

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KUD

Support person present: No.

1. My name is KUD. My date of birth is 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Paisley and lived with my father, my mother, my older siblings and younger brothers. My father worked as a labourer in the construction industry, then in a thread mill factory. He then worked on a dairy farm and his main job that I remember was in the paper mill run by Tullis Russell. Mum had some part time jobs but most of her time was taken up raising the family.
3. My family moved from Paisley to Carlisle and then onto, just outside Cupar. This was where I spent most of my time growing up before going into care. I had a good upbringing, it was tough but there were no issues. Apart from attending Primary I was able to live a country lifestyle and enjoyed going out in the mornings and playing in the local park with some of the other kids in the village. We would play football and I enjoyed going fishing. It was safe enough for us to be out from seven in the morning and not home until it was dark.
4. While attending Primary I really enjoyed the work we were being taught there. I have really good memories of my time going there. After being at Primary I went to Bill Baxter High School. The problem I had at school was I was a bit of a loner and although I enjoyed being in the school I hated actually going there. Once I was in the school I was okay.

5. I even remember some of my teachers, one of which was a Mrs Forrester. The very first period at the school we were all lined up to go into the class and we were all carrying on. She was shouting at us to try and get us to calm down before going inside. I never heard her shouting and she came over to me telling I looked like a ferret and I called her an ape. From that moment my time at the school changed and I never enjoyed it again.
6. My brothers had been at the same school and they had built a reputation for looking after themselves. Most of the teachers knew me as the younger brother and I was being tarred with the same brush as them, before they even got to know me. I did get into some fights while I was at the school. There was an area known as Moat Hill, just outside the school. It was just a large mound but it had the appearance of a boxing ring with trees at each corner of the mound. This was where we would meet and sort out our issues rather than involve any of the teachers.
7. I think I enjoyed my primary school education because there was less in a classroom and the teaching was more focussed. I ended up staying away from school and teaching myself at home. There was lots of encouragement from my family to go to the school but nothing from the high school. They were not filling my thirst for knowledge. When my older sister and brothers came home from school and they were having difficulties in a subject, it was me who would help them and teach them. I think the main issue was the number of pupils in the class was so big compared to primary.
8. I would tell my mum and dad that I was going to school but leave my bedroom window open. When they left the house I would climb back in and stay in for most of the day. The truancy officer would come to the house but I would not answer the door. He reported what was happening to my parents. I was then physically punished by my father. I wasn't battered black and blue but the physical punishment was what happened in those days. It is not something I believe in and have not used that on my son.

9. After three to four months of this I was expelled from Bill Baxter High School. The social work had been involved with my family because of me, from my first year at Bill Baxter, and they took me to a Children's Panel who transferred me to Auchmuty High School near Glenrothes. I don't remember any of the names of the social workers then. The panel talked to my mum and dad but no one spoke to me.
10. The panel also referred me to Playfield House to see a child psychologist. I never got anything from my sessions with her, but one of the expressions she used which stuck with me was, if I was to behave I would flower and blossom. There is nothing else that I picked up from our time together.
11. The only issue with Auchmuty school was I had to leave the house by seven thirty in the morning to get there and I would not get back to the house until six thirty at night. This took its toll and I found myself too tired to do any work at school.
12. I was getting bullied at the new school and would be beaten up most days by some of the pupils, including [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. That went on for a few weeks before I stood up for myself. I was given a two week suspension and when I came back I was given more respect by the other kids. I am still pals with both [REDACTED] today.
13. I was at Auchmuty for about six months and then I stopped attending again. Once again the social work sent me to a Children's Panel and they decided that I should be sent to Melville House.
14. The social work made comments to my mum during some of their visits that if she did not do as they were instructing they would take me off her on a permanent basis. Mum was really scared of them. It was made clear that if she did not let me go to Melville House they would keep me away from her for the rest of my childhood. They also made all sorts of promises to her that I would get home at weekends and that she would be able to see me at the school when she wanted.

