

1

Friday, 6 June 2025

2

(10.00 am)

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LADY SMITH: Good morning, and welcome back to the second

4

block in Phase 9 of these case study hearings looking

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into the residential care provision for children with

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healthcare needs, with additional support needs and for

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disabled children.

8

Now, this morning, we turn to evidence in person and

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we've also got some read-in evidence to do but the

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evidence in person is going to go first, I think; is

11

that right, Ms Innes?

12

MS INNES: It is, my Lady.

13

The first witness this morning is a witness who has

14

the pseudonym 'Claire'.

15

Her son, who has the pseudonym RGK, attended

16

Starley Hall School between about [REDACTED] or

17

[REDACTED] 2000 until about [REDACTED] 2001.

18

RGK was engaging with the Inquiry. However,

19

sadly, he passed away earlier this year in [REDACTED].

20

A statement that he gave to the police will be read

21

in later this morning.

22

LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23

'Claire' (sworn)

24

LADY SMITH: 'Claire', thank you so much for coming along

25

this morning. I know what you're doing is very

1 challenging, because you're here to talk to us,
2 particularly about the experiences your son had when he
3 was in residential care and you've already provided us
4 with a really helpful written statement about that,
5 which is evidence before me. It was good to be able to
6 read that in advance.

7 Can I also thank you very much for providing the
8 order of service from the Celebration of Mass after he
9 died and this lovely selection of photographs of him
10 from when he was very little, to, I think, probably
11 photographs quite recently before his death --

12 A. That's correct, yes, uh-huh.

13 LADY SMITH: -- looking at the age he seems to be then.

14 It's been really special for me to have these shared
15 with me. I see that one of the readings at his funeral
16 service at the crematorium was that lovely poem by
17 Mary Oliver about wild geese, reminding us that we all
18 have a place in the family of things. It's a timely
19 reminder to everybody of how important everybody in the
20 world is and how important your son's contribution was
21 in the time that he was here with us.

22 A. Thank you.

23 LADY SMITH: I also, before I leave those, have a request
24 and I don't imagine you'll be able to answer it today.
25 I see that one of the readings was from the Book of

1 Sirach. Now, of course, the Book of Sirach is included
2 in the Catholic Church's Compendium of the Bible but not
3 in the Protestant Church. You probably know the history
4 of it being excluded, I think it was around the time of
5 the reformation, and Luther didn't think it should be
6 there.

7 I don't imagine you can tell me now which particular
8 part of the Book of Sirach was read in, but don't worry
9 about it if you can't, you could send it in, I'd be
10 interested to know.

11 A. I do have a copy of it. When we had the Mass, I really
12 just wanted something that was uplifting as opposed
13 to -- and the Book of Sirach, if I recall, it was
14 something about children, I think, and then the gospel
15 readings was about Beatitudes, but I can get that for
16 you.

17 LADY SMITH: I'd love to have it if that was possible. But
18 thank you so much for sharing these and we'll get them
19 back to you before you leave later today.

20 A. Okay.

21 LADY SMITH: Now, so far as giving your evidence is
22 concerned, obviously we've got questions we want to ask
23 you. If any of the questions don't make sense, that's
24 our fault not yours, so speak up if you've got any
25 queries at any time.

1 But also it's really important you understand that
2 I do know that giving evidence at all in this public
3 forum about things that happened in childhood or to
4 children can get really hard and people can be taken by
5 surprise at their own emotions, however well prepared
6 they think they are. I do understand that. It's
7 entirely a matter for you how best to deal with that, if
8 it occurs. If you want a break, that's absolutely fine,
9 you just let me know, whether a pause sitting where you
10 are or you want to go out of the room for a little
11 while. If it works for you, it will work for me. All
12 right?

13 A. Thank you.

14 LADY SMITH: If you're ready, I'll hand over to Ms Innes and
15 she'll take it from there. Okay.

16 Ms Innes.

17 Questions by Ms Innes

18 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

19 'Claire', if I can ask you, please, first of all to
20 look at your statement, which is the reference
21 WIT-1-000001580. And if we look at last page of the
22 statement, page 38, at paragraph 199, we see that it
23 says there:

24 'I have no objection to my witness statement being
25 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

1 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
2 true.'

3 And we can see that you signed your statement on
4 10 April of this year, is that right?

5 A. Yes, that's correct.

6 Q. Thank you.

7 Now, if we go back to the start of your statement,
8 you tell us that you have come to speak to the Inquiry
9 about your son and you tell us that your son was born in
10 1986, is that correct?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. Now, you tell us a bit about his early life and some
13 difficulties that you faced, and if we go on to page 2,
14 at paragraph 12, you tell us that he had started
15 primary school in Aberdeen and that he wasn't too far
16 into it and you could see that he was struggling. What
17 sort of things became apparent?

18 A. Well, RGK was very -- sorry, he was very bright, my
19 son, very inquisitive, but it didn't take too long to
20 realise that some of the organisational things, he
21 didn't -- he didn't cope well with being in big groups.
22 He was quite sensitive, you know, a little bit -- you
23 know, with sensory overload and it became very apparent
24 that his handwriting skills were challenging and his
25 reading, but yet he was very articulate, could describe

1 things very ably, very inquisitive, but the structure of
2 the school environment -- we didn't have any problems at
3 nursery. He went to a Montessori nursery. He thrived
4 in that, but the structure of the school learning system
5 just didn't suit his way of thinking and taking in new
6 learning.

7 So that became difficult. It became very stressful
8 for him and we had appointments with the educational
9 psychologist, but there was no real thorough assessments
10 done. All that was ever given was a behavioural chart.
11 So really things just progressed on, until things became
12 at a crisis point.

13 Q. Yes, you tell us about that in your statement and the
14 difficulties that you had with the local authority and
15 getting an assessment done and, ultimately, you tell us
16 that you got an assessment done yourself --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- in Edinburgh.

19 A. Mm-hmm.

20 Q. And you tell us about that on page 6, at paragraph 31.
21 You had that done at the Siena Learning Centre?

22 A. Yes. Sister Dorothy Averill was recommended to me by
23 someone who was on the Education Committee at Aberdeen,
24 Bishop Moran. So I took my son down and she did a very
25 thorough assessment of RGK and I took it back to

1 Aberdeen City because, as I say, they were doing
2 nothing. He'd been out of school for six months and,
3 you know, they were doing absolutely nothing.

4 And when I took the report back, and she had
5 recommended Harmeny School for him to go to, and she had
6 identified, rightly, that he was very bright, very
7 intelligent, but he had dyslexia, dysgraphia and, you
8 know, his sensory system was quite sensitive. But
9 Aberdeen City said they weren't interested, it wasn't
10 their report so they weren't going to do anything about
11 it. So then I took legal advice and it was only after
12 that that they began to act and they took RGK for
13 assessment and then, thereafter that, they agreed to
14 fund for him to go to Harmeny because there wasn't
15 a school in Aberdeen that could meet his learning needs.

16 Q. And then you tell us, on page 7 at paragraph 37, that he
17 went to Harmeny when he was around about 6-and-a-half or
18 7 and he was there for two-and-a-half years.

19 A. That's correct, yes.

20 Q. And what was your overall experience of Harmeny?

21 A. I can't praise Harmeny enough. They brought out the
22 best in RGK. He thrived. I always remember that --
23 sorry --

24 Q. It's okay.

25 A. -- they had geese at Harmeny and RGK was in charge of

1 the geese and they brought on his phonics. His reading
2 ability caught up with his age, his oral skills were
3 advanced for his age, but his handwriting skills began
4 to improve. He really just thrived and he loved it and
5 they were -- Mr KYN , who was SNR , I can't
6 praise him enough. I had a very good relationship with
7 him in as much as that he wrote to me. I had written to
8 him expressing my concerns about what had happened. It
9 was almost like all the good work that Harmeny had done
10 was beginning to unravel because of the problems that we
11 were now back into with trying to get an appropriate
12 educational environment for RGK .

13 Q. Okay. So, that was at a later stage, I think, you spoke
14 to -- or wrote to Mr KYN again.

15 A. Yes, mm-hmm.

16 Q. You talk in your statement, as you say, about the
17 positive time that he had at Harmeny.

18 At paragraph 45, you say that problems began to
19 emerge again in about 1996. By this time, you had taken
20 up a post in Tayside and you say that your son was due
21 to leave Harmeny. Why was it that it was decided that
22 he was going to leave Harmeny?

23 A. Well, I think, at that time when he was there, Harmeny
24 was -- I think they were a smaller school and they only
25 had an upper age limit, I think, of 11, so there was no

1 other option, he had to leave the school.

2 So the problems emerged again about where RGK was
3 going to go to school, so the decision was made by the
4 educational psychologist that they would keep him back
5 a year. So he went to St John's Primary School in
6 Perth. He did very well. He was in a nice peer group.
7 All was okay. He was keeping up with the learning. And
8 then it was decided that, well, okay, so now he can go
9 to St Columba's, which was a huge big secondary school
10 of over 1,000 pupils, and I just knew this was not going
11 to work, and -- but had to be seen to try it.

12 At best, it lasted six weeks, and I think if RGK
13 was there more than seven days out of that -- he
14 couldn't cope with it. He was just so stressed with it.
15 So it ended up he wouldn't go to school. He was so
16 stressed that it was evident in, you know, his
17 demeanour, he just couldn't cope. So in order to hold
18 on to my post at work until I decided what the
19 educational psychologist was going to do, my brother
20 came down and would be there with my son while I went to
21 work, but I couldn't force him into school and, in
22 conjunction with the educational psychologist in Perth,
23 we were looking at what options were available for him.

24 Q. You tell us, on page 10, about this time when your
25 brother was assisting you with looking after your son

1 and then you say, at paragraph 55 and in the paragraphs
2 after that, that your son was charged with an offence by
3 Perth Police.

4 Now, you tell us in your statement that he had been
5 wrongly identified and the charges were ultimately
6 dropped. However, that was at a later stage.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. So at this point, which must have been in the year 2000,
9 your son had some charges hanging over him.

10 A. Yes. This was July 2000 and he was -- he basically was
11 not in school any more. The Education Department were
12 deciding what we could do and I had been renting a house
13 and, unbeknown to me, I had carbon monoxide, this is why
14 I was so tired and, of course, I was putting it down to
15 the stress of workload and also dealing with the worry
16 of him being out of school and I had been out in Perth
17 and I had fallen and I had to go to hospital, I couldn't
18 walk. It was while I was at the hospital I got this
19 message that RGK was in police custody and I
20 explained to the police that I was at the hospital,
21 I'd fallen, I was waiting for x-rays.

22 I kept in contact, asking them, you know, when
23 I could go and get RGK and they said, 'Oh, don't
24 worry, we'll take him home'. So by the time I got home,
25 which was after teatime, early evening and my brother

1 was there, no sign of RGK , and then the police
2 arrived with RGK and then they proceeded to tell me
3 about this offence that RGK had been -- was going to
4 be charged with and that he'd pleaded guilty to this
5 charge and it was a very serious offence, which I just
6 was frozen to the spot when they told me. I had
7 concerns, thinking, you know, about RGK being out of
8 school, but I thought, no, this doesn't ring true.

9 Then after the police left, RGK just went
10 hysterical and he said, 'Mum, they told me if I didn't
11 plead guilty you weren't going to come for me'. And he
12 had no -- no responsible adult present and they never
13 told me that when I phoned, you know, a number of times
14 to enquire what was happening.

15 And -- I mean, it was just beyond belief. RGK
16 was hysterical. Tried to reassure him. I went down to
17 the police station the following day to demand that they
18 retract the statement and explained what had happened.
19 They wouldn't do it. They just weren't interested and
20 so he went then -- we were still waiting for the funding
21 for his educational needs and then during this point,
22 Starley Hall was mentioned as a school that could
23 possibly meet his educational needs. But of course then
24 he had this cloud hanging over him, which, you know,
25 I knew wasn't true but at that point, you know, there

1 was no identification, there was no photographic
2 identification. The only connection they made was that
3 he was wearing a green and white football shirt and this
4 was what one of the ladies had identified. It was
5 a young male wearing a green and white football shirt.
6 That was the only -- he wasn't identified in any other
7 way.

8 Q. And ultimately after the time that he was at
9 Starley Hall, the charges were dropped?

10 A. That's correct, yes, but it took quite a while to get to
11 the Children's Panel and everything was dropped.
12 Everything was dropped. And subsequently, during that
13 period of time, the young boy or the male who had been
14 committing these offences had committed other offences.
15 My son was up in Aberdeen and yet the police still came
16 and arrested him and took him down. We had to go down
17 to the police station and it was beyond belief how they
18 thought a young boy could get to Perth and back and
19 commit these offences, and then it was proved it was
20 another boy and then all the offences were dropped.

21 Q. If we look on page 11, you talk about his time at
22 Starley Hall School and, at paragraph 60, you say that
23 this had first been mentioned and you went for a visit
24 to Starley Hall.

25 Prior to going on the visit, did you know anything

1 about the school?

2 A. Not really. There wasn't that much out there about it.

3 I remember I was, you know, trying to research other
4 schools. I remember I looked at Lendrick Muir as a
5 school, but I think I got a sense, at that time, that
6 things were maybe not too good. They seemed to be
7 struggling a bit. Really, I suppose I was quite
8 desperate because, at that point, we had this cloud
9 hanging over us. It was causing a huge amount of
10 distress for RGK. He was out of school and I felt
11 the longer he was out of school, the more at risk he was
12 of other, you know, problems arising.

13 So when Starley Hall was mentioned, it seemed -- and
14 the fact, as I recall, it was one of the social workers
15 that had become involved had mentioned it and I thought,
16 well, you know, we need to have a look at it, but there
17 wasn't much out there about it that I could -- you know,
18 in depth, that I could really read about, so the visit
19 was really my first opportunity to get more of a sense
20 of the school.

21 Q. If we go to the top of page 12 and, at paragraph 63, you
22 say that your son remembered something about the visit.
23 What was it that he remembered about that first visit?

24 A. Well, RGK was in a lot of distress. He was unhappy
25 and, of course, I was trying to cajole him and coax him

1 into saying: you know, you really need to be school, you
2 know, we'll try, you know, really go forward, you know,
3 really just trying to be positive, but this was
4 something that he always brought -- I mean, RGK and
5 I didn't argue about many things, but he would always
6 bring this up to me: on that day when he visited, one of
7 the other young boys came up to him -- and he brought
8 this up frequently -- and he said 'You don't want to
9 come here.'

10 And RGK brought that up frequently. He said
11 'Mum, I always remember that, he said, "You don't want
12 to come here"', but I sort of -- how could I say, in the
13 stress of what was going on and the pressure of feeling
14 to get him into school, I thought, well, maybe that's
15 just boys being boys and, you know, it will be okay and,
16 you know.

17 Q. What was your own impression? You tell us a bit about
18 that at paragraph 64. What was your own impression of
19 the children?

20 A. I didn't see much of the interior of the school.
21 I remember we went into, I think it was called
22 Bendameer House, which was the larger, bigger part of
23 the house. I think what struck me that -- I mean, there
24 seemed to be children around RGK's age, but I think
25 my impression -- and, you know, I think it was that

1 initial impression but then more subsequently when
2 I went back and, you know, visited again, to me the
3 children didn't look as though they were thriving.

4 Now, in my own professional training I couldn't say
5 what particular conditions or issues the children had as
6 challenges but, in looking at these children, to me they
7 didn't look like children that were thriving, and I can
8 only say I think you can tell when a child is happy and
9 thriving in their environment, they're open, they're
10 engaged, and I didn't get that sense about those
11 children but, again, I was so stressed about, you know,
12 trying to find a school for RGK that maybe
13 I didn't -- you know, I didn't act on anything around
14 that.

15 Q. You also say that a member of staff from Harmeny had
16 moved to Starley Hall. Did that give you some
17 reassurance?

18 A. Well, it did, because when RGK was at Harmeny,
19 PNC was -- he was, I think, SNR at
20 Harmeny, and because we'd had such a good experience
21 with Harmeny, I felt reassured by Mr PNC being there
22 and he came up to Aberdeen to meet with RGK and I.
23 And so, again, it was a known face from a positive
24 experience, so I thought, well, if Mr PNC is at
25 Starley, hopefully we can, you know, build on that

1 connection.

2 Q. On that first visit to Starley Hall, did you meet SNR

3 SNR ?

4 A. I can't remember, if I'm honest. I really -- I can't

5 remember. Possibly did, but it's -- it doesn't stand

6 out for me, you know, as -- I couldn't say with honesty

7 if I did at that visit.

8 Q. Now, if we go on to page 13, at paragraph 73, you tell

9 us a bit about the building. Are you able to describe

10 what it was like?

11 A. I just remember, you know, driving to Burntisland, going

12 up. It's obviously out in the countryside. The grounds

13 were quite impressive. I remember being told, and it

14 might have been at this meeting where I met SNR

15 SNR, that the house had previously belonged to

16 an Admiral and there seemed to be smaller outlying,

17 like, little cottages.

18 I don't recall seeing RGK's room, being inside.

19 I just remember being in the bigger house,

20 Bendameer House, but it looked quite an imposing

21 building, but I didn't get shown around the school.

22 Q. And did you know where your son was going to be

23 sleeping?

24 A. If I remember, no. The only thing I remember was that

25 when my daughter and I had visited, there was an issue

1 arose and that RGK was in a building. I just
2 remember it as being a brown building and RGK was in
3 a state of distress and that was an incident with the
4 staff that made me very, very uncomfortable and I just
5 remember, as we were driving away, I was very upset and
6 RGK threw a cup out the window, which I can only
7 assume because of his level of distress, but I just
8 remember it was a -- but it was dark, so it just seemed
9 like a brown building. That's all I can remember.

10 Q. So that wasn't the main house or Bendameer?

11 A. No, I don't think it was the main Bendameer House, no,
12 no.

13 Q. Now, on page 14, at paragraph 74, you talk about how you
14 felt when you were being shown around and you say you
15 felt overwhelmed. You say:

16 'I find it hard to describe but I almost felt
17 bullied in the situation. It almost felt coercive.
18 I remember feeling completely disempowered as RGK
19 mother.'

20 A. Yes. That's the incident where he had thrown the cup
21 out the window and, as I say, you know, being shown
22 around, I just remember Bendameer House and the grounds.
23 I don't remember seeing his room, but what had happened
24 here, they'd discovered that some of the children had
25 been smoking and RGK had been smoking as well, and

1 I was put in a situation that it was, well, you know,
2 he -- RGK had wanted to smoke and they were saying he
3 can't smoke. And I really felt that I was being
4 intimidated and bullied as his mother. I don't smoke.
5 Nobody in my family smokes, but -- I didn't agree with
6 RGK smoking but I could understand why, possibly, he
7 was doing this, maybe along with the other children, and
8 it was just a completely overwhelming situation that I
9 felt coerced into saying, 'No, RGK can't have any
10 cigarettes', which I totally agreed with but I felt it
11 should have been dealt with in a more professional way.
12 There should have been some behavioural approach or a
13 way of approaching with RGK but all I could see was
14 part and parcel of a very stressful environment, where
15 I remember the staff and just the way they dealt with
16 that, which I felt was completely unprofessional and
17 I just felt overwhelmed by it.

