to restraint in the establishment.
- 55. I did not see excessive restraint being used on residents at the establishment.

Concerns about Algrade Trust

- 56. No-one said anything to me directly about the establishment being the subject of concern because of the way in which residents were treated. However, I did hear sometimes from other visitors, who knew the establishment, not agreeing with how things were. The visitors did not say any more than that.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

- 57. Generally, residents didn't raise concerns. If a resident wished to make a complaint or report a concern, then the ladies dealt with them.
- 58. I was not aware of residents' concerns as no-one came to me with them. They mostly spoke to the Aunties.

Trusted adult/confidante

59. A resident could speak to staff or family with any concerns they had. I am not aware of residents doing so, other than my own situation. No concerns were raised to me about any complaints.

Abuse

60. There was no policy in place during my time at the establishment which defined abuse, however common sense would tell you what abuse is. If something happened that I thought was abuse, I had to tell the ladies who managed Algrade. The women relied on, and spoke of, religious beliefs and this dominated all principles within Algrade. They couldn't imagine abuse happening because Jesus was protecting Algrade.
61. I didn't witness any abuse, however looking back, it could be viewed as emotional abuse that the management insisted on all residents and staff calling them Auntie.
62. Looking back, and based on my criminal conviction, I believe that any abuse would have come to light at the time.
63. If undetected abuse happened, other than my own, this could be because of staff being untrained and reliance on the fact that everything had to go through the four women managers. If abuse was perpetrated by those women, then this could be covered up, as all allegations had to go to them.

Protection arrangements for residents

64. In relation to guidance and instruction to staff as to how residents should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour towards them, there was nothing in place to protect against abuse. For example, staff worked alone with one staff member to many residents and there was no way to report

concerns other than to the four women managers. The women managers had full autonomy and discretion to decide how situations were handled.

External monitoring

65. Inspectors visited the establishment on the odd occasion. I have no knowledge of why they were there or what they did while they were there. I was not aware of inspectors or other officials giving feedback or any other reports.

Record keeping

66. There was no record keeping during my time at the establishment.

Allegations of abuse

67. I have been the subject of an allegation of abuse towards adults who resided in the institution.
68. The allegation was made whilst I worked there. I was accused of sexual assault and sodomy which I accepted as a plea bargain. The judge stated that this was an offence on adults with learning difficulties whilst I was in a position of trust. I fully agreed with the decision made as I was guilty of the offence. I was given [REDACTED] imprisonment. I came out after five years and I was on licence. The case was fully investigated by Police Scotland.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

69. Other than my own situation, I was never involved in any investigation on behalf of the establishment for any reason.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

70. I have never been involved in the handling of reports to the establishment concerning any abuse claims, neither at the time of alleged abuse nor historical claims of abuse.

Police investigations/criminal proceedings

71. The only time in my life I have ever spoken to the police or given a statement to the police or to the court, was in relation to my own conviction.

Convicted abusers

72. The only person I have ever known to be convicted of abuse of residents at the establishment is myself. I am not aware of any other staff member being convicted of abuse of residents.

Other staff members working at Algarde Trust

Elizabeth Waugh

73. I remember Elizabeth Waugh. I knew her as Betty. She was at Algrade all the time I was. She had started Algrade with the other ladies as a school. She was in her seventies when I started, and in her eighties when I left.
74. Betty was the boss. If there were any problems you had to go through her, whether she'd listen or not was another thing. She would listen to you but I'm not sure she would always do anything about what you brought to her. She was so involved in the Christian video side of things. Betty thought she was living her life for Algarde but that wasn't shown in a positive way. I thought she should forget the coffee lounge and concentrate on the staff and the residents. Betty wasn't working alongside the social work department and the residents were stagnant. They were sitting about most of the time. Betty went to the coffee lounge in the afternoon, and I was left with responsibility for the men at Algarde while she was away.

75. In some ways, me and Betty were close. I agreed with her so she wouldn't make me upset and make me cry. The ladies helped me buy a car and they bought me a moped. Money was used as an object by them.
76. Betty spent most of her time at Pathhead, in her office, and at the coffee lounge. I worked with her on the Christian videos. I think she studied psychology because she had the ability to make you cry and she would isolate you emotionally by not speaking to you. Betty was my manager.
77. Betty had different sides to her, a loving side, and a controlling side with staff and residents. I never saw her do anything physically wrong, it was her mind and the way she affected people, including me, emotionally. One day everything was fine and the next day it was not.
78. I don't think anyone knew Betty fully. She genuinely wanted to put the gospel out. As she got older, she couldn't physically do the things she could do before, and she became slower. Nearer the end of my time, and the end of Algrade, she couldn't be bothered so much.
79. I saw Betty speak to residents, and to [REDACTED] but I didn't see Betty with younger children, I didn't see Betty discipline children, there was not much reason to discipline anyone because they didn't do a lot. I didn't see Betty abuse children, and I didn't hear of Betty abusing children. When the residents saw Betty coming, they would say, "Here comes Auntie Betty."

Leaving Algrade Trust

80. I left the establishment because I was convicted of offences against residents of the establishment.
81. I was not provided with any references relating to my time at the establishment.

Helping the Inquiry

82. Although I was not a witness to any abuse, I believe that there are lots of things we can do to make sure things like that don't happen. All staff need to be fully trained; establishments need to be monitored so that the ratio of staff to residents does not fall lower than two staff members working together, and there should be closed circuit television (CCTV) in establishments – anything that is going to protect people in care.

Convictions

83. I was convicted at the High Court [REDACTED]. The offences took place some months before I was convicted. The charges I pled guilty to were sexual assault and sodomy. I was sentenced [REDACTED] imprisonment.
84. I had no convictions when I started work at Algrade.
85. I was never asked by the establishment whether I had any convictions, which I didn't at the time.
86. I have been asked whether I committed the same or similar offences against children resident in the institution. I did not.
87. I explained my feelings before I committed the offences to the ladies in charge, Betty, Mina, Jean, and Rosa. I went to their cottage. I was nervous and crying at their door. I went into the living room. I can't remember exactly what I said to them, but I explained I had feelings that I couldn't cope with. I was struggling with my sexuality. I had sexual feelings towards the men in the cottage and, from the ladies reaction, I think I must have said something about that. I wasn't able to get out of Algarde to try to fix that. I didn't have anyone to talk to about it. They told me to keep quiet and Jesus wouldn't allow anything to happen, he would fix it all. I gave up talking to them.
88. I'm not making any excuses. I knew what I was doing when I committed the offences.

My offence was a breach of trust. I could talk about all aspects of my life from when I was a child, but they do not justify what I did. I will never forget what I did, every day it's on my mind, and I regret what I did. This is not an excuse, but I was left to my own devices, unsupervised with residents. When I reached out for help to management, they dismissed my concerns, and I had poor mental health at the time due to the working environment. I worked on-site, in a controlling environment, and there was no support or lay help. This is no excuse, and I say this only to be able to help stop, or prevent, any more abuse.

Other information

89. 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.... PSB

Dated..... 14-4-2025