Melville House School, Cupar

15. I knew from my brothers and some of my friends of the reputation that Melville House School had. It was not a good place to be sent. The female social worker who was involved with the family, I don't know her name, picked me and mum up in her car and took us to Melville House. On arrival there I found that this was a large Georgian House on three levels. The house was situated within its own grounds, with a long entrance drive to the front of the house. There were some playing fields with a football pitch as well and some woods to the rear of the grounds.
16. I was introduced to Mr Bell who was a teacher at the school and a residential social worker. He was a big guy with a beard and a nice guy while I was there. Mum spent the rest of the afternoon with me at the school and having coffee with some of the staff. I didn't meet any of the kids at that time but we were shown around the place and mum saw where I would be sleeping, eating and going to school.
17. I was given a brief run-down of the rules of Melville House by Mr Bell. One of things that stuck in my mind was that if I wanted to run away I was told it was not an issue as the door was always open. Their attitude was that if we ran away they would just phone the police and wait until I was found and they would bring me back again. You were not allowed out of the grounds without being accompanied by staff.
18. The man ^{SNR} of Melville House was a Mr ^{GBJ} he was ^{SNR} had ^{SNR} Mr ^{PBP}. I loved both of those people. Some of the people who were teaching us were also residential care workers. One of them was Sadie Finlay, she was an amazing woman and she became great friends with my mum. Ethel Phelps was another teacher and there were no issues with her. Mr Bell was a good teacher along with the gym teacher Mr McGregor. He previously worked at Bill Baxter High School when I was there.
19. Some of the people I had problems with at Melville House were ^{GBK}, a residential care worker, Mr ^{KVE} another residential care worker who stayed in the home with his wife. Although I had issues with Mr ^{KVE} his wife was a nice woman

who worked in the kitchen and the laundry. The last person I had issues with was KUF [REDACTED] again a residential care worker.

20. In the centre of the entrance hall was a stairway leading to the dormitories upstairs. I think there were eight or nine dormitories with six to eight people in each. It was all boys in Melville House. The age of the boys was from around eleven to sixteen. Some of the children in the home were orphaned with no one to look after them. Others were like me who had issues with schooling and some who had been in trouble with the legal system.
21. In your dormitory you had your bed, a side unit and a wardrobe. A neighbouring bed would back onto your wardrobe and give each bed area a sense of segregation and privacy. I did not take any of my personal possessions to the school as there was a chance someone would take it. There was nowhere to secure anything. I did once have something that had been signed by the rock singer Billy Idol which I had taken into the place. It went missing. I had my suspicions it was a member of staff. There was a conversation a couple of weeks later and he was telling about how much he liked Billy Idol and lots of things signed by him. I never said anything because I had no proof it was definitely him. That member of staff was KUF [REDACTED].
22. One of the orphaned children was [REDACTED]. Sometimes he would come home at the weekends with me and with some of the other kids on other weekends, just so we could get him out of the school for a little while for a little break.

Routine at Melville House School, Cupar

23. We were woken at seven each morning and we all had to get dressed in our gym kit. We were then sent on a two mile run. It did not matter what the weather was like, rain sleet or snow we were on that run. KUF [REDACTED] would drive the minibus either at the front of the run showing the route or sometimes at the rear to encourage the tail enders. We would have the same kit all year round, a burgundy pair of shorts, t-shirt and running shoes. Near the end of my time at the school they stopped this practice. I don't know why, it was just one day we were running, the next it was not happening.