18 And it was nothing that I had ever experienced at
19 Harmeny.

20 Q. Yes, you say, at paragraph 77, at the end of that
21 paragraph, you say that you felt, after your discussion
22 with support workers, that the calibre of staff was
23 nothing like the staff at Harmeny?

24 A. No, no, and, again, that comes back to my point that
25 I felt that in the big picture of things if -- you know,

1 if it eased RGK's stress and they addressed it in
2 a cognitive behavioural way with talking it through with
3 him, that it could have been done very differently, but
4 I just found the calibre of the staff appalling. They
5 were obtuse. You couldn't speak to them. It was almost
6 like their whole demeanour was one of control and power
7 and I got no sense of professionalism from them at all.

8 In fact, I didn't even get a sense they knew what
9 they were talking about.

10 Q. At paragraph 78, you talk about keeping in touch with
11 your son and you had been able to keep in touch with him
12 when he was at Harmeny. You say things changed at
13 Starley Hall. How did that change?

14 A. Yes. Well, I used to keep in touch -- I used to write
15 to RGK every day at Harmeny. I would send him a card
16 or write to him. I was working in Perth so some
17 evenings, I could drive through to see RGK at Harmeny
18 and that was always welcome, always accommodated. And,
19 you know, there was never an issue with anything like
20 that.

21 At Starley, I would say I'd like to come through --
22 and, imagine, Fife is nearer than Edinburgh to get
23 through to from Perth -- and I would have an arrangement
24 to go through and see RGK and then I was told
25 I couldn't come through and visit, that his behaviour

1 had been unacceptable so I couldn't come and visit him.

2 So this happened on a number of occasions and it was
3 very upsetting and, of course, then I subsequently found
4 out that, you know, I don't think RGK's behaviour was
5 any worse than any of the other children. I mean,
6 obviously I didn't see a lot of the behaviour of the
7 other children, but I can't imagine, and then, you know,
8 RGK told me he'd had bruises and, you know, had been
9 restrained in a way and this was -- so the
10 responsibility, the blame was put on to RGK because
11 of his behaviour.

12 But actually they didn't want me to see that RGK
13 had bruises and marks on him, I mean, particularly --
14 one particular incident where he was just restrained,
15 I think in fear of his life really so that -- you know,
16 this was a culture, this was -- and I'd never
17 experienced this at Harmeny.

18 So this -- by this time, I was back at work. I was
19 beginning to feel better and this was then when my
20 antenna was going up and I was worried about RGK's
21 demeanour and I think RGK was trying to protect me as
22 well after just being so unwell.

23 Q. Which staff members were contacting you to tell you that
24 you couldn't come and visit?

25 A. I can't remember, but there was one person. I think his

1 name is PRT , PRT . He had
2 responsibility, I think, for the house that RGK was
3 in, but I couldn't say it was him specifically, but
4 I just know that, you know, I was told I couldn't come
5 and visit by --

6 LADY SMITH: 'Claire', you mentioned that he had been
7 restrained. How did you know that he'd been restrained?
8 Did he tell you?

9 A. He told me, yes, uh-huh, he told me, yeah, but things
10 were, you know -- and again at the point of where RGK
11 told me he'd -- but he'd been restrained on a number of
12 occasions but it was the mode of the restraint that was
13 concerning, and he'd seen other children being
14 restrained in a similar way.

15 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

16 MS INNES: Did the school tell you that they were
17 restraining him?

18 A. Well they -- I would say not, not in a -- not in a way
19 that I can recall that was anything that should have
20 been done in a professional way or that should have been
21 done within a certain code of practice or conduct, so
22 I can't recall that there was ever a specific
23 conversation about that.

24 Q. You mentioned letters, that you would have sent letters
25 when RGK was at Harmeny. When he was at Starley, did

1 you ever get letters from him?

2 A. No, no. It was always -- it was phone calls but RGK
3 used to tell me that Mr KYU would be listening into
4 the calls and he told him if he said anything, the call
5 would be terminated.

6 Q. Said anything about what?

7 A. I can only presume what was going on at the school, what
8 RGK was seeing.

9 Q. If we move on to page 15, and paragraph 81, as you just
10 mentioned in your evidence, you were beginning to feel
11 a bit better, you say, by the January, but you were
12 beginning to have concerns, you couldn't put your finger
13 on things?

14 A. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

15 Q. But what was giving rise to the concerns that you had?

16 A. I think it was just this thing of not being able to
17 visit. You know, when I did speak with RGK, he
18 seemed quite guarded. I remember, on one occasion,
19 I did come -- did get RGK out on a visit and
20 I remember we came into Edinburgh and, again, I can't
21 remember which point between the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]
22 of him leaving, but I just recall we came into Edinburgh
23 for the day. I took him in the car. We parked the car.
24 We weren't that long there. We'd gone into Jenners and
25 we came out and RGK had a complete anxiety attack,

1 complete meltdown. He just couldn't cope and it was
2 almost like all the stress was just outpouring.

3 And I didn't really get a clear sense, but he just
4 said, 'Mum, I don't want to be at this school'. He
5 didn't tell me everything that was going on, but it was
6 clear for me to see there was something seriously
7 underlying. So at that point, I had contacted the
8 school by phone. I mean, at that time emails weren't so
9 prevalent, so I'd contacted them saying I wanted the
10 school doctor to see RGK. I was concerned about his
11 demeanour. Nobody ever got back to me. And there was
12 a case review, if I recall, in the January and I made my
13 concerns known there, that I was concerned about how he
14 was presenting, but I remember at that case review that
15 all the emphasis was on RGK's behaviour. There was
16 nothing about his health and wellbeing that might have
17 been triggering this behaviour.

18 And it was after that case review that I wrote to
19 Mr Stanford expressing my concerns about what I was --
20 you know, concerned about RGK's demeanour and again
21 I continued to phone the school to ask that he could be
22 seen by the school doctor. Nothing ever came of it.
23 And then of course I was beginning to ask questions
24 because I didn't get a sense there was any sound
25 underpinning pedagogy of education. That was the whole

1 point he was going there, was to meet his educational
2 needs. There was no sense of that. There was a clear
3 sense of that at Harmeny. So there was no sound
4 pedagogy of education, no philosophy about how this was
5 being approached, it just seemed shambolic. And I had
6 written this letter to Mr Stanford expressing my
7 concerns and thanking him. He was very supportive of
8 RGK and I.

9 Q. We'll have a look just in a moment at what you wrote,
10 but if we just stay on paragraph 82, you talk about your
11 son having been placed in a class with severely autistic
12 children, and did you have some concerns about that?

13 A. Yes, because, again, appreciating that every child's
14 needs is different, and again on a scale of things,
15 there were children there who had much more complex
16 needs than RGK. RGK's needs were mainly to do
17 with his learning and obviously the emotional stress
18 that that had, you know, evoked in him.

19 But I remember this conversation with a teacher or
20 either a support worker, but it went something like that
21 RGK was in this class with severely autistic children
22 who, through no fault of their own, understandably, were
23 acting out and, you know, obviously maybe distressed as
24 well and he told me that RGK was not accommodating
25 the behaviour of the autistic children, which I just

1 found absolutely shocking.

2 You know, and my point to him was that RGK was
3 not there to accommodate that. RGK was there to be
4 helped in his own learning. Surely that is up to the
5 teacher or the support worker who manages that class,
6 but it was just like everybody was lumped in together
7 and I come back to my point, there was no clear pedagogy
8 of learning that was discussed with me as RGK's
9 mother, whereas Harmeny it was very clear what they were
10 doing. They always explained the approach they were
11 taking. That never happened at Starley Hall.

12 Q. Then if we go over the page, at paragraph 83, you refer
13 to Peter Standford. You think he was a social worker or
14 social support person?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And you felt that he was somebody that you could speak
17 to and he had an air of professionalism?

18 A. Yes. He tried very hard. He could see the stress and
19 the distress that RGK was in. He tried to adopt
20 a behavioural approach. He built up a good relationship
21 with him, and RGK liked Mr Standford.

22 I felt he was the only person you could speak to who
23 had any sense of professionalism or even, I'll use the
24 word, a human approach, you know, and care. So he did
25 his best for RGK. He really did try.

1 Q. Then, if we look at paragraph 87 to 88, we see your
2 letter to Mr Standford after the review and you thank
3 him for his detailed assessment and you express some
4 concerns in relation to your son's mental wellbeing.
5 You say:
6 'I'm concerned that the failure of secondary school
7 [which you've talked about] coupled with the subsequent
8 offending behaviour [so the allegations that were
9 against him] has had an indelible effect on his
10 wellbeing and behaviour.'
11 And you gave him some further information.
12 Did you get a response to this letter?
13 A. Not a written response. I think I may have written that
14 letter some time maybe in February. I don't have the
15 letter with me, but I have a copy of it, and --
16 LADY SMITH: I think when you provided your statement you
17 thought it was 16 February 2001. That's at the
18 beginning of paragraph 87.
19 A. That was the February, so that was after the review
20 meeting.
21 LADY SMITH: Because that was in January?
22 A. Yes, January.
23 LADY SMITH: Yes.
24 A. Whether that letter had triggered other conversations
25 that I wasn't party to and I would assume maybe

1 Mr Stanford had to bring it to people's attention that
2 I was expressing these concerns. Probably -- no doubt
3 I continued to phone the school to express my concerns
4 about RGK. And I think in between this time, RGK
5 had gone to the children's hospital in Edinburgh for
6 further assessment around his learning needs.
7 I think -- all these reports should be in his medical
8 needs. But again these were not being met at the
9 school. And then, you know, in this backdrop then was
10 this abuse that was going on, the physical, but it was
11 the psychological abuse, I think, that took its greatest
12 toll on RGK as well, apart from the incidents where
13 he was physically abused.

14 Q. At paragraph 89, you refer to the report that came from
15 the children's hospital and you say it was like
16 Starley Hall were oblivious to this:
17 'It was like, we've got you now, we've got the
18 funding so forget about the other stuff.'

19 A. That was my sense that this was almost -- I mean,
20 I'll go back to seeing, observing some of the children
21 there who had -- you know, some of their behaviours
22 obviously looked like children with a lot of complex
23 needs, and I go back to the point there was no
24 underpinning educational pedagogy that I could see or
25 identify, no clear philosophy about what the school was

1 about and it almost seemed that this was running as
2 a business to get funding in from various local
3 authorities for children.

4 To me, this was part and parcel of what I was
5 concerned about for RGK and then I think my
6 subsequent concerns then were validated by what happened
7 thereafter, as I began to complain more.

8 Q. If we move on to page 18, and you talk at the top of the
9 page there, and then going into paragraph 92, about your
10 son being isolated. Can you tell us a bit more about
11 that? How did that come about?

12 A. Well, this -- I think this -- I've probably -- this
13 incident, the reason he was isolated was there was
14 an incident at the school -- and I've probably spoken
15 about this before I got to the incident, but there was
16 an incident at the school and this happened, I think it
17 was in the December, if I recall, and him and another
18 boy -- and there was another boy and a boy, there had
19 been an incident with them capering around with a bath
20 and I think it had got a little bit rowdy and so it
21 got -- yes, probably maybe a little bit out of control,
22 but the next thing I knew I was getting a phone call
23 from Mr KYU, if I recall it was him, telling me about
24 this incident and that, you know, him and this other
25 boy, you know -- to me, it sounded like hijinks but it

1 was portrayed to me that he was going to be charged with
2 attempted murder.

3 So I had to cope with this, you know, this
4 statement. So RGK was at Kirkcaldy police station
5 and when he was at Kirkcaldy police station, he told me
6 that he told the police about what he was seeing at
7 Harmeny. He told them about the abuse. But, of
8 course --

9 Q. Sorry, you said what he was seeing at Harmeny there.

10 A. I beg your pardon, Starley Hall, I beg your pardon. And
11 so he was brought back to Starley Hall. He was then put
12 in isolation which -- and this was all in the period
13 leading up to the Christmas period, if I remember.
14 I can't remember the exact dates. And I remember
15 driving down to see him. I was allowed to go and see
16 him and he was in -- it appeared to me like a cottage.
17 He was completely isolated from the other children.

18 I think it was the gardener or somebody had been
19 drafted in, different people were drafted in to sit and
20 watch RGK. And then it was during this period, this
21 December period -- and I can't remember if it was after
22 my visit to the school or before my visit, I had to go
23 down to Perth and I stayed in Perth and then drove
24 through to Starley Hall -- that Mr KYU phoned me and
25 this -- this -- he told me that he could have RGK

1 shipped out to a secure unit and I wouldn't know where
2 he was.

3 And this absolutely terrified me and, of course,
4 this -- with the other things hanging over, this
5 previous charge hanging over RGK and now this
6 so-called attempted murder, it just all -- it was just
7 too much. And when he said to me he could have RGK
8 shipped out to a secure unit, I just, sort of, took
9 that, that, well, maybe he can do this. But what
10 I didn't realise at that point and it was only when
11 I spoke to the social worker, she said no, that couldn't
12 happen. There would have to be a case review. There's
13 no way that could happen but yet I had to endure a phone
14 call from KYU telling me that he could ship my
15 son out to a secure unit and I wouldn't know where he
16 was.

17 And as the incident with the bath, I think RGK
18 felt that it was blown out of proportion. He said,
19 yeah, they were getting a bit rowdy but, I mean, to say
20 it was attempted murder was just -- it seemed to me
21 another sense of the control that they seemed to thrive
22 on at that school.

23 I would have thought any decent professional, no
24 matter how serious an incident might be, would phone
25 a parent and say there's been a very serious incident.

1 We need to discuss this. We need to find out what's
2 going on. We may have to take different measures. But
3 not a phone call where you're being threatened as
4 a parent that you have the power to ship your son out
5 and send him to a secure unit and you won't know where
6 he is. That goes against everything that should be
7 about professional behaviour and particularly about the
8 needs of a child.

9 Q. And was it after this incident that your son was then
10 put into isolation?

11 A. I think it was -- yes, it was after the bath incident
12 that I think he was then kept away from the other
13 children. And, again, you know, RGK, as I say, was
14 very articulate, he could speak up for himself and they
15 didn't like that. You know, a lot of the other children
16 that I observed there, some of them, their communication
17 skills weren't good, they weren't very articulate, a lot
18 of it was -- a lot of children shouting. I mean, some
19 of the children almost seemed feral, through no fault of
20 their own. But RGK could -- he was articulate, he
21 was well spoken, he could speak clearly and again that
22 didn't go down well.

23 That was put down as him being cheeky when he
24 wasn't.

25 Q. If we go on over the page, to page 19, you talk there

1 about the phone call with Mr KYU that you've just
2 mentioned.

3 At paragraph 100, you talk about another phone call
4 that you had from him.

5 A. Yes. This -- and again, I can't recall if this
6 happened -- at what point before the incident about
7 shipping him out to a secure unit, but Mr KYU tried
8 to tell me that RGK was making phone calls, and
9 I can't remember the words he used, but I think it was
10 in the context of making rude phone calls to him, and
11 I said to him, 'Well, if that's the case and you think
12 it -- then you need to do something about it, deal with
13 it'. And nothing ever came of it. But, again, to me,
14 it was another layer of exerting psychological, coercive
15 control over me as RGK's mother, about portraying
16 RGK in a way, and, of course, RGK told me that
17 Mr KYU was listening into his phone calls and told
18 him if he said anything, the call would be terminated.
19 But nothing ever came of that.

20 Again, it was another threat, but it was never
21 investigated. Nothing further ever came of it.

22 Q. And what came of the attempted murder charges, as you've
23 mentioned?

24 A. Nothing, if I can recall and, if I'm honest, I can't
25 recall if that was part of the things that came up at

1 the Children's Panel, if I remember. Again, nothing.
2 Again, it was an incident that seemed to be escalated to
3 something that people thrived on in a way of control and
4 coercion and, as I said, RGK told the police at
5 Kirkcaldy about the abuse he was seeing of other
6 children himself. Nothing was done about it.

7 Q. If we move on to page 20 of your statement, you talk
8 there about some of the incidents that happened and at
9 paragraph 104, you talk about your son sustaining
10 a severe head injury. Can you tell us what happened?

11 A. Well, RGK described it as the way that Mr KYU used
12 to -- this seemed to be his modus operandi, that he
13 would put his arm across the neck, he put his arm across
14 RGK's neck and restricted his breathing and RGK
15 said he couldn't breathe, so it wasn't the type of
16 restraint where a child should be restrained in
17 an appropriate way.

18 This was he had his arm across RGK's neck and
19 RGK couldn't breathe and RGK had banged his head.
20 There were little wash hand basins in some of the rooms,
21 and so RGK had banged his head on one of the wash
22 hand basins. He was never taken to the hospital to have
23 that checked and obviously a head injury can be very
24 dangerous.

25 He saw another boy, a similar incident, with, you

1 know, having his head banged. Nothing was done about
2 it. So RGK was concussed. He couldn't breathe. And
3 I think Mr KYU had said something to him about, if
4 I remember RGK's words, that, 'You're meant to be
5 a toughie from Aberdeen', or something. So he was
6 almost being provocative to RGK as well.

7 And I don't know which incident this occurred in,
8 but I do know RGK talked about that, that KYU was
9 almost goading him saying, 'You're meant to be a toughie
10 from Aberdeen'. RGK was just a small boy. He wasn't
11 big for his age. You know, he wasn't -- RGK wasn't
12 heavily built. He was a small child for his age and for
13 a man to exert that level of physical -- it was almost
14 like -- to me, it's a type of manoeuvre that someone
15 with army training or -- you know, that would use.
16 That's the type of restraint you exercise adult to
17 adult, not adult to a young child.

18 Q. In terms of the head injury, were you told about this at
19 the time?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Did your son tell you about it at the time?

22 A. RGK -- and I can't remember at what point, but RGK
23 did tell me he'd banged his head off the wash hand
24 basin. And again, this all fed into my concerns about
25 RGK's demeanour, what I was beginning to get a sense

1 of what was happening at the school and also I was
2 beginning to get better from being unwell and I was on
3 a phased return to work. So I was suddenly, you know,
4 everything now I was more able to process, I was feeling
5 a bit stronger and this was all giving me major cause
6 for certain.

7 Q. At paragraph 105, you talk about the restraints that
8 you've just mentioned. And you say:

9 'I don't know the exact number of times [my son] was
10 restrained but it happened more than once.'

11 A. Yes, definitely, and -- and -- sorry --

12 Q. Sorry -- and again, did your son tell you about this at
13 the time?

14 A. He didn't tell me initially, I think, at the time
15 because RGK -- you know, I had been unwell. RGK
16 was quite protective of me and I think he -- he just
17 wanted out of the school. He'd ran away a few times.
18 He hoped they would put him out of the school and
19 I think that was what he was hoping for, that if he ran
20 away, they would just put him out of the school.

21 Again, in the order of things, I can't -- but RGK
22 did tell me about these things, but again at what
23 precise point, I can't recall.

24 Q. If we go on over the page, at paragraph 106, you talk
25 about another incident that distressed your son and that

1 was where they rubbed his face in vomit on the carpet.
2 Are you able to tell us about that?

3 A. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Yeah, RGK talked about this
4 frequently. I don't know what had led up to it.
5 I don't know if it was another child who had been sick
6 or it was RGK that was sick, but RGK always
7 described the smell of cheap hamburgers that they were
8 fed. RGK wouldn't eat them. RGK was used to
9 a good diet. And I don't know if it was RGK that got
10 sick, but what they did was they rubbed his face in
11 vomit on the carpet and he had carpet burns down his
12 face and RGK would talk frequently about he couldn't
13 bear the smell of hamburgers, he would talk about that
14 incident and that stuck with him.

15 I mean, that was dehumanising, it was brutalising,
16 and that's something that, as I say, stuck with RGK.
17 He couldn't bear the smell of hamburgers.

18 Q. Did you see him with the carpet burns down his face?

19 A. No, no, but he told me he had carpet burns on his face.

20 Q. You mentioned a moment ago in your evidence that there
21 were the physical incidents but, for your son, the
22 psychological abuse was worse.

23 A. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

24 Q. What sort of things?

25 A. Well, I think it was just the way they spoke to RGK.

1 I think there was a lot of goading. I think the
2 psychological for RGK was he was in a constant
3 heightened state of alert. He could see what was going
4 on with the other children. He didn't want to be there.
5 And I think RGK talked about sleeping with something
6 under his pillow, because of the way he was being --
7 I don't know what that was, but he just was in
8 heightened vigilance the whole time and it was the
9 psychological of the unknown, of what was going to
10 happen next, that really frightened him and upset him.

11 And then obviously observing some of the other
12 children as well.

13 Q. At paragraph 111, at the bottom of page 21, you talk
14 about your son leaving Starley Hall. How did it come
15 about that he left?

16 A. Well, I recall this incident very, very clearly. I had
17 returned back to work on a phased return. I was in the
18 office at the hospital where I worked and I just
19 finished a treatment session with patients and I came
20 back to take this phone call from Mr Stanford and
21 I think it must have been -- it could have been maybe
22 end of [REDACTED], early [REDACTED], I can't remember the exact
23 timeframe now, and he started to tell me he was leaving
24 Starley Hall.

25 And I said, 'Oh, I'm very sorry to hear that'. And,

1 of course, for me, there was a sense of -- you know,
2 that was quite concerning because he was the only person
3 I felt we had any type of rapport or working
4 relationship with, and then he proceeded to tell me --
5 first of all he told me he was leaving Starley Hall and
6 then he proceeded to tell me that RGK was being put
7 out of the school.

8 I said, 'But how can that happen?'. I said, 'That's
9 not possible'. I said, 'There hasn't been a case
10 review. There hasn't been a review meeting'. RGK
11 had a record of needs. And he said -- I can't remember
12 his words exactly, but it was something to the effect
13 of, he said: RGK's behaviour is -- he said: there are
14 children here whose behaviour is 1,000 times worse or
15 100 times worse -- I can't recall the exact -- than
16 RGK. He said: the issue is their parents either
17 don't know or understand or don't care -- something of
18 that -- words to that effect. He said: the issue is
19 people don't like the questions that you're asking.
20 And, at that point, RGK's belongings had been put
21 into a black bag and he was on his way back up to Perth.

22 And he was under this order, which was still hanging
23 over him, and he then had to go to Parkview School. Secondary

24 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

25 Secondary Institutions - to be published later, and then he came

1 out of Parkview and then obviously we went to the
2 Children's Hearing, which took place in Perth, which
3 Mr Standford came up for, and then all the charges
4 against RGK were taken away.

5 So then, of course, the supervision order could then
6 be taken away, all the restraints that had been placed
7 on RGK, so RGK was then back in Aberdeen with
8 myself and then it was back then -- I was then trying to
9 make a decision, should I stay in Perth? My daughter
10 was at school in Perth. And, you know, then I was
11 thinking what are we going to do? At this point
12 I'd been offered a post in Aberdeen, a teaching post,
13 and I thought, maybe we need to just go back to
14 Aberdeen, so that's what we did, and then Aberdeen took
15 up the responsibility for RGK's education.

16 But there was no case review. There was no
17 discussion. He was just put out the school, as I say,
18 with his -- they didn't even phone me as RGK's mother
19 to tell me this is happening. He was already on his way
20 up to Perth with everything in black bags.

21 Q. And then other than your contact with Mr Standford, did
22 you have any contact with the school, with Starley Hall
23 again after that contact?

24 A. I can't recall, you know. It was just such
25 a distressing time. I really -- I can't recall if I

1 phoned the school to verify. It was just horrendous.

2 I can't remember if I did phone the school.

3 Q. If we move on to page 24 of your statement, you talk
4 about the impact that his time at Starley Hall had on
5 his life.

6 At paragraph 121, at the end of that paragraph, you
7 say:

8 'Having been wrongly accused of the offences and
9 having been broken by his experiences at Starley,
10 I think this was a significant tipping point in his
11 sense of who he was.'

12 A. Absolutely. I mean, I suppose if you can imagine
13 a young boy that didn't come from a home environment
14 where you were shouted at, where you were brutalised, to
15 go from what -- how Harmeny had treated RGK to go
16 then to -- obviously there was the failures of the
17 mainstream schooling, which RGK described incidents
18 there that just crushed his self-esteem, so at that very
19 important formative age for RGK as a young
20 adolescent, his whole sense of identity was just wrapped
21 up in this offence and the way the police dealt with it
22 and what they called him, and this was all his identity
23 then he was beginning to formulate, and then the
24 experience at Starley Hall, where he was brutalised,
25 dehumanised, all this just layered up and layered up on

1 RGK .

2 And I did seek -- I did ask for RGK to be seen by
3 children's services in Aberdeen and he was referred to
4 CAMHS. There was a huge waiting list. He was seen by
5 a paediatric child psychiatrist and RGK disclosed the
6 things that happened, but then his age, I think by this
7 time, we had to wait that long to be seen and then he
8 was out of CAMHS and into adult services but, by this
9 time RGK was broken, his whole identity was infused
10 in what had happened there.

11 Then there was another incident where RGK was
12 walking home one night and he was stopped by the police
13 in Aberdeen and they PNCed him and we discovered, to our
14 horror, that these charges that Perth Police had lodged
15 against RGK, they hadn't been taken off and then the
16 police then proceeded to, I think, ridicule him about
17 that, so here was another layer then, and so we had to
18 go to the solicitor in Aberdeen and he had the charges
19 removed but they hadn't been removed from the PNC
20 computer.

21 So, again, this, you know, was another incident that
22 just compounded all that RGK had experienced. So
23 I could see that deterioration then. He did go to
24 a school -- the education authorities in Aberdeen did
25 put him to a school in Aberdeen. They said he had to

1 go. It was Cordyce. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

2 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

3 Secondary Institu He said, 'Mum, I'm not going. I'm not
4 going'.

5 Q. You tell us in your statement about your son's life
6 after he had finished school and as an adult and you
7 tell us about the reports that he made of what happened
8 to him.

9 Did he speak to you over the years about his
10 experiences at Starley?

11 A. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm. I mean, this was always
12 a touchpoint of huge sensitivity with RGK and I. It
13 was the only thing we ever had any, I think, cross words
14 on. He said, 'Mum, I told you I didn't want to go to
15 that school and yet you sent me'. I said, 'RGK',
16 I didn't send you. I had no choice'. I said, it was --
17 you know, partly it was the educational, you know,
18 psychology department. You know, RGK didn't go into
19 care, it was his educational needs, but of course when
20 these incidents -- particularly the incident in Perth,
21 he was wrongly accused of that, then it added another
22 dimension to things.

23 So it was a hugely complicated picture. And then,
24 I think, for RGK the distress and -- he just never
25 got over it and that was the one thing he would talk

1 about all the time, was Starley Hall, about what he'd
2 experienced there and how Mr KYU had treated him. He
3 wasn't particularly fond of PRT either. They
4 were the two people he mentioned the most. And
5 I remember one night in the kitchen, RGK was so
6 distressed, crying about what had happened at
7 Starley Hall, he took down his arms
8 and he said, 'Mum, I told you, I told you I didn't want
9 to go there'.

10 And I tried as much as I could to explain to RGK,
11 you know, the complications of the issues but for him,
12 as a young boy, by this time he would have been 16/17,
13 his whole sense of identity had been eroded and for me
14 to watch, you know, RGK do that to himself was
15 hugely, hugely distressing and it was just -- the only
16 way that RGK could express his anger and what was
17 simmering inside him as to what -- and he just --
18 I think in that whole situation in Starley Hall, he just
19 felt just completely helpless, like being held hostage,
20 and that just pervaded his whole sense and that just,
21 you know, added to the trauma, you know, that he'd
22 experienced.

23 He spoke to health professionals in Aberdeen about
24 it. He told social work, you know, very early -- nobody
25 asked anything or did anything about it and I remember

1 when I was desperately trying to get RGK into
2 residential rehab because he started self-medicating to
3 dampen out the -- RGK couldn't sleep. He would get
4 flashbacks to what happened and I was desperately trying
5 to get help for RGK and I wrote letters, went to my
6 MSP. There was no psychological treatment and
7 I remember I had fought very hard to get RGK into
8 residential rehab and I had even reached a point where
9 I said to the health -- I said if you can do the --
10 help him with the detox, I'll find the money for the
11 residential rehab.

12 And when they conducted the interview with RGK ,
13 he had to go back over everything again. So he had to
14 go back over all the trauma of what happened in
15 Starley Hall, and then the person, I think it was
16 a social worker, who was interviewing him, when he told
17 her about Starley Hall, she said to him, 'Are you sure
18 you're not making that up?'. I mean, it just beggars
19 belief. He told other social workers about the -- and
20 nobody asked, nobody followed up on it, and this was
21 recorded in RGK 's notes as early as 2015 or even
22 earlier, before we knew anything about the court case.
23 I just found out about the court case by chance.

24 Q. We're going to move on and talk about the court case now
25 and you tell us that you found out about it, as you say,

1 by chance and as a result of that, both you and your son
2 gave statements to the police.

3 I want to move forward to the trial itself. If we
4 move to page 29 of your statement, you say at
5 paragraph 148 that -- I think you'd given statements in
6 2019?

7 A. That's correct.

8 Q. And then in February or March 2022, you say that the
9 case came to trial and you tell us in this paragraph
10 that there were no precognition statements although
11 somebody went over your son's statement with him and
12 then you say that you got quite short notice that you'd
13 have to give evidence?

14 A. Mm-hmm. It was very chaotic and I remember during the
15 period, the CID had interviewed RGK, I think it was
16 in the September, and I, 2019, separately. They'd come
17 up to Aberdeen very quickly when I reached out to the
18 Procurator Fiscal here in Edinburgh.

19 We were about six hours with the police giving very
20 lengthy statements and RGK had given his statement,
21 we were interviewed separately, and then, obviously, we
22 waited for things to happen. Then, of course, the world
23 went into COVID and things were all put on hold.

24 During that time we did get, you know, various
25 communication from the Crown Office and at one point

1 somebody did call me about a precognition statement and
2 then it just seemed to disappear. Nobody got back in
3 touch.

4 So during that period, I had asked for
5 an orientation visit. So when the court case was coming
6 nearer, I had asked for an orientation visit to the
7 court, for [RGK], and -- particularly for [RGK], again
8 because, you know, it's just different environments, and
9 that had been requested. Never heard anything back. So
10 we were waiting.

11 And then I recall it was probably around lunchtime,
12 I think it was a Tuesday in March, we got a phone call
13 saying, 'You have to be in court tomorrow', so we had
14 just a small window of opportunity to get organised.
15 And I had been preparing for this. I had been, you
16 know, working with [RGK], supporting him, what we would
17 need to do if we needed to go. I had arranged all his
18 medication, that if we were away for a day I had all the
19 medication. I had a bag packed.

20 The only problem for me was that because of the
21 short notice, I then -- I had a whole day of lectures
22 the following day, I had to cancel those, but we got
23 down on the train and we presented at the High Court and
24 I was told, 'Oh, you're not going to be called as
25 a witness', which nobody explained to me why at that

1 point, but obviously my focus was on RGK .

2 So we sat for the whole day in this small room,
3 stifling room, in the High Court in Edinburgh. We just
4 sat and sat, and occasionally, I don't know if they were
5 Victim Support, but these people appeared and sat with
6 us and then they would disappear off again and then we
7 went out for lunch, and I was aware in the morning when
8 we arrived at court there were people standing outside
9 and I observed some of the people and I know I can't say
10 definitively but I would imagine some of them were
11 witnesses, their age, their presentation, some of them
12 looked very unwell. I remember two people in
13 particular.

14 But we came back in the afternoon. We sat in the
15 room waiting and then this strange incident occurred,
16 which I feel was completely questionable.

17 This gentleman, I think he was a -- would be a QC at
18 that time, appeared into the room where RGK and I
19 were sitting and we were at the very end room, there was
20 no further -- you couldn't go any further, and he came
21 into the room and he said, 'Oh, sorry, wrong room', and
22 it was almost that he was scanning RGK and I, and he
23 left and he turned back the way he'd came and
24 disappeared.

25 And we were right downstairs, you know, we weren't

1 near the court area at all so it seemed so bizarre and
2 a short while after then, the clerk of the court
3 appeared and he said, 'Oh', he said, 'RGK you're not
4 going to give a statement today. You're not going to be
5 called as a witness. Someone will come and speak to
6 you. You'll have to come back to court tomorrow'.

7 This was about -- maybe -- it was certainly nearer
8 4 o'clock, coming up to that time. So that then caused
9 a degree of distress because we'd been sitting there all
10 day, RGK was getting anxious. And so we were
11 sitting. So somebody came and said, 'We'll arrange
12 a hotel for you', as we sat.

13 And then, the clerk of the court came back and he
14 said, 'RGK, you're now being called to give your
15 witness testimony'. So they brought RGK and I
16 upstairs. I waited in the side room. RGK went in.
17 And it couldn't have seemed any length of time before he
18 came back and his very words were, 'What was all that
19 about? They spent more time asking me about my name, my
20 age, my address, they didn't ask me about what
21 happened', and the only thing he said -- I think he
22 maybe managed to give a few brief details, but nothing
23 in depth about what had happened to him, and that --
24 I presume it was the defence QC, just told him he was
25 a liar.

1 And with that, that was RGK's presentation
2 finished. He was brought back. He was very upset about
3 that and of course that then was another -- and I had --
4 and again, I feel bad about this, because I had said to
5 him, I said, 'RGK, the truth will come out'. I said,
6 'You have to go'. I said, you know, that, 'You've given
7 your statement'. I said, 'The truth will come out. You
8 must go'.

9 So I, you know, got him there. If truth be known,
10 if that had been left to RGK on that short notice, he
11 would never have got there, it would have been too
12 anxiety-provoking for him to be able to get to Edinburgh
13 and do that, so he probably wouldn't have made it to
14 court. And it was just really, really shambolic.

15 As we were leaving the court, I could hear somebody
16 very distressed and shouting, and somebody saying, 'Call
17 the police', it was awful. So we went back to --
18 obviously to Aberdeen and I read it in the paper that it
19 was not proven.

20 I had no contact from the Crown Office. It wasn't
21 done in a timely way. We had to read it in the paper
22 and immediately I read it in the paper, I got in touch
23 with the Crown Office. I was not happy with how that
24 situation had unfolded.

25 Subsequently RGK and I went for a meeting at the

1 Crown Office in Edinburgh and on the day I made the
2 phone call to complain about the whole procedural aspect
3 of how it was managed, the vulnerability of the
4 witnesses, I very quickly got a phone call back from the
5 Procurator Fiscal's office, and I made it very clear, my
6 observations and the management, the way things were
7 done, and then in the course of the conversation, which
8 I have to say the person who phoned me was being very
9 helpful in trying to be supportive to me and I think
10 trying to explain things, he inadvertently let it slip
11 which I -- and he said, 'Of course, a number of the
12 witnesses sadly died'.

13 This just was absolutely appalling to me. A number
14 of the witnesses had died. Well, I wouldn't be
15 surprised at that, given the vulnerability of the
16 children and some of the people I saw maybe outside and
17 knowing what happened to my son, and he had all the care
18 and support in the world, that, you know, I could give
19 him.

20 So I was then offered a meeting and RGK and
21 I went down to the Crown -- we met with the
22 Procurator Fiscal who was in charge of the investigation
23 and we met with the deputy advocate and I had a number
24 of questions. They were very gracious, very helpful,
25 but I have to say I found the reasons -- and, of course,

1 saying that you can never really predict what a jury
2 might do, but it was just so wrong. A remote jury.
3 Very vulnerable witnesses who were not prepared.
4 Witnesses who as children didn't have good communication
5 skills, couldn't express themselves with clarity, and
6 then you're expected to go into a court, and it was --
7 as I say, it was a remote jury.

8 All Mr KYU and his cabal had to do was to sit
9 back and wait for the chaos in people's lives to take
10 its toll, and I found myself thinking if this had been
11 a trial about a fraud case and, you know, there was --
12 a fraud case and a number of the witnesses had died,
13 that would have made the newspapers, but, no, these
14 people, these children, these adults were irrelevant.
15 It didn't matter. They died, so of course, as
16 I understood it, under the Moorov principle, which
17 I then -- it was explained to me, the chain of
18 corroboration broke down.

19 It wasn't that these children, now adults, weren't
20 telling the truth, they just found it difficult to
21 express themselves with clarity. But then, of course,
22 the chain of the evidence had broken down and it was --
23 this wasn't about who's telling the truth, this was
24 about the barriers that people come up against,
25 inequalities, inequities, vulnerable people, chaos.

1 I would imagine that many of those witnesses, on the
2 day they had to come to court, may not even have had the
3 bus fares to get to court. If you have to find a way of
4 just coping with your day, to get your medication or
5 whatever, or your life is so broken by your experiences,
6 are you really going to get yourself organised to get to
7 court? And I think this whole underpinning contributed
8 to the failure of that court case, of not proven.