24. When we were back from the run it was time to make our beds, get washed and then down for breakfast. For washing there were sinks, along with some baths which were separated by wooden partitions and an open plan shower area. I always preferred a bath because it was more secure and private. There was always plenty of fresh warm water for the bath or showers. I brought some of my own toiletries but the school did supply some if it was needed.
25. About nine o'clock each day there was a meeting where there was a handover from the night shift staff to the day shift. After this meeting we were in the school for a little while. About ten thirty there was another gathering where we all were present and we would have some tea or coffee. Eleven o'clock it was back into the school until twelve thirty for lunch. After lunch it was school in the afternoon until three thirty or maybe four o'clock. Dinner was around five o'clock until six o'clock. There would be another meeting for the changeover of day shift and the night shift. Then it was some free time until supper about nine o'clock. We had some cheese on toast and tea, then into the TV room. Bed was around ten o'clock with lights out at ten thirty.
26. At night when lights were out we were supposed to go to sleep. I was quite lucky as my bed was next to a window and there was enough light outside which allowed me to be able to read a book. There would be two residential care workers who would supervise us during the night. There was one young lad in the unit, I can't remember his name, who managed to get into the staff room as both workers were out patrolling the corridors. He was feeling really down with life at the school. He was able to get into the medicine cabinet and he took [REDACTED]. That incident ended with an ambulance being called. He was taken to hospital before being returned to Melville House.

Food

27. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were really good at the school. Breakfast had different cereals and porridge available, along with as much toast, tea or coffee, as you liked. There were no issues about not liking any particular food. There was always a choice

of food available and the people who run the kitchens provided really nice meals with proper food, unlike school lunches. There was a group of older kids who were called the leavers. They were at an age where they were due to leave the school. They had their own separate area on the ground floor with their own dining area.

Clothing

28. Melville House School provided all our clothing. It was all labelled with our numbers, even the footwear and towels. That meant when you sent your clothes to the laundry you knew which set was yours when it was returned. Outside the dining room there were some lockers where your fresh laundry and bedding would be placed. Cleaning ladies changed the bed linen on a regular basis and the clean set placed in this locker. My number was [REDACTED].
29. Now and again during my time there I was taken into town to get some new clothing and shoes. This was not paid for by my parents and I presume it was funded by Fife Council.

Schooling

30. Schooling at Melville House was situated in a modern block situated at the side of the main building.
31. The topics being taught by the staff there were very basic. The staff would just repeat the same set of reading material and arithmetic. They were happy so long as each of the kids there were able to do the basics. We were never taught much better than that, there was no curriculum being followed, like you would if you were in a local school. We were grouped together by our ages in the class.
32. Sometimes there was a particular boy who showed a great deal of promise and for some reason he was allowed to attend the local school. In my time that was a boy named [REDACTED] who was studying at the high school for his higher.

33. Ethel Phelps was one of the teachers and I remember she was trying to teach some algebra. You could see that she was not able to understand what she was teaching. When I asked a question she was not able to answer as she did not even understand the basics. When she wrote the equations on the school board she needed to look up the answer at the back of the book as she could not work out the solution by herself. I am not saying I was better but I had enough knowledge and understood those subjects better than she did.

Discipline

34. The discipline at the school was a point based system. You started on ten points and had a point if you did not attend school, misbehaved in the school and for many other things throughout the day. If you were deemed to have done anything wrong during the day you were deducted a point. A lot of the kids rebelled and were deducted points but I tended to behave myself.
35. On a Friday, as we had a half day from school, you were given your pocket money. It started at three pounds for the week but if you had any loss of points you would lose some of your pocket money. Each point you lost during the week you were deducted fifty pence. At it's worse if you lost most of the points you were in danger of losing your privilege of going home for the weekend. Sometimes I never took my pocket money and allowed it to accumulate. I don't know where the money for this was coming from but I presume it was from the social work or the child benefit money.
36. At one point we as a group raised the point and asked where the money that was being deducted went to. It would have been given by someone to be given to the kids. If they were taking money from this fund, what were they doing with it. They never answered us.

Leisure

37. After the evening meeting we would be given activities for the evening. This all depended on what staff were on and perhaps what time of the year it was. One of the

teachers enjoyed fishing and he took me out, but he took me to an area which I knew very well from staying there and I was able to teach him the best place to catch the fish.