9 I couldn't understand why I was not called as
10 a witness. I didn't feel the explanation was
11 satisfactory, but I had to accept it, but I've since
12 made a complaint about this to the Crown Office and
13 I'm waiting to meet with them to discuss this in more
14 detail.

15 Q. Thank you. How did the outcome of the court case and
16 what happened affect your son?

17 A. It was terrible. You know, RGK, he said, 'Mum,
18 I told you, I told you that he would get off'. He said,
19 you know, RGK, he said, 'I told you', and he said,
20 'Mum, what was all that for?'. And it was just again
21 another layer of, you know, a situation that had caused
22 him huge distress, you know, this not proven.

23 He just went into a downward spiral. It was very
24 difficult. Within that period, we had periods of --
25 where RGK seemed to be doing okay and -- but there

1 was a constant battle with trying to get the medication
2 right. RGK didn't sleep. He couldn't sleep because
3 of -- you know, thinking back about Starley Hall, he
4 would turn night into day.

5 RGK had -- his anxiety was such that he couldn't
6 go to the chemist to collect his own medication.
7 I would go twice a week to collect his medication and,
8 basically, I just kept RGK safe, as safe as I could,
9 and functioning, making sure he ate well, he got to his
10 appointments, but basically, every day, RGK's life
11 was about just trying to cope and get through the day
12 because his mental health deteriorated so much.

13 LADY SMITH: 'Claire', can I just try to help you with one
14 thing I noticed. In your statement, you said you
15 discovered, at paragraph 155, I think it is, that there
16 had been a deputy advocate handling the case and then
17 suddenly a new deputy advocate.

18 I don't know whether you are laying stress on the
19 word 'deputy'. Has anybody explained to you? The term
20 is actually advocate depute and it is an appointment by
21 the Lord Advocate of a lawyer that the Lord Advocate is
22 satisfied has the degree of competence and skill to be
23 allowed to prosecute on the Lord Advocate's behalf in
24 the High Court. It doesn't mean that suddenly a deputy
25 appeared from nowhere that didn't know what they were

1 doing.

2 A. No, yes, my apologies, I think I got the terminology
3 wrong in the title to the advocate.

4 However, if I'm permitted to say, one of, I think,
5 the concerns for me in this case was there seemed to be
6 the advocate depute who had been investigating this
7 case, I mean, I think this was five years in
8 investigation of police time and then that person was --
9 I think obviously took up another post and here we had a
10 new person.

11 I'm not -- I'm not calling into question the
12 person's credentials or their commitment, but, to me, it
13 didn't seem helpful that somebody new was being brought
14 in and I felt that -- I think you just -- someone with
15 gravitas, experience and wisdom, and that's not
16 a criticism of the person, I think that's just another
17 factor in this case that didn't help.

18 LADY SMITH: I wonder if what really the nub is here is that
19 plainly you're thoughtful, you're intelligent, you're
20 articulate and you cared and there should have been more
21 explanation to you.

22 It could be when you're talking about the
23 investigation five years earlier, that would be in the
24 Procurator Fiscal's office. The police pass information
25 to the Procurator Fiscal's office. The

1 Procurator Fiscal then will direct investigations into
2 the case. If it's a High Court case, the case is at
3 some stage, when it's all prepared, handed over to the
4 advocate depute to study, take forward, may ask the
5 Procurator Fiscal to find out one or two more things,
6 but the person who dropped out of the scene might not
7 have been another advocate depute.

8 It's possible. I don't know. Maybe the most
9 important point for you is that somebody like you, in
10 your position, was left in the dark, so far as it being
11 properly explained what the history of the case had
12 been.

13 A. Certainly that played into it, there is no doubt about
14 that, and I think, you know, following the case and the
15 reporting in the papers and then, you know, I think, to
16 me, it was just another factor that there obviously
17 seemed to be a depute advocate who had been very much
18 involved in the case and obviously -- and then that
19 person was no longer there and then obviously someone
20 else had come in. As I say, it's not to call into
21 question her -- you know, her capability or credentials
22 but I suppose, as part of the big picture, it just
23 seemed another level that was unhelpful to how the case
24 was conducted.

25 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

1 Ms Innes.

2 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

3 I want to cover one final matter with you, 'Claire'.

4 And that is that I understand that you've been
5 making some investigations in relation to Starley Hall
6 and the inspection and monitoring systems that were in
7 place at the time.

8 As part of that, I understand that you did an FOI
9 request, I think, to Fife Council because you understood
10 that before the Care Commission came in, there was
11 a period when Fife Council had responsibility for
12 inspecting.

13 One of the things that you found was an inspection
14 report from 1998. So if we can look, please, at
15 FIC-000001472.

16 And we can see on the first page here that this is
17 an announced inspection of Starley Hall on four dates in
18 May 1998.

19 If we can move on, please, to page 4 of this
20 document. If we can just scroll up to page 3. Yes,
21 summary of report. We see here that it says:

22 'The inspection of Starley Hall School has shown
23 a school which is in a state of transition. Part of the
24 residential accommodation is satisfactory and another
25 part couldn't be approved for registration at the

1 present time. Qualified staff have been appointed and
2 a programme for staff training has been developed.
3 Plans have been made to reorganise care planning and to
4 provide care which meets the needs of young people, but
5 at the present time some young people live in
6 accommodation which is so poor and so neglected that it
7 could not be approved for registration.'

8 So there was an issue about the standard of
9 accommodation. And then it goes on:

10 'Most care plans are purely based on medical or
11 health needs and are not comprehensive care plans. Most
12 children state that they have been bullied and at times
13 staff seemed unable to control and keep the children
14 safe. The level of incidents in relation to challenging
15 behaviour, accidents or bullying is a cause for
16 concern.'

17 What was your reaction when you read this?

18 A. I couldn't believe it when I read this report. I just
19 found it beyond words that this house of horrors was
20 allowed to exist and what made it -- what prompted this
21 inspection was, yes, that schools had to be registered,
22 but of course, prior to this, Starley Hall, and I'm sure
23 like a number of other institutions, were operating
24 without appropriate registration. So they had no option
25 but to be registered.

1 And there is another part to this registration that
2 concerns me as well, that when I was trying to find the
3 reports, and, of course, I was looking on the
4 Care Inspectorate, I could only find some that started
5 from 2003 and I had to request these again as a freedom
6 of information.

7 So, by 2003, you could see that they were beginning
8 to get their act together. They had to, because of --
9 and I have to say I would question the calibre of some
10 of the reports. They were very, I would say,
11 subjective, not objective, which I think things have got
12 better now in how things are graded, but this school was
13 required -- it wanted to be -- because it's
14 an independent school -- and it was running as
15 a business, you know, this is the concerning thing, but
16 they had to be registered or obviously their funding
17 flow would stop.

18 Now, when I contacted the Scottish independent
19 schools, there is an overarching register which a lot of
20 independent schools come under, you know, like Loretto
21 or, you know, other independent schools, when I asked
22 them for a copy of when Starley Hall was registered with
23 them as a school, they couldn't tell me.

24 And I got some vague response, about 2000, and
25 I said -- under the freedom of information I requested

1 a copy of that. They said they weren't obliged to give
2 it to me. So I then decided, when I began investigating
3 more, I thought -- it looked as though Fife Council were
4 responsible for that period of schools, particularly for
5 the residential care aspect.

6 So I put in a freedom of information and this is the
7 report that I got. So when I went through it,
8 everything that I saw in that report are the questions
9 that I have put at the end of my statement.

10 I didn't get this until I think it was February, but
11 I had already made the statements into my witness
12 statement, so when I read this, it almost validated or
13 verified what I was suspecting about Starley Hall.

14 I mean, how they could have vulnerable children with
15 complex needs and, as I say, no pedagogy of education,
16 no training, no staff with appropriate qualifications to
17 keep these children well and safe and back to my point
18 of seeing children who didn't look as though they were
19 thriving, and it just read as a house of horrors.

20 I mean, for children to be allowed to remain in
21 an environment that was considered unsafe beggars
22 beliefs. It just beggars belief why and how those
23 children were left there.

24 And of course, it allowed **KYU** and his gang,
25 his -- I call them a cabal, to operate with impunity.

1 I mean, it was -- so as you read through the report --
2 I mean, I was highlighting red sections. I made
3 comments. You could have actually just ran a red
4 highlighter through the whole thing.

5 And what was even more shocking for me was when
6 I read this report, and they sent me additional
7 information, I read through it all, so of course it
8 raised more questions for me, so I sent a subsequent
9 email back to Fife Council and I have to say it took
10 a while for them to produce these documents for me,
11 I didn't get it within the required 20 days.

12 So eventually I got them and some things were
13 redacted. So I then went back with further questions,
14 particularly in relation to the areas for concern, the
15 points of action that needed to be addressed. Basically
16 there was nothing. There was nothing there. They were
17 just -- they were making it up as they went along, as
18 far as I'm concerned, as long as they got the funding.

19 And what made it worse, to think that local
20 authorities were funding a lot of money to put very
21 vulnerable children here. So when I went back and I
22 sent a subsequent email to ask Fife Council when these
23 actions were followed up on to allow Starley Hall to
24 operate as a registered school, the email I got beggared
25 belief and the -- the terrible tragedy for me as

1 RGK 's mother, I was in Ireland visiting my family,
2 and I was on the train and I had just learned that
3 RGK had passed away and I was desperately trying to
4 get a flight home and I was in my emails and here was
5 an email from Fife Council having the audacity to say,
6 'We assume these things had been addressed'.

7 How on earth can a council assume that vulnerable
8 children -- that these things were addressed. It was
9 absolutely shocking. And that's my last correspondence
10 with Fife Council. But to write in an email is equally
11 cavalier and just shows their lack of, I think, checks
12 and balances to say, 'We assume these had been
13 addressed.'

14 So basically this inspection took place in 1998.
15 I'm sorry, there's no way by 2000 they had their house
16 in order. I mean, I know working in the NHS, having
17 worked there, how long it takes to bring about change
18 and to get programmes up to speed and staff development.
19 What I witnessed at Starley Hall verifies that there was
20 no way these things were brought up to standard. But
21 they managed to get their registration, which is wrong,
22 and, of course, I would imagine, and I don't know, but I
23 would imagine that most of the issues of abuse took
24 place within a time period where this school was not
25 being rigorously inspected or brought to a standard that

1 it should have been, to care for vulnerable children.

2 I subsequently found a report in 2003, again I had
3 to request this under the Freedom of Information Act,
4 and it just beggars belief that a member of staff, in
5 Starley Hall, a complaint was made to the
6 Care Inspectorate, a member of staff had
7 an inappropriate relationship with a child. Who has
8 an inappropriate relationship with a child as a staff
9 member at a school for vulnerable children? This person
10 was subsequently allowed back to work at the school.
11 Who makes decisions like that?

12 And then it was only because it was raised as
13 a complaint that the matter was dealt with.

14 So there's just been so many red flags with this
15 school, with things that weren't addressed in the
16 appropriate way and for the Scottish Council for
17 Independent Schools not to have a record from when this
18 school was -- and they could just say, 'Oh, it was some
19 time in 2000', but yet they allowed this school to be
20 registered with not the appropriate signing off, none of
21 these issues, any follow-up report that these matters
22 had been addressed.

23 The next time I then put a further Freedom of
24 Information Act into Education Scotland and they sent me
25 the reports that were done in September 2001 and these

1 were done by the education inspectors, not residential
2 inspectors and, I'm sorry, if you don't have a joint
3 integrated inspection, you're going to miss things. So
4 the education inspectors might have been seeing one
5 thing, and I have to say it didn't inspire me, their
6 report either in 2001, but there's huge questions about
7 why these children were left, and nobody followed up on
8 this house of horrors in this report from these
9 inspectors.

10 LADY SMITH: 'Claire', a few minutes ago you mentioned the
11 Scottish Council for Independent Schools and a concern
12 that they couldn't tell you when Starley Hall was
13 registered. Did you mean the Registrar of Schools?

14 A. No. I understand that in terms of overarching, I did
15 contact Scottish Government to start with, to find out
16 who was responsible for the oversee of independent
17 schools and then I discovered, I think it's the SCIS --

18 LADY SMITH: Sorry, to interrupt, they aren't
19 an organisation that has to oversee schools. Schools
20 may join SCIS out of common interest and to share
21 learning and SCIS organise courses. It's a completely
22 independent body but I wondered if it's the Registrar
23 who is responsible for maintaining the Register of
24 Independent Schools that you had in mind?

25 A. Well, I think there's possibly a number of issues here.

1 Yes, and I feel there is a part on Scottish Government's
2 part to play with that. But I felt it was also
3 concerning that this Registrar of Independent Schools
4 was accepting Starley Hall without a full background
5 knowledge of the credibility of the school and that
6 obviously these concerns had been identified.

7 So they were quite happy to register them and
8 parents would go on to that website and obviously have
9 trust in that, but with these underlying issues that,
10 you know, were in the background, when they were allowed
11 to become part of that organisation.

12 And yes, I take your point that they are a voluntary
13 organisation --

14 LADY SMITH: SCIS are, Scottish Council of Independent
15 Schools.

16 A. Yes, yes. Absolutely, yes.

17 LADY SMITH: I think the point that you are making, very
18 well, if I may say, about the need for any government or
19 government-associated body, a government agency like the
20 Registrar, they should somehow know about information
21 that has been gained by a public body fulfilling
22 a statutory responsibility, which is what the inspectors
23 do.

24 I think put SCIS to one side, because they're
25 a voluntary body seeking to bring together, if

1 independent schools wish to do so, their knowledge and
2 learning and taking their own practice forward and
3 keeping them informed about up-to-date learning and so
4 on.

5 But I think your target thinking here must be the
6 Registrar and then, separately, government, in trying to
7 see that the systems are such that a school doesn't get
8 to register and doesn't get to maintain its registration
9 if it's not fit for that registration. Have I got you
10 right?

11 A. I would agree. I think it's where systems talk to each
12 other and there is a duty of candour for honesty and
13 transparency about these things.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

15 Ms Innes.

16 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

17 Obviously, we have your statement as well as your
18 evidence this morning, 'Claire', so I don't have any
19 more questions for you.

20 A. Thank you.

21 LADY SMITH: 'Claire', nor do I. I just want to thank you
22 again so much for doing all you've done to provide
23 evidence about your experience of Starley Hall.

24 Your experience as a mother, trying to support her
25 son through the very difficult time that he was having

1 and your thoughtful analysis of what was going wrong, it
2 cannot have been easy for you. That's a huge
3 understatement, I can see that, and it does cast light
4 on what the impact is on family members if a child is
5 put in a position such as your son was in a very
6 powerful and clear way and I'm very grateful to you for
7 that.

8 A. Thank you.

9 LADY SMITH: I'm going to break now because I always break
10 at this time of day to give everybody a breather,
11 including the stenography team, who have been at it
12 since 10 o'clock.

13 During the break, we'll make a final decision about
14 what we go forward with after the break.

15 A. Thank you.

16 LADY SMITH: But I hope that will help you if we just have
17 a breather now.

18 (11.37 am)

19 (A short break)

20 (11.52 am)

21 LADY SMITH: Now, just before we move on to the next stage,
22 a couple of things that I want to mention.

23 In the course of the evidence that we've had so far
24 today, we have used some names of people whose
25 identities are protected by my General Restriction

1 Order.

2 One of them is the witness's own son. This is not
3 a criticism at all of the witness, because it often
4 helps just to use the correct names within the hearing
5 room. So there was the witness's own son. There was
6 also two people, Mr KYU or Mr KYU, and
7 PRT.

8 Now, none of these people can be identified outside
9 this room as having been referred to in our evidence
10 and, just to repeat, that's because of the terms of my
11 General Restriction Order, which provide that they're
12 not to be so identified.

13 Now, Ms Innes, next stage?

14 RGK (read)

15 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

16 As I mentioned first thing this morning, 'Claire's'
17 son, RGK, was engaging with the Inquiry, but had not
18 provided a full statement before he passed away.

19 As a result of that, I have RGK police
20 statement that he gave on 12 September 2019, which
21 I'm going to read in.

22 The reference for this is PSS-000029729.

23 Just following on immediately from what
24 your Ladyship has just said in relation to the
25 restriction order, I will be using, in the course of

1 reading this out, the name of Mr KYU and PRT ,
2 so the same applies.

3 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much for flagging that up.

4 MS INNES: If we can look at the first page, we see -- if we
5 go down to the second section under 'Provenance', we can
6 see that the statement was taken on 12 September 2019.

7 If we go on to the next page, we can see that RGK
8 initially gives some personal details, which I'm not
9 going to read out, just about where he was living, and
10 his family members.

11 Starting at the paragraph 'My mum':

12 'My mum alerted me about a year ago about the
13 National Child Abuse Inquiry, which are investigating
14 institutional abuse within children's homes. Around
15 a month ago, my mum told me that Starley Hall was under
16 investigation.

17 'Starley Hall was somewhere I attended as a child
18 and suffered abuse from staff members whilst I was
19 there, but I never reported it to anyone. My mum told
20 me that staff members had been charged and it was in the
21 papers.

22 'I don't know how it came about, but contact was
23 made between my mum and the police who are based within
24 Fife and it was agreed that I would provide a statement
25 today, Thursday 12 September 2019, about my time at

1 Starley Hall and the concerns I have.

2 'I was born and brought up within Aberdeen and I
3 attended St Joseph's Primary School. I got moved out of
4 that school when I was about 7 years old and was placed
5 within St John's Primary School in Aberdeen.

6 'I was moved due to behavioural issues that I was
7 displaying. I had been diagnosed as having dyslexia and
8 another condition which affects my memory and
9 timescales. I can't remember the term or the name of
10 this condition. I struggled to understand certain
11 lessons at school and often played about or wandered
12 around in class so staff would have put me down as
13 disruptive within the classroom, which is why I was
14 moved.

15 'Around 8 and a half, 9 years old, I was moved to
16 Harmeny School in Currie in Edinburgh who specialised in
17 pupils with dyslexia. That was a residential school
18 where I stayed Monday to Friday and would go home at
19 weekends.

20 'I was able to speak to my mum whenever I wanted
21 when I was there.

22 'I was at Harmeny until I was about 11 and a half
23 years old, which is when they decided I was performing
24 at the level I should have been and had caught back up
25 with the work I had fallen behind on.

1 'My experience at Harmeny was positive and all good.
2 I enjoyed my time I was there. The staff were
3 brilliant. I was taken out on trips, on football
4 matches, skiing and swimming. I built up good
5 relationships with the staff members there.

6 'There were very rare occasions I needed to be
7 restrained by staff at Harmeny School after I had maybe
8 made an attempt to run away or me and another pupil had
9 been fighting.

10 'When I was restrained at Harmeny, I was held loose
11 enough that you could wriggle out. It was like the
12 staff were worried about hurting me and they were
13 gentle. The staff would always try and talk to you
14 before going into restraint.