38. There were some days out we had, where we could go to the Rollorama in Dundee. This was where people would go round in a circle on roller skates. Another activity was canoeing. When we went out on this sort of trip we would be taken there in a group, in the minibus. One of the older teachers who suffered from arthritis would have us play indoor bowling, chess, pool or darts. The activity was based on the school punishment points system, the more points you had the better the activity. If there were a lot wanting to go on one activity then it was first come first served. You were not allowed to hang around your bed area during leisure time.
39. I can remember there was a time when we were due to play against another local football team. The problem was it was soaking wet and the pitch was water logged. Mr McGregor, the gym teacher, was insistent that we play the match. Neither our team or the opposition wanted to play the match. Both teams decided among themselves that the match would not take place. Mr McGregor was not happy about this, but there was nothing he could do about it. Both teams went back to Melville House where we all played pool and other games together.
40. Even as teenagers the staff allowed us to smoke. I started when I was about twelve. There were lots of those large metal ashtrays throughout the home. They even supplied tobacco in the tuck shop, so you could buy it off your pocket money.

Running away

41. Although I did not run away there was an occasion we were missing for a while. At the back of the grounds of Melville House there is a set of woods. A group of twelve of us had been to those woods beforehand and built a den within a thick area in the middle of the trees. We stayed there for about three days. At the end of the three days we were bored and went back inside the house. The staff were not happy with us, our point of view was we had not ran away as we were still within the grounds.

Visits/inspections

42. From the time I was dropped off by the social work and apart from attendance at Children's Panel I never saw another independent social worker during my time at Melville House. Their sole role seemed to be to listen to the school about non-attendance, make no enquiries as to reasons, speak and take a statement from my mother. They then prepared a report for the panel all without speaking to me. They then presented their findings to the panel, again without speaking to me and then dump me in the home and never visit me to check on how things were going.

Family contact

43. When I had sufficient privileges I would be allowed to go home each weekend. I was also allowed to go home during the school summer holidays. I would be home for two weeks during those holidays. I would also be home during the Christmas break.
44. Visits by my family were allowed, but I do not know whether it was supposed to be arranged beforehand. My dad had a motor bike and he would come up at least once a week and demand to see me. My dad was a large man and could be seen as quite intimidating with his height. He was never refused when he arrived. I never saw any of my brothers or my sister, but they were getting older and starting to work and move to their own places. I did not see much of mum at the home but saw her mainly when I was on home leave.
45. There was one time when I was home for the weekend and I was fed up with all the slapping I was getting. I could not take anymore and told my father what was happening. He asked who it was and I told him it was GBK who was the most frequent abuser. Dad left the house and jumped on his bike and went straight to the school. He was there and back within half an hour. I asked him what happened and he told me that when he spoke with GBK he denied using his hands on me. He said he did not believe him and believed what I was saying. He held GBK up against the wall and threatened what may happen to him should he ever lift his

hand to me again. When I went back on the Monday it was being talked about by lots of people at the school. After that I was not slapped at the school. Although there was no physical abuse they resorted to trying to threaten me with loss of privileges whenever they thought I had done anything wrong.

Trips

46. I did get sent out for a day trip. I remember we went to Ullapool. There were about eight of us who were taken there. There were two teachers with us, KUF [REDACTED] and I think Mr Bell was the other one. Although it was quite a boring trip, it was still a good trip because I was away from Melville House. There was no slapping on the head by KUF [REDACTED] as he would not do that in front of Mr Bell, who was a senior member of staff. This was typical of him and the others who slapped us, it was never in front of senior staff.

Birthdays/Christmas

47. I don't remember anything about Christmas being celebrated at Melville House. When it came to someone's birthday the only acknowledgement was a notice would be read out at the morning meetings.

Healthcare

48. I do not remember many visits relating to healthcare. I did get my jab for TB and there was one time I was there for being ill and I think it was Mrs [REDACTED] who may have been the nurse. She told me I had chicken pox and told to me stay in bed for a while. I did not have any reason to visit a dentist while I was there.

Bed wetting

49. There was an issue with some of us at the Melville House with bed wetting. When I suffered from this problem they put a rubber sheet on my bed. When that did not stop me they put a wire mesh onto the bed with a buzzer attached. Whenever I wet the bed

the buzzer would be activated. After this happened a few times I got so fed up with it, I threw it out the window. I was too scared of the dark to get up at night to go to the bathroom. Although there was no punishment for wetting the bed, it was brought up at the morning meeting. The staff would announce this to all who were present. It was so embarrassing for any of us who went through this and this was the main cause for me wetting the bed.

Abuse at Melville House School

50. The meetings for the change of staff in the morning and again at night were very embarrassing. Not only did the staff discuss each person in the school, but we were all made to listen to what was being said about us and we obviously heard what was being said about our friends as well. The night staff told the day staff and everyone present about any incident where someone had misbehaved or done something wrong.
51. At one of those meetings the staff brought up something that had been found when I had been for some sort of medical. They told all and sundry that I was bruised in my groin area. I found this extremely embarrassing as I had not been assaulted by anyone and not been the victim of any sexual abuse. I don't know what the cause was but they thought it okay to tell it to everybody. Mr ^{KVE} made mention that the school would need to look into this. I argued that there was nothing to look into and did he not realise it was not something that needed a discussion in public. Mr ^{KVE} and I ended up arguing about this. He told me I shouldn't be arguing with him and he sent me to the rector's office. I tried to give my side of the story but he was not interested either and backed Mr ^{KVE}. I lost my weekend home privilege that week.
52. There was one of the residential care workers, when he was covering the night duty, he would deliberately set off the fire alarm. He was happy when the fire brigade were attending. He would pretend to them that it was one of the kids that set it off or that it was a test. This happened a couple of times during the same week he was on duty.

53. KUF [REDACTED] was one of the residential care workers. He was one who would use his hands to slap you. There were times I may have been playing pool and he would ask me to do something. I might have said to him that I would do whatever it may have been as soon as I finished the game. That was not good enough for him and he would slap me on the back of the head for making him wait. This was a regular thing for him. I wasn't refusing him, I was just asking for him to wait a while. I wasn't the only one this happened to. One of the other kids called [REDACTED] was also on the receiving end of similar treatment.
54. When I went for my bath I would make sure that the cubicle door was closed and locked. The main reason being that Mr KVE [REDACTED] was really creepy and most occasions when I was in the bath I could hear him outside. He would ask who was in the bath. It was not a coincidence because he was always there. It was the same with many other boys. With me there was nothing sexual, but then he could not get into the cubicle. Apart from rumours I saw no evidence of him doing anything sexual with the boys.
55. Mr KVE [REDACTED] GBK [REDACTED] and KUF [REDACTED] regularly slapped boys across the back of the head. For example it might be nine o'clock and it was perhaps time for bed. You might have been doing something at the time, like smoking a cigarette, and say you will go as soon as possible. You were then be slapped over the head for not reacting immediately. Each of them did this not only to me, but I saw them do this to many other boys.
56. I remember on one occasion that [REDACTED] had an altercation with KUF [REDACTED]. They were at the pool table and although I could not hear what started it, it ended up in a full fight. Although [REDACTED] could push the staff with his attitude, on this occasion there did not seem anything untoward until they actually fought. Other staff eventually arrived and [REDACTED] was pinned to the ground.
57. One of the things I recall about my time at Melville House was that there was never any fighting among the residents. The only thing I can think as being the reason for that was the total resentment of the staff by the residents.