15 'There was one occasion my key worker at Harmeny
16 applied a bit too much pressure on my back whilst
17 restraining me and I was left with a red mark on my
18 back. The staff member was so apologetic and wanted to
19 meet with my mum to say sorry about it. He felt
20 terrible. The member of staff's partner was assaulted
21 badly a couple of days before and he was maybe stressed
22 and handled me a bit too hard. He didn't mean it and
23 I didn't look badly on him for doing that. I believe he
24 resigned after that as things were strict at Harmeny.
25 I actually thought highly of that guy though and didn't

1 want him losing his job over that.

2 'Once I left Harmeny, I went to St John's in Perth
3 for about six months and then I went to St Columba's
4 Secondary School in Perth. I was there for two years.'

5 I think we've heard from 'Claire' that it was
6 a shorter period:

7 'I stopped going to school and got into car crime
8 and ended up getting involved with the police.

9 'Due to me getting into so much trouble, I was
10 allocated a female social worker. I can't remember her
11 name. She was based at Perth social work. She was
12 pretty sound.

13 'I ended up in front of a Children's Panel and I was
14 placed on a supervision order, which meant I couldn't
15 return home. Social work had to find me somewhere to
16 stay for two days until a place became available for
17 Starley Hall in Burntisland. I can't remember exactly
18 where I was placed but I'm sure it was some kind of
19 social work camp. After those two days, I was moved to
20 Starley Hall. I can't remember the exact date or months
21 I moved there. However, it was in 1999.'

22 Again, I think 'Claire' said it was [REDACTED] 2000.

23 LADY SMITH: I think he's just a year out on that.

24 MS INNES: 'Starley Hall has three houses and an education
25 block, which was like prefabs with flat roofs, which was

1 in between two of the houses.

2 'As you enter the grounds of Starley Hall, up the
3 drive to the left was one of the accommodation houses,
4 which is where I lived for a short period of time.

5 'As you drive further along the main road as you
6 just entered the grounds, there was another house on the
7 right, which is where I spent some of my time living in
8 there. I believe there were four houses in total and
9 they all had different names but I can't remember them.
10 The house was like a small cottage and I was put there
11 on secure terms for a period of a month as a punishment
12 and was never allowed to leave that cottage at any point
13 over that month. I was put there after pranking about
14 with another pupil and put them in a bath.

15 'Nobody else was in that cottage during that month
16 I was in there, other than a male gardener whose name
17 I can't remember, who stayed 24/7 with me. I wasn't
18 even allowed an hour's exercise or visits from my mum.
19 I wasn't even getting to attend the education block
20 during that month. I still got breakfast and supper but
21 never got a lunch when I was there. I only had
22 a mattress in my room and a toothbrush and toothpaste.
23 I was constantly being told that any day someone was
24 coming to get me and take me to another secure unit, and
25 then fired into other secure units and my mum wouldn't

1 have a clue where I was. I was in real fear of where
2 I would end up. They were constantly playing mind
3 games. It was Mr KYU , SNR , who would be
4 telling me these things about being moved to other
5 units. He would come into the cottage to speak to me
6 and say those things to me.

7 'The gardener who looked after me within that
8 cottage was really decent with me. I believe he lived
9 in Kinghorn and from reading the papers recently, I have
10 read a name which I now can't remember. However,
11 I recognise that name as being that of the gardener who
12 was really decent with me. It seems he has been charged
13 with stuff, which I was shocked about.

14 'The gardener was about 45 years old, 5' 6" in
15 height, slim build. He had dark hair with a little
16 moustache with grey bits going through it. I think he
17 had a Scottish name. There was only one gardener so
18 it's him. He wasn't a proper member of staff. They
19 just paid him to look after me. It was like it was
20 a cheap option for them when they have no one else to
21 look after me.

22 'I was subjected to two assaults within that
23 cottage. However, I am struggling to remember what
24 members of staff were involved.

25 'I had been at Starley Hall for about six months

1 when I was first properly assaulted.'

2 Again, there are issues with timing, but that's not
3 unusual.

4 LADY SMITH: It's not a problem.

5 MS INNES: 'Lots happened before those assaults where I got
6 a backhander from staff. By that I mean staff used the
7 back of their flat hand to slap me off the face. I was
8 constantly having to be on my toes from the day I moved
9 in there. I can't remember who it was who would
10 backhand slap me. I was probably getting slapped once
11 or twice every couple of weeks. It wasn't every staff
12 member. It was a couple of staff who would do it. They
13 would pretend to slap me and I would flinch and they
14 would find that funny.

15 'The staff always tormented me and stressed me out
16 if I was misbehaving by taking all my stuff away from me
17 or threatening me to get me out into other units.

18 'Every day other than the time I was locked in the
19 secure terms cottage, I attended the education block
20 from about 9 until 3. There were teachers who would
21 come into the school and teach us, then go away again.
22 There was one female member of staff who was decent but
23 I'm not sure if she done anything about the things that
24 she would have seen that wasn't right. I'm not sure of
25 her name. She was in her late 30s/40s and she had dark

1 skin. She lived in a small village before you got to
2 Burntisland. She was the only nice teacher that
3 I remember.

4 'The other teachers weren't great. They didn't try
5 to give us an education. It was like they were sent
6 there to fill some hours.

7 'The other main house which was the main building
8 contained all the offices and reception in it. It was
9 never somewhere I stayed. I was in that building.

10 'I believe Mr KYU's office was attached to the
11 education block where the other teachers were.

12 'I ran away a lot of times from Starley Hall as
13 I hated being there.

14 'The occasions I remember I was assaulted was, like
15 I said, within the cottage, which I was later placed in
16 for the secure term previously mentioned. I remember
17 this day in particular I was sitting eating lunch with
18 other pupils. I can't remember any of their names.
19 There was one girl from Dundee there. I think there
20 were about four or five of us in the cottage. I think
21 there were about four members of staff there too whilst
22 we ate lunch.

23 'Something happened between me and another pupil
24 which resulted in me being restrained on the floor by
25 the members of staff. It was all four members of staff

1 that restrained me. Two males and two females.
2 I couldn't give you their names as I can't remember what
3 they looked like. I actually think PRT [REDACTED] was one
4 of them. He was a member of staff in Starley Hall. He
5 was in Mr KYU [REDACTED]'s pocket. I don't think I could even
6 describe the other staff members. PRT [REDACTED] was
7 little and fat with a baldy head. There was a member of
8 staff each holding my arms and one staff member holding
9 my legs and one controlling my head. I could see
10 Mr KYU [REDACTED] leaning against a wall watching everything
11 that was happening. At no point did he say anything.
12 One of the staff members kneed me in the ribs and it
13 made me physically vomit on the floor. My head was
14 forced down into my vomit which meant I was struggling
15 to breathe as the vomit was getting breathed up my nose
16 which was bubbling and I was choking on vomit still in
17 my mouth. Every time I breathed, sick was going in my
18 mouth. I was struggling to get away until the point
19 I was kneed in the ribs. They were pushing on pressure
20 points and it twisted my hand up my wrist. They
21 continued to apply pressure until I stopped struggling.
22 'I think that incident went on for about half
23 an hour and I can't remember how it stopped. I think
24 I was put to my room which was within that same cottage.
25 I didn't share a room with anyone.

1 'As you entered the front door of that cottage there
2 was a dining room on the right and a kitchen with
3 a hatch to the dining room. There was an office just
4 around the corner from the kitchen. There was then
5 a hallway which led to five or six different bedrooms.
6 I don't know any of the other kids who had rooms in that
7 cottage the same time as me, other than [the girl
8 I've mentioned].

9 'When I was assaulted that time I have described
10 when I vomited, it took place within the kitchen.

11 'I believe the other kids had been moved outside so
12 wouldn't have seen what happened.

13 'Like I said, it only happened six months into me
14 being at Starley Hall but I don't know what day or month
15 it was.

16 'The second major incident I remember was about
17 a couple of weeks or a month after that initial incident
18 and it happened in the education block this time.
19 I think it was right outside Mr KYU 's office.

20 'As you entered the prefab education block on the
21 left, there was offices and to the right was Mr KYU 's
22 office. The classrooms were further along the hallway
23 to the left.

24 'I think I wrote on the wall or something and was
25 sent to Mr KYU 's office and whilst outside in the

1 hall I was in the corner and Mr KYU came right up to
2 me and pushed his head right into the side of my neck.
3 It was like he was trying to instil fear into me by
4 getting into my face. I think I said something cheeky
5 to him resulting in his putting his forehead right into
6 my neck, which obviously cut off my oxygen or blood
7 supply briefly as I fell to the ground and blacked out
8 but I don't know how long for. I was really dizzy. It
9 was only Mr KYU there when this happened. He just
10 said, "Right, are you going to listen now?" He then
11 tried to sit me up on a chair and said, "Walk it off.
12 You're meant to be a rough Aberdonian". I'm not sure if
13 a teacher came along or not. I'm not sure what happened
14 next but I was sent to my room afterwards.

15 'I would describe myself as having the same feeling
16 as being choked out by Mr KYU that day but not using
17 his hands or arms. Nobody else saw that but I told the
18 other kids in the school. I'm not sure though. I think
19 I spoke to my social worker about it. Again, I can't
20 remember what day or month it was but it was in the
21 afternoon time between 1.30 and 3.

22 'There was a third occasion I remember being
23 assaulted by an unknown staff member. It was a staff
24 member not a teacher. I can't remember when it
25 happened. I believe it was evening time and I was in my

1 room playing my music too loud. This male member of
2 staff entered my room and wanted to turn it down. He
3 was in and out a few times and I kept turning it up
4 again. I was standing close to the door when he came
5 into my room for the last time and pushed me with force
6 with one hand across my chest area, which resulted in me
7 falling back and smashing my head against the sink in my
8 room. I kept saying I was tired and sleepy after that
9 incident, but staff just kept saying I would be fine.
10 It was the back side of my head which hit the sink.
11 Nobody witnessed me being pushed into my room but he
12 must have told some staff members because I later told
13 staff I felt concussed. They didn't ask what happened.
14 They just sent me back to my room.

15 'My room didn't have a number on that but it was
16 midway up the cottage on the left. My bedroom window
17 faced out to the road which led to the other cottage.
18 There were other bedrooms in the cottage on either side
19 of my room.

20 'I wouldn't be surprised if someone didn't hear
21 stuff going on with staff members and assaults happening
22 as I often heard voices being raised and a thud which
23 was followed by greeting so I assumed that pupils were
24 being assaulted.

25 'The third assault on me happened in the same

1 cottage I was first assaulted in. There was one time
2 I witnessed a small young boy being restrained by
3 Mr KYU outside the classrooms in the education block.
4 I can't remember the boy's name but he flung his head
5 back and he hit Mr KYU on his temple and was knocked
6 out. Mr KYU blacked out and ended up on the ground.
7 I believe the child was charged with assault on
8 Mr KYU.

9 'I knew from what Mr KYU was like he would catch
10 up with the boy and eventually he did but I didn't
11 witness it. The boy told me Mr KYU throttled him by
12 grabbing him around the neck with his hands. I could
13 see the boy had red marks around his neck which looked
14 like thumb marks.

15 'I was so fearful during my time at Starley Hall
16 that I ended up having something metal in my pocket like
17 a key chain as protection in case I needed it. I was
18 always scared I was going to be assaulted.

19 'I say that the psychological abuse I suffered at
20 Starley Hall impacted my life more than the physical
21 abuse.

22 'I would write letters to my mum which had to be
23 given to staff and she never received them.

24 'My mum would phone and ask to speak to me but the
25 calls would be monitored and times I wouldn't get to

1 speak to her.

2 'There were times my mum would be told she couldn't
3 visit and it was for no other reason than to give my
4 face time to heal as I had sustained red marks from
5 being restrained or slapped. My time at Starley Hall
6 has damaged my life. I don't believe I would have made
7 some of the poor choices I have done since leaving
8 Starley Hall as I only done certain things like heavy
9 drugs to escape the bad memories I had from
10 Starley Hall.

11 'Even whilst at Starley Hall, I started to buzz gas
12 to numb and escape the feelings I had about being there.

13 'In 2001, I ended up leaving Starley Hall after my
14 mum started asking questions about me being put on
15 a month-long secure as punishment. I think Starley Hall
16 thought, "Well, if questions are being asked, let's just
17 get rid of him".

18 'I was about 15-and-a-half when I left. I disclosed
19 what was happening at Starley Hall to my social worker
20 and at one point she said it was illegal what they were
21 doing.

22 'Throughout my time at Starley Hall I told my mum
23 what was happening and I would write what was happening
24 in the letters to my mum, which is why she wouldn't ever
25 have got them. Staff wouldn't have wanted her knowing.

1 'I'm not sure of any of the other pupils' names who
2 were there at the same time as me other than [the girl
3 I've mentioned].

4 'My experiences from Harmeny School to Starley Hall
5 are like complete black and white, such different
6 experiences.

7 'I went to a residential school in Parkview in
8 Dundee for two days after Starley Hall. However, after
9 that, my supervision order stopped and I ended up going
10 back to Aberdeen.

11 'Over the years when I get depressed, I bring
12 Starley Hall up to my mum as being the place which
13 ruined my life. I honestly feel my life would be so
14 different if I didn't go there.

15 'I think this is the reason why my mum kept an eye
16 on Starley Hall coming into the papers.

17 'I never spoke out about this as the drugs kept it
18 buried deep down and since getting better and off the
19 drugs and seeing this in the papers has given me the
20 strength to speak up and hopefully make these people who
21 ruined my life be held accountable for what they have
22 done to me.'

23 RGK then goes on to identify certain documents
24 provided to him by the police. He says:

25 'I have had this statement read back to me and it is

1 a true and accurate account.'

2 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much for that. Thank you.

3 MS INNES: We'll now move to another statement of another

4 applicant and Ms McMillan will deal with that.

5 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Ms McMillan, when you're ready.

6 'Wallace' (read)

7 MS MCMILLAN: Thank you, my Lady.

8 We're now moving back to Monken Hadley and to the

9 statement of someone who is known by the name of

10 'Wallace'.

11 The reference to 'Wallace's' statement is

12 WIT-1-000000748.

13 In his statement he says he was either 10 or 11 when

14 he was taken to Monken Hadley and left when he turned

15 16. Unfortunately, we do not have any records for his

16 attendance there.

17 At paragraphs 2 to 9, he talks about his life before

18 care. Starting at paragraph 7, he then talks about

19 Monken Hadley and his experiences there. He says:

20 'I recall travelling to Monken Hadley to see what

21 the place was like. I travelled with my mother and

22 another woman in a car. I was travel sick the whole way

23 there so when I arrived, I was not feeling at all well.

24 We were shown round the school and after about an hour

25 we drove home. I recall telling my mother when I got

1 home that I did not want to go there.

2 'On the visit to Monken Hadley, I was shown round
3 the school by another boy. I recall that we were given
4 a meal in a room that was like a staffroom. I recall
5 that we met an elderly couple who owned the school at
6 that time. I can't recall their name but they sold the
7 school not long after.

8 'I came back from [REDACTED] School one day and my
9 mother told me that I was going to boarding school at
10 Monken Hadley. She had organised a grant to buy my
11 clothes to wear there. The woman with the car took my
12 mother and me to the school and I was again travel sick.
13 I was either 10 or 11. I don't know who the woman was
14 that drove the car.

15 'The school was in Newton Stewart in Dumfriesshire.
16 It was situated at the top end of Newton Stewart. There
17 were woods in the grounds and an old folks' home close
18 by. There was another school and some housing situated
19 nearby. I think there was another building connected to
20 the main building, which was sold off and no longer used
21 by the school.

22 'I recall that the school looked like an old stately
23 home set in its own grounds. From the main road, you
24 entered at an angle and then there was a driveway that
25 went up the hill to the school. There was a bungalow at

1 the top of the hill that was occupied by the old couple
2 that owned the school and then the [new couple] when
3 they owned the school. I can't recall the names of the
4 old couple.

5 'As you got close to the school, there was a large
6 courtyard which was like a car park. It was tarred but
7 there were also large stones in it. You could drive to
8 the back of the school. When stood facing the school
9 from the outside, the main entrance was in the middle of
10 the school and the dining room was off to the right and
11 on the left-hand side of the main entrance were the
12 classrooms.

13 'Inside the building, there were numerous exits and
14 to leave a unit other than the seniors' unit, you had to
15 come down the main staircase in order to leave the main
16 building. I was originally in the junior unit on the
17 first floor. The senior unit was on the next floor and
18 the third floor became the girls' unit when they were
19 introduced into the school. When I first arrived, there
20 were no girls and there was someone living on the third
21 floor but I don't know who they were. All units, the
22 juniors, seniors, girls and the special unit, all had
23 their own living area, bathroom facilities as well as
24 bedrooms. But the special unit was the only unit with
25 its own dedicated classroom.

1 'When you came down the staircase, there was a small
2 hall with a telephone box. You walked through the large
3 hall to get to the main entrance. In the small hall
4 there was a door that led you to the classrooms and to
5 the kitchen area. There were downstairs toilets and
6 access to the cellar. There was a laundry washing area
7 for clothing and bedding off the main hall.

8 'There were no real sports facilities in the
9 grounds. If you went downhill from the courtyard, there
10 were steps down to a football pitch, which did not have
11 goalposts.

12 'When [the new couple] took over the school they had
13 built timber classrooms and had a Portakabin installed
14 in the grounds of the school. It was soon after the
15 time that [the new couple] took over that the school
16 changed its name to Woodlands School. There were also
17 changes in the routine at the school but the abuse
18 didn't stop.

19 'I think that there were about 45 boys attending at
20 the school. The ages ranged between 10 and 16. We were
21 all in dormitories and the number of dormitories and
22 those using them would vary depending on the number of
23 boys at the school. It could range between four and
24 five for the numbers in each dormitory. We slept in
25 bunk beds. My first dormitory was later used as

1 a sitting room but originally it had about 12 of us
2 sleeping in there in bunk beds.

3 'I started off in the juniors, as all boys aged
4 under 14 did. When I turned 14, pupils went to seniors
5 but only when beds became available. I went from the
6 juniors before I was 14 to a special discipline unit for
7 approximately six months to a year before I moved up to
8 the seniors. Pupils placed in the special unit were
9 those that questioned and complained about the
10 conditions and treatment at the school.

11 'You had to call all the staff "Sir" or "Madam".
12 When I first arrived, the school was run by an older
13 couple whose name I can't recall. They in turn sold the
14 school. I wasn't there for long with the older couple.
15 [The new couple] changed the name of the school to
16 Woodlands School. [They] came from Zimbabwe and they
17 were both teachers.