Leaving Melville House

58. When I was due to leave Melville House I attended another Children's Panel. This was to assess whether I should be released or stay at Melville House until I was eighteen. This took place the week before my sixteenth birthday. When I got back to Melville House I got into an argument with Mr KVE and he tried to slap me. I told him he could not punish me anymore as I was going home soon. He told me as far as he was concerned I would not be getting released. He said Melville House were trying to have me kept there until I was eighteen. I had already read up on this matter, as I was aware that there were some boys who were sixteen and seventeen in there. But I did ask him what would he be doing if I was to marry when I was sixteen, which I was allowed to do, would he try to get my then wife to be kept in the home? He did not have an answer for me.
59. I had a holdall already packed with my things. I told him I was leaving and there was nothing he was going to do to stop me. He pushed me on my shoulders to make me sit down on the bed. He told me that with my attitude I was going nowhere. I grabbed my bag and left the home.
60. The police did call at my house and spoke with my mum. They told her that in the opinion of Melville House I had absconded and needed to return there. I told the officer the reasons for being away. I told them I only had one week before I would be released anyway. The officer was saying that he was having to follow procedures and that was why he was at the house. I told him that if necessary I would run away for a week and then come back and I would be sixteen. My father also had a word with the officer, who left a short time later and I remained at home.
61. I had to attend at the Children's Panel the following week. This was much the same as the first one I attended. I felt this time I had a voice. Mr KVE was there as the senior social worker from Melville House. He was saying the home were recommending that I stay with them until I was eighteen. I asked why they were keeping me as I was not being sectioned and I had committed no crimes. The panel

had their discussion and came to the decision that I was to go home. I spoke briefly with Mr KVE and told him what I thought of him and Melville House.

62. What I did find from the first time I was made aware of the possibility of going home, was there was no other conversations with staff about it. During my time at Melville House there was not any preparation for my return home and for me being an adult living in the outside world. I never even got to say goodbye to anyone. I was released from the panel and straight home.

Life after being in care

63. I kept trying for jobs but as soon as people saw that I was a former resident at Melville House I was then turned down. I went to a careers' office and they suggested that I try further education. I was already working three jobs to provide me with some money. I was working as a kitchen assistant, then in a homeless centre in Glenrothes and also worked in a bar. I managed to get permission to go back to Auchmuty High School and study with the fifth year students before moving onto college. I got my O-levels, Highers and even managed to get my Diploma all within three years of returning to education.
64. When I left the home there was only my brother still staying in the family house. I felt I never fitted in there anymore as I was separated from my family for so long. I only lasted there a couple weeks before I moved in with my sister for a short time. After being with her I declared myself homeless. I was then given a place in Glenrothes and this would have been when I was about seventeen.
65. I also spent some time with the Prince's Trust in Great Yarmouth. When I was with them they were able to help me with mock interviews. They said that as soon as anyone puts residential school, List 'D' or borstal onto your CV then no employer is going to look at it. They taught me to complete the forms properly and this improved the chances of me getting jobs.

66. From my time of leaving college with my new qualifications I went on to spend most of my life working as a chef. I worked at [REDACTED] Golf Hotel, [REDACTED] Hotel and I have worked abroad as well. I later changed direction and re-trained as a precision engineer working on medical equipment.
67. I played darts a lot and really enjoyed that [REDACTED] for which I have won a few medals. I also played football and enjoyed other active sports. As I got older I found that the bruises and niggling injuries were taking longer and longer to heal. This all stopped along with work when I was diagnosed with MS in 1990. I have been unable to work or take part in sports since.
68. I got married for the first time when I was twenty and this did not last too long. I have been married twice more and have a nine year old boy with my second wife. I have custody of my son on alternate weeks and he stays with his mother on the other week. With my current wife we have a young daughter.
69. I have had help with speaking with psychologists about my mental health issues. I was able to tell them that I had been in care but not about any of the abuse there. I later suffered a mental break down and ended up in Whyteman's Brae hospital for a short period. I had locked myself away in my house for about twelve days. The only thing I remember about that time was someone had called the police and they had forced entry to my house and found me within. This was about twelve or thirteen years ago. This is not something I have had an issue with since and do not see any need for this type of treatment. My wife is very helpful looking after me and my emotions.