18 '[There was a man] who cared for boys out of school
19 hours. He was part of the care staff. [He] never had
20 any direct caring responsibility for me other than when
21 I was in the special unit. My care was provided by
22 [a woman] who was in charge of the juniors. Mr Thorburn
23 senior worked night shift looking after the boys in the
24 junior and senior units.

25 'Beth Marr was a very nice lady who was very good to

1 me. When I was about 14 or 15, during a school holiday,
2 I went to stay with her at her own house for a few
3 weeks. Miss Banks and Miss MacDonald were also there.
4 I went to stay there because I was not eating and
5 Beth Marr thought she may be able to get my eating
6 habits sorted out. My stay with Beth Marr was the first
7 time I experienced the love and care of normal family
8 life. I think that Beth Marr had separated from her
9 husband and I recall that she had two little girls.
10 I think that this may have been over the Easter
11 holidays. I do recall that Beth was a very good-looking
12 woman and the boys would ask her for a kiss at bedtime.
13 But one of the boys used to take it to the extreme. She
14 would give you a kiss on the forehead, which was lovely.

15 'There was another member of staff called
16 KWG, who took the class of pupils back to her
17 house on a few occasions. KWG was one of my
18 teachers. Mr Heap was another teacher.

19 'There were two kinds of staff. There was the
20 teaching staff and the care staff who looked after you
21 outside of the classroom. I think that the care staff
22 worked a shift system and it depended who was on duty as
23 to who looked after you. I think that the night shift
24 care staff stayed in the school overnight and went home
25 in the morning.

1 'Miss Banks who came from England and Miss MacDonald
2 who came from Glasgow stayed in the school and looked
3 after the girls who were boarding. They were both very
4 nice people.

5 'There was a cook who was a lovely older lady and
6 later on in my schooling at Monken Hadley, which had
7 been renamed by then to Woodlands School, I would go and
8 sit with her at lunchtime and talk to her. There was
9 also cleaning staff who I worked with instead of going
10 to school classes from approximately 14 until I became
11 old enough to leave the school. They were all good
12 people.

13 'Mr Thorburn senior worked at the school as a carer.
14 Once, on the day I was due to go home, I was told
15 without explanation that my parents didn't want me at
16 home and I was going to stay with Mr Thorburn senior.

17 'Some time after this, Mr Thorburn senior passed
18 away while I was at the school. On the day of
19 Mr Thorburn senior passing away, one of the pupils
20 laughed. I asked him why he'd laughed and he told me it
21 was a nervous reaction. [The man who cared for the
22 boys], who was a friend of Mr Thorburn senior, battered
23 [this pupil], punching and kicking him as punishment.

24 'KXL was a member of staff. He was my
25 carer after [the female carer] left. He drove the

1 minibuses that took you home and collected you after the
2 holidays. He also took you on some school trips. He
3 was a good bloke.

4 'I remember arriving at the school having been
5 travel sick. I was introduced to some of the other boys
6 and then I went down to the dining hall to have
7 something to eat. I was sat at a single table that was
8 like a school desk. I remember looking out the window
9 and seeing a long driveway and a bungalow across from
10 where I was sat.

11 'This was my first introduction to [the male care
12 staff member], he was a carer and the start of abuse
13 I was subjected to by him. He grabbed me by the hair
14 and picked up the knife I was going to eat with and
15 continually whacked me on the back of the head with
16 the handle. This was while I was looking out the window
17 and I could see my mother and this other woman driving
18 away. This was my first experience of the school.
19 I have no idea what I had done wrong to warrant the
20 assault on me by [him].

21 'I remember that I went into the courtyard and I was
22 crying after what [he] did to me.

23 'I was shown the dormitory where I was going to be
24 sleeping on the previous trip that I had made to the
25 school with my mother. The dormitory had about 12 other

1 boys. I recall that we changed dormitory every year.
2 The first dormitory I stayed in was the largest in the
3 school and became a sitting room during the time I was
4 there. We each had a bedside cabinet where we kept our
5 clothes. We had three sets of clothing for wearing
6 whilst we were at the school. We had pyjamas, a school
7 uniform and casual clothes for playing in at nighttime.

8 'We had to go to church on a Sunday, which was
9 compulsory and for that we had to wear our school
10 uniform.

11 'When [the new couple] arrived at the school it was
12 soon after that the girls arrived. The arrangements
13 changed in that the juniors were on the first floor, the
14 seniors on the second floor and the girls on the top
15 floor. There was also an area between the juniors and
16 seniors. I believe this area originally wasn't used.
17 It was an area off the staircase.

18 '[The new couple] asked [the male care staff member]
19 to turn this area into a special unit for some of the
20 children with discipline problems that needed to be
21 punished. This unit consisted of one or two bedrooms,
22 living area, shower, toilet facilities and one room
23 dedicated to a classroom. Mr Heap was the teacher in
24 this classroom. [The male carer] took charge of the
25 unit out of school hours. I remember [three boys] and I

1 were all placed in this unit under the control of [the
2 male carer] and we were totally isolated from all the
3 other pupils other than when we were outside and went
4 for meals. Every morning we had to make up our bed
5 blocks like the army, which meant stripping our beds and
6 folding the bedding in precise squares at the bottom of
7 our bed. [The male carer] would check these and if not
8 correct they had to be redone. After leaving the school
9 room, we had to stand by our beds until [he] gave us
10 permission to make our beds and these had to be made in
11 a military fashion and again, if they weren't correct,
12 they had to be remade again. This happened every day
13 along with checking our underwear. We had to take cold
14 showers every morning. He would get us up at 6 in the
15 morning to clean the unit. It was just like being in
16 the military.

17 'The entire school had an assembly with [the new
18 owners] every Friday. During this assembly any of the
19 pupils could raise any issues that were bothering them
20 or make suggestions. Pupils did make suggestions but no
21 one ever said a word of complaint or raised matters that
22 bothered them as they were too frightened of the
23 consequences if [the male carer] found out. We also
24 knew that if we complained [the new owners] wouldn't act
25 upon it. Some of us took a turn at chairing the

1 meeting. I was one of the pupils that regularly chaired
2 the meetings. I do recall one of the boys asking [the
3 new owners] if we could have quilts for our beds instead
4 of blankets. [The new owners] sorted that out for us.

5 'In the juniors and seniors we would be woken up in
6 the morning by whatever staff member was on duty at
7 7 am. We would get up and go for a shower. Then we'd
8 get dressed. Every day we'd make our beds and tidy up
9 the unit. We would sweep the floor with a brush. We
10 all had a chore to do. The cleaners didn't clean the
11 units.

12 'We would then have breakfast and go to school.
13 There was a break for lunch and then back to school,
14 which finished at about 4 o'clock. We'd get a cup of
15 tea and cake at that time. Not long after [the new
16 couple] took ownership that was done away with. We had
17 the evening meal about 6 o'clock. We would be in bed
18 at 9.

19 'After school, we had to wear our casual clothes.
20 When we went to bed it was to sleep and not to talk.
21 I remember that there were shutters and curtains on the
22 bedroom windows and the members of staff would wake you
23 by opening the curtains and shutters.

24 'I don't recall any of the care staff having to deal
25 with any incidents through the night other than pupils

1 absconding. I do recall we had a fire drill but that
2 was always through the day. The only movement at night
3 was when [the male carer] took the boys out of bed to
4 punish them, which was really abusing them.

5 'When [the new couple] owned the school, girls were
6 introduced into the school ... Originally there were
7 about six girls there. This number increased over time
8 to about 12. To be honest, most of the boys were
9 delighted to see the arrival of girls but it didn't stop
10 the violence and the abuse from [the male carer].

11 'A few years after the [new owners] came to the
12 school there was an annual fete run by the school which
13 raised money. This money was then divided amongst the
14 units, the sum allocated due to how many pupils were in
15 each unit. Each unit decided how they would spend the
16 money.

17 'When you went to the dining room you could sit
18 where you wanted. You had to line up before you went
19 in. The tables would be set with bread and we would get
20 our own plate and cutlery. At breakfast, it was
21 porridge, a slice of bread and marmalade when the older
22 couple were there.

23 'At lunchtime you had a main meal and pudding and
24 the evening meal was soup and a main course. The cook
25 never forgot any of the boys' or girls' birthdays and

1 they would always get a cake made by her which was
2 shared around with the other children in their unit.
3 The food was okay to be honest but I didn't like
4 mushroom soup or toad in the hole.

5 'I was unable to eat broccoli, brussel sprouts or
6 cauliflower. [The male carer] would force me to eat
7 these foods. He would force me even if I was being
8 sick. If I was physically sick then [he] would force me
9 to eat all the food and my own vomit. It was the reason
10 that I stopped eating meals. The only thing I would eat
11 was bread and jam. After about six months of only
12 eating bread and jam, they took me to the local doctor's
13 surgery in Newton Stewart and the doctor said that as
14 long as I was eating something I would be all right.
15 I didn't see any other pupils being force fed.

16 'There were communal showers in the juniors with
17 only four shower heads. We stood waiting our turn in
18 the area of the showers. There was no privacy in the
19 juniors. When I moved to the seniors there were
20 individual cubicles which allowed you some privacy. In
21 the juniors, [the female carer] supervised the
22 showering.

23 'You wore a school uniform during school hours and
24 when attending church on a Sunday. You wore your own
25 casual clothes the rest of the time. You had your

1 pyjamas for bedtime.

2 'I went to classes in the school up until the time

3 I was 14. I wasn't eating properly and I hated going to

4 school. I became friendly with two of the cleaning

5 staff who were very nice to me. They encouraged me to

6 eat and I would stay with them all day cleaning,

7 including [the new couple's] bungalow, instead of going

8 to classes. I had very little education. I think that

9 this had been agreed by [the new couple] because [the

10 new couple] or my teacher KWG never questioned

11 why I wasn't attending classes.

12 'I think there were three classrooms when I first

13 attended the school, all in the main building. There

14 were three main teachers when [the new couple] took over

15 the school. One teacher, I don't recall her name,

16 KWG and [the female of the new couple] who

17 taught in the classes, although [she] stopped teaching

18 later. It was when I was moved into KWG's class

19 that I spent my time with the cleaners instead of in

20 school lessons.

21 'When I did attend class we were taught the basic

22 subjects: reading, writing and maths and only to basic

23 level, no science or languages. It was primary school

24 teaching. I had never had experience of secondary

25 schooling as I didn't attend the classes to be taught

1 but I had to do exams.

2 'You had to attend church on a Sunday. The
3 Catholics went to their church and the Protestants to
4 their one. You had to use 5p of your pocket money for
5 the collection at church. I did attend Sunday school
6 but I did not enjoy it. I never had to attend church
7 when I was at home and was not religious.

8 'There were the usual three school holidays during
9 the year. There was one occasion when I never went back
10 home at the school break because my parents didn't want
11 me home. I stayed with Mr and Mrs Thorburn senior on
12 this occasion. On one occasion while I was at home from
13 school on holiday, my parents agreed that I could go and
14 stay with Beth Marr.

15 'When I did go home to my parents, my sister was
16 usually there and we got on very well. She was in
17 a home in Dundee. My sister would phone me when I was
18 at the school. I couldn't phone her because I couldn't
19 afford to with the pocket money I was given. My father
20 was less violent towards me than my siblings and despite
21 the conditions at home, it was nice to be home and away
22 from the school.

23 'Unless you were on an E grade and after [the female
24 carer] left, we would be taken out by KXL
25 on trips to Stranraer. I remember on one trip I got

1 lost in the woods and I got into a panic. A few years
2 after [the new couple] took ownership, they would take
3 us all on holiday from the school for a week. We used
4 to go to a hut, bothy-style building built by the
5 military. We also went camping near a beach. We would
6 stay in tents but I recall that it was cold and we only
7 had one blanket. We were always accompanied by some
8 staff, including [the male carer].

9 'Every pupil at the school would get a cake baked
10 for them by the cook. She never forgot anyone's
11 birthday. That is the type of woman she was. She knew
12 everything that was going on in the school and she was
13 not always happy with it. I spent a lot of time with
14 her, in her company when I was not attending classes,
15 including when I was working with the cleaners.

16 'You usually went home at Christmastime. When [the
17 new owners] came they introduced minibuses and used them
18 to get us home and to be collected for going back to
19 school. There was one occasion at Christmastime when
20 the school minibus came to pick me up and I wasn't at my
21 parents' as I didn't want to go back to school. So the
22 minibus was unable to collect me. My father took me to
23 Glasgow Airport and put me on a service bus to
24 Newton Stewart. My parents were back together at this
25 time and did not want me at home. I jumped off the bus

1 and made my way back to Livingston. My father battered
2 me and after a couple of weeks at home, the minibus came
3 and collected me and took me back to the school.

4 'There was a points system where you started the
5 week with 126 points. You would lose points for bad
6 behaviour. These points would be deducted for anything
7 from swearing to not making your bed correctly. But
8 these points could also be deducted without a reason
9 given or you could automatically be put on an E grade.
10 These points were deducted by teaching and caring staff,
11 including [the male carer]. I was one of the boys who
12 ended up losing most of his points every week. It meant
13 that when you got pocket money, you had to use part of
14 it to pay to go into the cinema every Saturday and also
15 for the collection at church, which meant I had nothing
16 left most weeks. I can still remember having to stand
17 for the National Anthem when it was played in the
18 cinema. At the time, I was both a nationalist and
19 a republican. [The female carer] insisted on us going
20 to the cinema and standing up when the National Anthem
21 was played. If you didn't stand, then on return to the
22 school [she] would get [the male carer] to you and we
23 all knew what that meant. I was entitled to get £2 per
24 week for working with the cleaners but as I got less
25 than a C grade, it meant that I lost the £2 every week.

1 'When you turned 14, the school would allow you to
2 smoke if you had written permission from your parents.
3 My mother gave me permission to smoke. I couldn't afford
4 to call out but my sister would call me on the phone.

5 'Inspectors came to the school regularly, maybe once
6 or twice a year. I remember at one of the assemblies
7 being told visitors were coming to inspect the school.
8 [The new owners] told the boys to stay away from them
9 and not to speak to them. If they came towards us, we
10 were to make a beeline in another direction and make out
11 that we had somewhere else to be. I don't recall
12 speaking to any of the inspectors and I don't recall the
13 inspectors speaking to any of the boys or girls. If we
14 embarrassed the staff in the front of the inspectors, we
15 would be punished and that was made plain to us.

16 'I didn't know who these people were when they were
17 inspecting the school. It wasn't until I spoke to
18 a lawyer in approximately 2005 that I learned that these
19 people were local authority educational inspectors.

20 'I recall that my parents came to visit me on one
21 occasion when my father was working nearby. I think
22 that he only came to show off his new car. They took me
23 out for the day. It was very rare that parents came to
24 visit any of the pupils.

25 'There was no medical help when you were in the

1 school. There was no resident nurse or doctor nor did
2 either attend the school to my knowledge other than to
3 attend to [the boy that died]. Even when [the male
4 carer] burst my head open and it wouldn't stop bleeding,
5 I wasn't seen by any medical staff or first aid. Nor
6 were the pupils seen by medical staff or first aiders
7 when abused and injured as a result of abuse. We just
8 went to bed bleeding or aching. You had to look after
9 yourself. I did make one trip to the local doctor in
10 Newton Stewart when I wasn't eating properly and as
11 a result of this, I had lost a lot of weight but he
12 basically said that if I was eating something I would be
13 fine. All I could eat at the time was bread and jam. I
14 stopped eating because all I wanted was to get away from
15 the school and [the male and female carers] who were
16 abusing me.

17 'I never ran away when I was at
18 Monken Hadley/Woodlands School. I know that some
19 children did run away and I recall two of them suffered
20 from hypothermia and ended up in hospital ... If you
21 ran away you would be punished and put on an E grade.

22 'There was a school belt that you could get from
23 [the male owner] which he used on pupils' hands. [He]
24 stopped issuing punishments and this was left to the
25 other members of staff but [the male carer] was more

1 fond of grabbing your hair and slapping you about the
2 face, kicking, including when you were down and punching
3 you and is detailed throughout this statement.

4 'There was a system where everyone got 126 points at
5 the beginning of the week and there were deductions for
6 bad behaviour. At the end of the week, the people with
7 the most points received the most pocket money. I think
8 that pocket money day was a Friday, so the system ran to
9 a Thursday night. Prior to me attending and throughout
10 my entire time at the school, deducting points was the
11 established form of punishment without having to use any
12 form of violence. Then why did the owners, the old
13 couple and [the new couple] allow, in addition to the
14 deduction of points, cruelty towards the pupils? For
15 instance, brushing the playground/car park with
16 a toothbrush while they had bare legs, locking us in
17 a dark cellar, making us sit bare arsed on the stone
18 steps and pupils being physically punished by members of
19 staff which, in actual fact, became physical abuse.
20 When [the new couple] were in charge, a pupil once
21 slapped a teacher. This resulted in the pupil being
22 removed from the school within a couple of days. Why
23 then could a pupil be removed for slapping a teacher
24 when this teacher was constantly picking on him because
25 of his race? But staff members were allowed to

1 physically and sexually abuse children causing many
2 injuries including physical, mental and even loss of
3 life with impunity? If [the new couple] could take
4 decisive action against [this pupil] why couldn't they
5 do the same against the abusers of the pupil? The [new
6 couple] made a conscious choice not to reprimand the
7 members of staff that abused pupils, not to stop the
8 abuse and not to report it to the authorities and/or
9 police. [They] had double standards, they had zero
10 tolerance for violence against teachers but the staff
11 had carte blanche to be violent and abusive towards
12 pupils at the school.

13 'After school on a Friday, there was a school
14 assembly held in the dining room. At this assembly the
15 pupils had the chance to tell staff the things that they
16 would like to see change.

17 'You could be put on an E grade which meant that you
18 got no pocket money and you received different
19 punishments all week. These punishments were that you
20 were banned from smoking, you were not allowed to watch
21 TV, you had to go to bed before everyone else, you
22 couldn't go on any outings, no pocket money. I can
23 remember, as one of these different punishments, being
24 given a toothbrush and told to go and clean the
25 playground/car park. This was while wearing shorts and

1 your knees and lower legs would be bare on the hard
2 tarmac and stone ground and this had to be done every
3 day for a week. These were procedures set in the school
4 rules and could be administered and overseen by a member
5 of staff. These punishments applied to every child,
6 both girls and boys.

7 'The only time that you got the belt was by [the new
8 male owner] and it was for something that you did when
9 you were in the classroom. He would give you five
10 strokes on each hand. I remember one time he hit me so
11 hard that he cut the palm of my hand open. [The male
12 carer] had different methods.

13 'I think some of the boys did wet the bed but they
14 would be given plastic sheets and they had to change
15 their bed every day. They were given fresh bed clothes
16 if they did wet the bed. I was not a bed wetter.

17 'My first experience with [the male carer] was on
18 the first day at the school. I don't know what I did to
19 him, but as --

20 LADY SMITH: I think the 'as' shouldn't be there. It doesn't
21 make correct grammar otherwise. 'But he was pulling my
22 hair.'

23 MS MCMILLAN: Thank you my Lady, so: 'I don't know what I
24 did to him, but he was pulling and continually hitting
25 the back of my hand with the handle of a knife that

1 I was to use with my meal which was very painful.
2 I could see my mother driving away and this made me very
3 afraid from the first day being there.
4 'The only time I felt safe at the school was when
5 [the male carer] was not on duty. Even on his days off
6 [he] would come into the school as a form of
7 intimidation. He would ask us what we had been up to
8 and that if he found out anything bad, he would see us
9 when he was back on duty, this meant that when he was
10 back on duty during the night he would come and see you
11 and carry out abuse. When the old couple owned the
12 school [this male carer] was really in charge of the
13 seniors in the same role as [the female carer] was with
14 the juniors. But after [the new couple] took over
15 ownership, a short while after [the male carer] was
16 promoted, after we reported the abuse to [the new
17 couple] and he was [placed] in charge of the other staff
18 under [the new couple]. Later when the special unit was
19 established he became in charge of that. I was only
20 under the direct care of [this male carer] when I spent
21 time in the special unit between leaving the juniors and
22 going back into the seniors but this didn't stop [him]
23 abusing me from the first day I was in the school right
24 up until the day he left the school. When I got to the
25 seniors [he] was still in charge of the special unit.

1 '[He] was not afraid of what he was doing to us. He
2 did it openly and in front of other pupils and other
3 members of staff and [the new owners] knew about the
4 abuse because we reported the abuse and the specifics of
5 the abuse to them a few weeks after they came to the
6 school. [The female carer] would tell him if we had
7 been bad when we were in the juniors and he would come
8 and punish us, this consisting of him telling us that he
9 would see us later on and later meant during the night
10 when it was quiet and the punishment he dealt was not
11 punishment but abuse. He would hit us like we were
12 fully grown men using his fists and kicking us. The
13 physical abuse, mental and emotional abuse from [the
14 male carer] did not stop when [the new owners] arrived
15 at the school. It continued and got worse because it
16 resulted in [a boy] losing his life and a girl being
17 sexually abused.

18 '[The male carer] would force me to eat. He would
19 stand over me in the dining room until I had eaten what
20 was on my plate, including eating any of my own vomit.
21 He would force my head down to the plate and force me to
22 eat the food, including sprouts and cauliflower which
23 I still can't eat to this day, they made me baulk.
24 There were other members of staff about who saw him
25 doing this. I was in the juniors when my eating

1 problems started and that is when [the female carer]
2 took me to the doctors.

3 '[She] came into the doctor's surgery with me.
4 I think that this was the first and only time I went to
5 the doctors. I can't recall the name of the doctor but
6 the surgery was in Newton Stewart. I didn't tell the
7 doctor why I was not eating. He directed most of the
8 conversation towards [the female carer]. I think he
9 asked me how I felt and I told him I was okay. The
10 doctor told [the female carer] that as long as I was
11 eating something I would be fine.

12 '[The male carer] would get us up out of our beds
13 during the night and lock us alone in an underground
14 cellar near the kitchen area for as long as he wanted
15 which could be an hour or several hours at a time,
16 wearing only pyjamas and the cellar was full of water.
17 There were lights in the cellar but I couldn't find them
18 so I was in the dark feeling very scared. It was
19 a terrifying experience. This happened to me on two
20 separate occasions. Once prior and once after [the new
21 couple] took over. [He] also threatened and did put
22 pupils in a room with senior boys and these boys had
23 been instructed to beat you up and this is what happened
24 or he'd threaten us with having senior boys come into
25 the dormitory while we were sleeping and batter us.

1 I was threatened with these by [him] but it never
2 happened to me, but you always had this in the back of
3 your mind.

4 '[The male carer] would also get us up through the
5 night and make us sit on the stairs in the main
6 staircase. He would make us take our pyjama pants down
7 and sit naked from the waist down on the cold concrete
8 stone steps for hours at a time. It always happened
9 through the night and he wouldn't supervise us, he just
10 left us there. Sometimes I was with other children and
11 other times I was on my own and if we needed the toilet
12 we would have to pee where we were.

13 'On one occasion one of the boys wrote something
14 like '[The male carer] is a bastard' on the wall using
15 faeces. [He] got wind of this and decided to punish us,
16 so after school was finished, he lined the whole school
17 up in the large hall and asked the person who had
18 written the message to own up. We all stood there for
19 hours. No one came forward so at 6 pm, still wearing
20 our school uniform, we went into the dining room. After
21 our meal we returned to the large hall and again had to
22 stand until it was time for bed.

23 'The next morning he continued the punishment. He
24 got all of the junior school to go into the schoolyard
25 for exercise. This exercise lasted for more than

1 an hour and only ended because [one boy] collapsed and
2 died. At the school there was no gym teacher nor had we
3 ever had gym lessons or exercise classes. He stopped us
4 from attending the classroom that morning. He took us
5 into the schoolyard in the front of the school entrance
6 where he made us exercise, which consisted of touching
7 our toes and what I can only describe as military
8 exercises. He then took us to the bottom of the drive
9 and had us continually running up and down the hill to
10 the bungalow and wouldn't allow us to stop. When we
11 weren't running we had to run on the spot.

12 'One of the boys collapsed and died during this
13 exercise. When this happened, [the boy] was running
14 towards me coming down from the hill. So I could see
15 him and his face as he collapsed, fell and then died in
16 front of me. He grabbed hold of me. As the ambulance
17 left, we were told that [he] had died and that he had
18 a weak heart and he would have died anyway even if he
19 had been walking up the stairs. The point was that we
20 were not exercising but we were being punished and not
21 allowed to stop. We were all being driven to the state
22 of collapse through fatigue and exhaustion and [this
23 boy] did collapse and died as a result of this
24 punishment. There was a system of discipline already in
25 place at the school, the graded system by the deduction

1 of points, but [the male carer] bypassed this and
2 substituted it with cruelty that ultimately resulted in
3 the needless loss of life ... [The new owners] could
4 have and should have finally put a stop to the cruelty
5 and the reign of terror by [the male carer] at the
6 school but instead they did nothing to stop this and
7 [he] stayed at the school for years and continued his
8 abuse, which finally resulted in a girl being sexually
9 abused before the [owners] finally took action but only
10 by the removal of [the male carer] but to the best of my
11 knowledge, the [owners] didn't report it to the police
12 or the authorities. Where was the duty of care to the
13 children under their control?

14 '[The male carer] took all the juniors down to the
15 bottom of the drive and placed us in three columns.
16 [This boy] was in my column and was directly in front of
17 me. The first row ran up and down the hill while the
18 other ran on the spot. When the row got to the bottom
19 of the hill, they tagged the next row who ran up the
20 hill and those that had just come down the hill went to
21 the back and ran on the spot. [The boy] was immediately
22 in front of me running down the hill and towards me when
23 he grabbed on to me and collapsed to the ground. [The
24 male carer] told us to help him drag him off the
25 driveway and on to the side of the woods, but I think he

1 was already dead. [The male carer] then told us all to
2 go back to the school and to ask someone to call
3 an ambulance, we did this. I remember the ambulance was
4 called and there was flashing blue lights.

5 'We were all told to go back to the school while
6 a doctor and an ambulance were called. None of the
7 pupils were allowed to talk to the doctor or ambulance
8 staff or indeed any police if they were involved.
9 I think that [the boy] was already dead. The staff told
10 us that [the boy] had a weak heart and that this is what
11 caused his death. I didn't believe this and it has
12 always haunted me and that's what [his] parents and the
13 authorities were told. He was such a nice and quiet boy
14 and he collapsed and died because we were being
15 excessively punished for someone writing a derogatory
16 comment about [the male carer] and [the male carer]
17 taking extreme action as a punishment.

18 '[He] would have no hesitation in punching and
19 kicking you. He would also throw you down the stairs
20 and was allowed to do whatever he wanted. He did these
21 to me. I remember when the girls came to the school, he
22 took a shine to a particular lassie. She would sit on
23 his knee and he would put his hand up her skirt between
24 her legs. I think the girl was about 12. All the staff
25 would see this happening and do nothing about it.

1 I can't recall the girl's name. I felt hopeless not
2 being able to ask the girl if she was okay for fear of
3 being on [his] radar.

4 'There was another occasion when [two boys] and me
5 were coming back to the school from a day in town. On
6 the way back we killed a hedgehog. [The male carer]
7 heard about it from [one boy] and summoned [the other
8 boy] and me to the living room in the seniors although
9 we were still juniors at the time. The living room was
10 full of all the senior pupils. He laid right into us
11 with a bamboo stick, hitting us all over our bodies.
12 [One boy] got it worse than me. We were both black and
13 blue. I have always greatly regretted killing the
14 hedgehog.

15 'I recall watching an occasion when [the male carer]
16 battered [another boy]. He punched, banging his head
17 off the walls and kicked him. It was when we had been
18 put into the special punishment unit that [the male
19 carer] was in charge of. We must have been
20 approximately 14.

21 'On one occasion I was stood outside the main
22 entrance to the school. The entrance external walls
23 were made of stone. I wasn't aware that [the male
24 carer] was there. He deliberately physically abused me
25 by pushing into me with the full weight of his body and

1 using a bent outstretched arm to knock me off my balance
2 and hitting my head into the cornerstone column of the
3 school entrance. My head was split open and bleeding
4 badly but I was not offered any medical help from
5 a doctor or any other medical staff. I had to deal with
6 it myself. The damage needed stitches. I was still in
7 the juniors. I still have a scar on my head. None of
8 the other boys ever questioned what was happening for
9 fear that they would get on [the male carer's] radar and
10 be the next one to be beaten.

11 'You would be lined up by a member of staff who
12 would be told to inspect your underpants for skid marks.
13 If you had any soiling then you would have to wash your
14 own underpants. [The male carer's] wife ran the laundry
15 and she didn't want to have to wash dirty underpants.

16 'I just stopped eating while I was at the school.
17 There was a man at the school whose name I have
18 forgotten. He was working at the school and one day he
19 took [two pupils] and myself back to his house. While
20 we were there I needed to go to the toilet. The man
21 told me that I couldn't go to his bathroom. The man
22 eventually agreed to letting me go to use the toilet in
23 the bathroom and there was a lot of dirty clothing which
24 entirely covered the bathroom floor.

25 'When I got back to the school I told one of the

1 boys about the state of the bathroom. The man must have
2 got wind of this because he came to my bedroom and got
3 me up out of bed, took me into the hall and he then
4 quizzed me about it and I didn't lie to him. He
5 deliberately dropped a metal tin of paint on my left
6 foot, which caused it to burst open. This has left
7 a scar. It was bleeding everywhere but he wouldn't let
8 me get any treatment and I went to bed with it untreated
9 and bleeding. All I can remember about the man is that
10 he used to be some sort of caretaker or gamekeeper on
11 a large estate and he used to live in the cottage on
12 that estate. I think the purpose of this trip was to
13 try to get me to eat as his wife cooked a meal for us.

14 '[The female carer] from day one at the school felt
15 it was part of her duties to come into the shower room
16 and wash between the crack of our arses and private
17 parts. We were not young children any more. This
18 started from my first day I attended the school and
19 didn't stop until she left. And she didn't need to do
20 that. This was the only abuse I suffered from that
21 woman. She did it to all the junior boys.

22 'I was also abused by the son of a member of staff.
23 The son was also a carer at the school ... He grabbed
24 me from the line by the hair, lifting me off the ground
25 and threw me about banging my head against the walls in

1 the corner where I had to remain. I was so frightened
2 about what was happening that I wet myself. The reason
3 [he] assaulted me was because one of the boys was
4 constantly prodding me in the back so I turned around
5 and headbutted him, bursting his nose. I have to say
6 that I was not proud of doing that. [He] worked the
7 night shifts looking after us and I think he took it
8 upon himself to punish me. I was in the juniors when
9 this happened and would be under 14.

10 'The local authority, the [owners] and all the staff
11 working at the school had a duty of care to ensure all
12 pupils' safety, health and wellbeing and all the above
13 had a duty of care with the exception of the carers to
14 ensure that all pupils were educated. All these duties
15 of care were breached at Monken Hadley/Woodlands School.

16 'Shortly after [the new owners] arrived at
17 Monken Hadley, two of the other boys ... along with
18 myself told them about the abuse we were suffering at
19 the hands of [the male carer] and [the female carer].
20 They listened to what we said and a couple of weeks
21 later [the [REDACTED] carer] had been promoted and had
22 bought a new car. It gave him carte blanche to do
23 whatever he wanted. It sent a clear signal to us not to
24 complain because he was untouchable. The [new owners]
25 did nothing to remedy our complaints. They made

1 a conscious choice not to reprimand staff members for
2 abusing children, not to stop the abuse and not to
3 report it to the authorities. The [new owners] deemed
4 their financial position more important than the safety
5 and wellbeing of the children at the school under their
6 care.

7 '[The male carer] took [two others] and me and put
8 us into his new car. He told us that he'd been
9 promoted. He told us in no uncertain terms that we were
10 not to make any more complaints about him or it would be
11 worse for us.

12 '[The male carer] continued his relationship with
13 the young girl. I suspect it was the other staff
14 members that reported it to [the new owners]. This was
15 a long time after we'd made the complaint to [them].
16 The upshot was that [the male carer] left the school but
17 there was no report to the police or other authorities.
18 He was just allowed to leave. I think I was about 15
19 when he left and only when he had left the school did
20 the abuse stop. The last time I recall seeing [him] was
21 after he'd left at a town fete where all the pupils just
22 ignored him.

23 'I also reported the inappropriate behaviour of [the
24 female carer] when she came into the showers and washed
25 our private areas. [The new owners] did nothing about

1 that either and the behaviour continued until [she] left
2 the school.

3 'I left Monken Hadley, then named Woodlands School,
4 when I turned 16 in 1986. Prior to leaving school I was
5 still working with the cleaners but I recall that when
6 the inspectors came I had to go back into the classroom.
7 I was known as a [REDACTED] leaver as I had reached the age
8 when I could leave.

9 'I went home and stayed with my parents ... I
10 attended a Youth Training Scheme in joinery. I was on
11 a course for over a year. I wasn't long finished with
12 the scheme when I was in a motorbike accident. I had
13 numerous operations and have been unable to work since
14 then. I was 18 when I had the accident. I met my wife
15 and she was happy to work for us both and did not want
16 me to work but wanted me to stay at home.

17 'I was diagnosed as being diabetic in 2013 and in
18 December 2018, I had a second hip replacement and
19 I've not been outside my house since then due to the
20 operation and the COVID lockdown started.

21 'My education has suffered badly and I missed out on
22 a proper education. I was only taught basic reading,
23 writing, maths, not even grammar or percentages and no
24 science, geography, history or languages, et cetera.
25 I have been badly affected, mentally, emotionally and

1 psychologically as a result of my time at Monken Hadley.
2 I was always told that I was a bright scholar but I was
3 unable to concentrate, focus and pay attention to what
4 I was being told.

5 'I didn't realise that I had difficulty
6 concentrating until I was an adult and my wife pointed
7 this out to me and I shut down and blank things out that
8 I am being told. I retreat to a world of my own.
9 I have always felt that I have been on my own and have
10 no one to turn to for help or guidance either at home or
11 at school and to this day I don't have trust in people.

12 'After my motorbike accident in 1988, I had a number
13 of operations. To this day, I still suffer the effects
14 of the physical, mental and emotional abuse I suffered
15 while at Monken Hadley.

16 'I have only had one relationship in my life and
17 that is with my wife. The school definitely affected
18 me. I lived in fear every day I was at school and the
19 only time I could relax was when [the male carer] was
20 off for the day. But to ensure that he kept me
21 traumatised, he sometimes came in on his days off when
22 he would make a point to find me.

23 'One of the main things that has traumatised me and
24 affected me during my life has been what happened to
25 [the boy that died]. He was a friend of mine and he was

1 only 14 when he died. I had no experience of death and
2 he was the first person that I knew who died. I have
3 never sought any counselling to deal with my abuse at
4 Monken Hadley or the death of [my friend], nor was any
5 counselling offered when we attended the school. It is
6 only now that I realise why we weren't offered or given
7 medical or counselling services while I was at the
8 school. If we had, this would have opened the
9 negligence and the abuse suffered by the pupils at the
10 hands of the staff and [the owners] at Monken Hadley.
11 I was at the school from age approximately 10 and
12 I'm now 51 years old and I'm still dealing with what
13 happened to me and others at the school and the after
14 effects of this. I have therefore been given more than
15 three life sentences.

16 'My childhood was ruined and I'm sure that more
17 abuse took place than I have recalled in this statement.
18 But due to the mental, physical and emotional abuse
19 I have suffered, I have blanked this out of my memory.
20 I never spoke to my family about my time in Monken
21 Hadley and my sisters never discussed their time in care
22 with me. I have never met my sister. My parents'
23 attitude was that we should be seen and not heard, so
24 I have never been able to discuss Monken Hadley with
25 them either. I was brought up in the midst of violence

1 every day of my childhood. It happened at home and at
2 school.

3 'I did go back to Monken Hadley School after I left.
4 It was when the school were having their annual fete.
5 The reason for me going back was to see Beth Marr, who
6 I was very fond of. So much so that I took my niece to
7 see her. My parents took me with my niece, they
8 returned after the fete. My uncle worked on the ferries
9 in Stranraer and he picked me up on the Sunday on his
10 way home. I stayed for two nights at the school. The
11 school burned down in 2006 and I did visit the school to
12 try and see [the owners] but they had moved house and
13 I didn't manage to see them.

14 'I did contact a lawyer in 2005 to see if I could
15 get a case made against [the male carer], the local
16 authority and [the owners] and if I was entitled to any
17 compensation. I did see on the internet that [the male
18 carer] had been charged with some offences. The lawyer
19 told me that my circumstances were now time-barred and
20 I wouldn't be able to raise a case. I think that [the
21 male carer] was jailed in 2003 for three years. I was
22 told by the solicitor that during the police
23 investigation into [the male carer], my name was
24 mentioned to the police as me being a victim of his
25 abuse but the police deliberately failed to contact me.

1 I was living in England at the time and I was on the
2 electoral roll and could have been found quite easily.

3 'I have never reported the matter to the police
4 after being told that my case was time-barred. I often
5 thought about taking a case against the school but
6 I never done anything about it.'

7 'Wallace' goes on to the lessons learned:

8 'I wish that I had spoken to the police when [my
9 friend] died and informed them of all the circumstances
10 involved in his death. I should have gone to the police
11 to report the abuse and taken some of the other children
12 with me instead of speaking to [the owners]. There was
13 no point in speaking to my father as he would have gone
14 to the school and beaten [the male carer] to a pulp. My
15 father was a very violent man and it may have helped him
16 but it would not help me. I don't know if the police
17 would have believed us if we had reported the abuse or
18 if they had not taken definitive action then the abuse
19 would have got worse. When [the male carer] left the
20 school everything improved and it was much easier being
21 there without the threat of violence daily.