Reporting of abuse at Melville House

70. When I was at Melville House I did try to make a complaint about the staff slapping me on the head. I spoke with Mr ^{PBP} [REDACTED] who was ^{SNR} [REDACTED] of the home. I told him who the people responsible were. I thought that would have been enough for some sort of action to be taken. I never heard anymore after that. This would have been just before I told my dad on a weekend leave when he spoke with Mr ^{KVE} [REDACTED].

71. I have also reported the slaps to the police. There was a day I was out with my gran and I told her what had been going on. She took me to the police station in Cupar. I was speaking to them in an office for about half an hour, while my gran waited at the front of the station. Again, this was before I told my dad.
72. My dad told me he also went to the police about me being hit by the staff. This was right after he had been at the school. Again nothing was done about it.

Impact

73. It has taken until now when I am fifty years old before I can say I have found true happiness. I blame my time in care at Melville House to be the main cause as I was taken away from any family life as a young boy. I did not know how to have a loving relationship with anyone as I was never shown how. I would like to have grown up as a teenager with my family, have the day to day advice from my parents and see my older siblings growing and leaving the house to start their careers. I lost all this by being placed in care.
74. I blame the local authorities for my troubles with Melville House. They appointed the staff to the home and they should have had a proper education system in place within Melville House. I have shown with the right chance I was able to obtain a decent education and obtain good qualifications.
75. Having been physically abused by the staff at Melville House, I do not agree with this type of punishment. I do not use physical punishment with my son, despite that he is now at an age where he is beginning to push boundaries. I do have a fear of giving him a row in case I am doing him some harm. It is only through my current wife that she has taught me more about discipline, not just in the family environment, but that there is discipline needed in many aspects of life.
76. I am paranoid about lots of things in my life in case I am doing things wrong. I am paranoid about spending an extra pound in the shop or whenever a bill comes through the door. Most of that is because no one taught me these are things we all deal with.

77. I have a bit of resentment relating to my brother [REDACTED] who was just above me in the family order. He was never put into care but he was getting into a lot more trouble than me. He was regularly being dealt with by the police. Why was I placed in care for not being at school but he got into trouble with the law and allowed to stay at home?

Lessons to be learned

78. One of the issues I had with the Children's Panel was that I was not spoken to or asked my opinion. If they had spoken to me perhaps they would have found out that I was happy if I was being taught and needed support with me getting to the school as I was always a loner. The social work have guidelines that they follow and no one tries to read between those lines to see if there is a better solution. I was not a stupid person as I could speak two foreign languages.
79. When I was in the home there should have been a proper standard of education and there should have been qualified people doing the teaching.
80. What I needed at school was to be taught more and they should have taken into account my issues about difficulty in attending. My son is very similar to me but the difference is nowadays I can go to the school and have a conversation with the teachers. They have agreed to provide him with more work and he is sailing through that as well as work in the class.
81. Maybe if there had been more one to ones with my teachers or some sort of mentoring system in place, maybe that would have made such a difference to my education.
82. It is my understanding that when social workers have completed thirty weeks training they then have the power to remove a child from their home. That is nowhere near enough training. As a parent even after thirty weeks of having a child you are still inexperienced. Social workers need much more experience before they should have such power.

83. I was lucky because I did have a family to offer me support but there were many in Melville House that had no one looking after their needs and the social work just treated them like a statistic and once in care they could forget them. These kids had no chance in life.

Records

84. I would love to have been able to see my records of my time at Melville House. I did talk to someone about this but I can't recall who this was. I seem to remember someone saying they did not keep any records but would appreciate any help to see them.

Other Information

85. I would like to see Fife Council being taken to task for what happened to me in care. They are the ones responsible for me going into care, the staff being employed in care and they ran Melville House and carried out no checks while I was there.
86. 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. KUD

Dated. 16.11.2020