22 'I would hope that what people who were in the care
23 system are saying is listened to. I hope that the local
24 authority inspectors start to speak to children in the
25 schools and listen to what they say. It does not seem

1 good value to pay large sums of money for children to be
2 abused.

3 'I have no objection to my witness statement being
4 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
5 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
6 true.'

7 'Wallace' has signed his statement and it's dated
8 6 July 2021.

9 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much indeed, Ms McMillan.

10 I think that leaves us with just one read-in to
11 cover in this block, is that right?

12 MS MCMILLAN: Yes.

13 LADY SMITH: We'll do that at 2 o'clock or so.

14 MS MCMILLAN: Yes, my Lady.

15 LADY SMITH: Very well. I'll stop now for the lunch break.

16 (1.06 pm)

17 (The luncheon adjournment)

18 (2.00 pm)

19 LADY SMITH: Ms McMillan.

20 'Sean' (read)

21 MS MCMILLAN: Good afternoon, my Lady.

22 This is the final read-in for block 2 of this
23 particular phase and this is for the witness who is also
24 anonymous and will be known as 'Sean'.

25 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

1 MS MCMILLAN: The reference for 'Sean's' statement is
2 WIT-1-000000855 and parts of 'Sean's' statement were
3 already read in on Day 485, which was 11 October 2024.
4 'Sean' has provided a very detailed statement to the
5 Inquiry. So today I'll be focusing on the elements of
6 'Sean's' statement which cover his time at Woodlands.
7 LADY SMITH: Thank you.
8 MS MCMILLAN: 'Sean' was born in 1983 --
9 My Lady, I wonder if we could just have a few
10 minutes.
11 LADY SMITH: How long will it take to find it and get it up?
12 Ok, right. I'll go from the bench and then we get on to
13 it.
14 (2.03 pm)
15 (A short break)
16 (2.10 pm)
17 LADY SMITH: That looks like the right statement that's on
18 screen, is it?
19 MS MCMILLAN: It is, my Lady. I'm grateful for the time to
20 resolve the matter.
21 'Sean' was born in 1983.
22 The witness statement is WIT-1-000000855.
23 He lived initially with his mum and his
24 half-brother, his sister and his half-sister. He stayed
25 in Paisley but he says that he was used to violence in

1 the scheme that he was brought up in. He was placed in
2 foster care in 1985 until 1986.

3 He then went back to stay with his mum for a short
4 period of time before being placed in Beech Avenue
5 Children's Home. He returned to the care of his mother
6 but he says it was a difficult household and his mother
7 was abusive towards him.

8 He then spent a period of time in Gryffe Children's
9 Home between the ages of 8 and 10.

10 'Sean' then tells us that he went to Woodlands, this
11 was in around [REDACTED] 1993, he would have been about aged
12 10 at the time, and he left in around 1995. Records
13 that we do have appear to show that he left Woodlands in
14 [REDACTED] 1996.

15 LADY SMITH: That he left Woodlands in 1996, [REDACTED].

16 MS MCMILLAN: Yes.

17 LADY SMITH: And went there?

18 MS MCMILLAN: Around [REDACTED] 1993, my Lady.

19 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

20 MS MCMILLAN: So he was 10 when he went there and around 13
21 when he left.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 MS MCMILLAN: He goes on to tell us about his experience
24 there. Beginning at paragraph 131, on page 34 of his
25 statement, he says:

1 'The staff told me I was going to this place called
2 Woodlands for a visit. I was told I was going there and
3 the visit was just a formality. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

4 Secondary Institutions - to be p She knew Woodlands and she told me
5 her husband used to work there. It turns out her
6 husband had been done with some historical child abuse
7 things out there and it was well known.'

8 At paragraph 133 he says:

9 'They certainly didn't mention anything about the
10 distance on the first visit. I was naive and thought it
11 was going to be close. I think a normal drive is about
12 an hour-and-a-half but because of traffic, it took us
13 about two-and-a-half hours. I had never travelled this
14 far in my life so I was getting car sick. I had never
15 been car sick before. When I got there, it was just
16 a pure culture shock. I didn't have a clue what any of
17 them were saying because they had a different accent.'

18 At paragraph 134, he says:

19 'By the time I got there, I was tired and crabbit.
20 There was a lot to take in. It was a bigger building.
21 The boys were all a lot older and bigger with ripped
22 physiques. I liked the look of the place but they only
23 showed you the good bits for a visit. I quite liked the
24 feel of the place. There might have been a meeting with
25 staff but I don't remember. I certainly wouldn't have

1 said anything because my mum was there and I would have
2 been threatened not to speak to them. I left quite
3 excited, apart from the distance, because I didn't see
4 why it had to be so far away. I realise now there might
5 have been reasons for that but I didn't know.

6 'It was a huge tall building. I was in a unit
7 called the Flat which was at the very top of the
8 building. Below that you had a unit called the Uppers,
9 below that a unit called the Inneres and below that on
10 the first floor was a unit called the Lowers. Outside
11 of the building, there was another building which was
12 called the Bungalow. That was a separate unit for the
13 girls and some of the more vulnerable boys.

14 'In my unit, as you enter, at the top of the stairs
15 on the right-hand side, there was another door that
16 would take you up to the attic. To the left, you had
17 two bathrooms, one was just a toilet and the other had
18 a bath and a shower. Further along that corridor, there
19 was a kitchen. Off the kitchen straight ahead you had
20 two bedrooms and further along you had the entrance to
21 the living room and that led into a wee dining room
22 area. Then there was a door with a really steep
23 staircase going down to the next level. There was
24 another bedroom on the other side before you got to the
25 living room. The Flat was self-contained, as was every

1 unit on each of the floors. You could mix with other
2 boys from different units at class or after school if we
3 played football. There were staircases but they were
4 more for emergency exits. If you wanted a friend from
5 another unit to visit you, you would have to ask the
6 staff and they would arrange it.

7 'Every unit had their own staff. The staff who
8 worked in my unit were Craig Williamson and Ian
9 Shankland. They were pretty cool guys. When it came to
10 any violence or aggression, Ian took a step back, but he
11 didn't like any of that sort of thing. Obviously if any
12 staff needed his help he was there, but he never started
13 anything. I would say he was gentle natured. There was
14 a couple of other guys, but I don't remember their
15 names. If they were short-staffed then staff would work
16 in other units but usually they kept to their own. Ian
17 was in his late 20s or early 30s I would say. He was
18 all right and quite a cool guy. I think he was
19 genuinely a decent guy and in fact I think he was my key
20 worker for a while. Craig was about the same age with
21 the same build, but maybe a bit taller than Ian. He was
22 all right as well. I had run-ins with every member of
23 staff, but that just happens when you're in care.
24 I think there was a Morag Robertson or Robinson and
25 [there was another female] or something like that.

1 [That other female] was like a witch, an evil nasty
2 woman. She had an accent which I couldn't tell at the
3 time if it was Welsh or Irish. She came across as a
4 sweet old woman but she was twisted. There was another
5 woman called Ann Miller. Her real name is Pamela
6 Miller, but she just went with the name Ann. I really
7 liked her and she was one of the staff when I first
8 started. I couldn't make out what she was saying. She
9 was the first Londoner I had heard. She would come in
10 in the mornings all full of beans and call people ducks.
11 She said things like "Good morning my little chickadees"
12 but it was like she was singing it. I would ask her why
13 she was calling me a duck and what a chickadee was.
14 I liked her because she was a bit bonkers. She saw the
15 funny side of how I was struggling with all the mad
16 accents. I had a lot of time for her. At night, the
17 care staff went home and a night watchman would come in.
18 'It was weird as they had two sets of staff and
19 every second weekend or on holidays you would have
20 a different team of staff. These staff would run things
21 with you so it was all activities. We had Bobby and his
22 wife Betty Dalziel. Sometimes it would just be me there
23 when they were on or maybe another couple of boys. If
24 there was anyone in the Uppers, they would join us after
25 assembly on the Friday and once all the boys who had

1 home leave were heading off, they would sit me and
2 whoever else was staying and ask what our plans were for
3 the weekend. They would go through things with us like
4 what's for dinner tonight and what's for lunch tomorrow.
5 They would make a plan with us and then we would go
6 shopping on the Friday for stuff. They were very
7 accommodating and it was all about what we wanted as
8 opposed to being told what we were getting. They slept
9 on fold down Z beds in the unit with us.

10 'There was also Mr and Mrs Malcolm, who did the same
11 job as Bobby and his wife. He had been there for
12 30 years or something by the time I got there and a lot
13 of people despised the guy. I really liked him though.
14 He ran the local karate club and he was right into his
15 martial arts. He used to take me and show me all his
16 weapons. He gave me a sword. He asked me about the
17 knives I possessed and I said I had a few wee lockbacks
18 and wee knives. He gave me other things like ninja
19 stuff just to show there was no threat or danger from
20 them. I think that's how I bonded with some of the
21 staff, because we had things in common. I could talk to
22 him about weapons all day long but start talking about
23 my personal stuff and I would be off. I suppose I was
24 quite selfish as it was always on my terms.

25 'Mixing the bungalow pupils with the units at the

1 weekends and the holidays was crazy because the boys in
2 the bungalow were very vulnerable. Some of the boys
3 from the other units were violent and that was something
4 they could never be prepared for. It would be like
5 dropping a kid from a normal happy family into
6 Woodlands. It was a culture shock for them to see how
7 abusive the staff were to the boys from the units, but
8 to us this was normal. We couldn't understand why they
9 weren't treated the way we were.

10 'A lot of pupils didn't know who the weekend staff
11 were, as they would be on home leave. Likewise, the
12 weekend staff didn't know a lot of pupils. Eventually
13 over time they all met each other but it seemed the two
14 different groups of care staff were very separate.

15 'I am pretty sure within each of the units there
16 were unit managers so there would always be one who was
17 a bit more senior. They also had people whose job was
18 to catch you if you ran away. We used to call them kid
19 catchers. [There] was a guy who ran after us if we were
20 running around the grounds.

21 'There were a couple of people who ran the place.
22 You had people who were the Head of Care and others who
23 were the Head of Education. Those in education worked
24 during the day, more like school hours. I would see
25 them during school times as we had a lot of problems

1 within the school and it was them who would come and
2 deal with you. There was also teaching staff who worked
3 at the school and they were completely separate to the
4 care staff. I do not know if the teaching staff had any
5 sort of specialist training to deal with challenging
6 kids. It didn't seem that they had any training in
7 restraining us. Only very rarely did a member of school
8 staff come in to help cover if there was a care staff
9 shortage over the school holidays.

10 'I think Woodlands had 30 to 40 pupils in total and
11 in my unit there would be five or six boys. It was two
12 to a bedroom. I think one of the rooms had something
13 like three or four beds in it. They weren't all
14 occupied, but if they needed them, they could make
15 space. I would say I was two years younger than the
16 youngest of the kids there. I think it was unheard of
17 at the time to have someone there who was my age.
18 I think there were some 16-year-olds but it tended to be
19 15 was the oldest age. The boys in my unit were aged 12
20 to 13.

21 'I don't know why a lot of the kids were there, but
22 most of them got home every weekend or every other
23 weekend. It was the same with school holidays: a lot of
24 boys would go home for them. I never had any home leave
25 at Woodlands until the lead-up to me leaving.

1 '[There] was a guy who was a member of care staff
2 but not in my units. I had problems with him. I would
3 say he was 6 feet tall, he was in his late 40s or early
4 50s, strong looking and he had previously had a stroke
5 ...

6 'I don't recall the day I started but it seemed to
7 be really fast after the visit. I was 9-years-old. My
8 record shows I arrived in 1993 and stayed until ... 1996
9 ... I was quite excited and hyper about the move ...
10 The staff were nice to me for the first hour until I got
11 a feel for the place. It was Thursday I got there so
12 I was told I would go to school for one day before the
13 weekend. They explained they would start my work on
14 Monday and that the Friday would just be like
15 an introduction. Staff did sit me down and tell me what
16 was acceptable and what wasn't. They were reading the
17 riot act pretty much but I didn't understand a lot of
18 what they were saying because of their accents. I felt
19 they were talking really fast and I think they got sick
20 of me asking them what they had said. I was shown
21 around and shown my bedroom. I was also introduced to
22 the boys before going for dinner.

23 'I don't know what records were transferred about me
24 and nor do I know what information was shared with each
25 of the staff. It was well known from everywhere I had

1 been in care not to try and touch me or hug me. You
2 would be lucky if I would shake your hand. I'd strike
3 out without warning and it was an automatic reaction
4 rather than something that I thought about doing. You
5 would expect something like that to be made known to any
6 staff dealing with me, but it wasn't and that led to
7 an incident in the first few days which impacted on my
8 time at Woodlands.

9 'For the first six months you got up at 7.30 and you
10 were expected to clean the room. I shared my room with
11 one person. One of us would clean the sink, the
12 skirting boards and wipe the door while the other person
13 would Hoover and make the beds. The residential staff
14 would come in and check things like running their finger
15 along the top of the door. After the six months, things
16 relaxed. We were expected to keep our room tidy but not
17 to the extent of cleaning skirting boards and stuff like
18 that. Once the cleaning was done you would get ready
19 for school and go through for breakfast.

20 'I was always used to sharing a room so it wasn't
21 new to me. The boy I shared with ... was a mental wee
22 guy. I would wake up and he would be sitting at the end
23 of my bed. I wasn't used to this and he would come out
24 and say he was scared and ask to sleep at the bottom of
25 my bed. I would tell him we were all scared kids but he

1 couldn't sleep there. Thinking back now, I think he
2 might have had homosexual tendencies as he was always
3 trying to get into the beds of the younger boys. I told
4 staff they needed to get him out of the room or I would
5 stab him in his sleep or something. I was very vocal
6 and even if I was unrealistic I knew the words to say
7 for shock value. [He] was two years older than me but
8 he was big like a farmer. Strong and stocky and quite
9 an intimidating guy to look at. Things came to a head
10 and he was moved. He was just too weird, not just
11 trying to get into my bed but the stuff he talked about.
12 The other people I shared with were just the usual
13 problems. When you spend so much time with someone you
14 start picking faults and looking for the reasons not to
15 like them. I would also say that by this time, I think
16 my behaviour and actions put some people on the back
17 foot. Although I was the youngest and by far the
18 smallest, when it came to acts of violence I was to be
19 watched.

20 'Bedtime was 8.00 pm through the week and I think it
21 was 9.00 pm at the weekends. The night watchman didn't
22 do anything other than sit and smoke and check on us
23 every couple of hours. He would work between two units
24 so sometimes we would have no adult present, because he
25 was down the stairs dealing with something. We didn't

1 have much interaction with the watchman unless we were
2 kicking off.

3 'It was the staff working in each of the units who
4 prepared the food ...'

5 'Sean' then says he enjoyed the food at Woodlands
6 but he had eating problems. Moving on to paragraph 155
7 on page 42, he says:

8 'Every morning you had to have a bath or a shower.
9 If it was a bath it was only a couple of inches of water
10 and you were to be in and out. That caused me problems
11 and I know it sounds bad but I think my hygiene must
12 have been pretty bad. I don't remember my mum bathing
13 us much. It wasn't in my nature to jump in in the
14 morning and have a shower. It wasn't normal to me.
15 I struggled with washing every day. I didn't really
16 know how to wash my hair. Sometimes I would go in and
17 honestly I would just duck my head under the water and
18 tell them I had had my shower. I probably stank most of
19 the time and was quite dirty. It caused problems with
20 the teachers and the other boys. The word in the day
21 back then was "ya black bastard" though it wasn't
22 a racial slur in any way, the black referred to being
23 dirty. The staff called me that and that led to the
24 boys doing the same. All the boys were going through
25 their own thing so if they saw an opportunity to jump on

1 the bandwagon and give someone else a hard time, they
2 would. It is the same psychology as in the jail. It's
3 to stop any attention coming their way. It took me
4 a while to understand it.

5 'It wasn't for months later I overheard a teacher
6 telling another boy how to shower. She explained you
7 start with your hair and use the shampoo and then work
8 your way down your body. She told him that once he
9 finished washing, he should wash the shampoo out and
10 once your shampoo is out you go to your privates.
11 I pick up when someone is telling other people and from
12 that I learned how to clean myself.

13 'We had uniforms for school time. It was black
14 tracky bottoms, a polo shirt, which could be blue or
15 burgundy, with a jumper matching that colour. It was
16 pretty much like a prison uniform. I believe the
17 lassies had some sort of skirt they could wear with
18 tights or they could wear the trackies.

19 'Every eight to ten weeks they gave you £150 which
20 was used to buy clothes. They would take me out to buy
21 them. I could buy whatever clothes I wanted within
22 reason. I think there was a £50 limit you could spend
23 on trainers but if they were slightly dearer than that,
24 it was at the member of staff's discretion. I always
25 chose to go with Bobby. I wouldn't say I was close to

1 him but I was seen as having a better relationship with
2 him. I always kept other people at arm's length. With
3 him I could kind of talk, but then he would always try
4 and get into my home life and how I was feeling, but
5 I was too guarded. I couldn't deal with my emotions so
6 I couldn't physically talk to him. I think at one point
7 he became my key worker but that was a few years down
8 the line. He was there pretty much the entire time
9 I was, so I chose to do everything with him or his wife.
10 'In the first six months things were different. You
11 could get what they called a hall pass, which meant that
12 you could be outside after school hours. If a teacher
13 or a kid catcher asked, you had to show them your pass,
14 which meant you had permission to be out. You could
15 also get a town pass, which you could get if you were
16 trusted. Again, if staff asked you to show your pass,
17 you had to show them it. I didn't really get passes
18 because they didn't really know me as I was just in.
19 The boys who were established in the place could request
20 these passes. There was also an option if a member of
21 staff was willing to take you out. That could happen as
22 they were allowed to go out with a certain amount of
23 boys. I think it was one staff could take no more than
24 three boys.
25 'In the evenings I could watch the telly. Some of

1 the boys were getting home leave and they might bring in
2 their Nintendo or Super Nintendo. They would be the
3 main man and we would just sit in their room and play on
4 that. Some people were allowed to bring in their
5 portable TVs.

6 'There was a rope swing in the grounds I liked to
7 play on or you could play football. One of the boys
8 might bring in a football or a rugby ball. I was always
9 a lot smaller so I stood no chance if they had the ball.
10 Any kind of physical games it was laughable and because
11 of my size, I stood no chance.

12 'Bobby and Betty were good. I had a lot of time for
13 Bobby as he helped me out a lot throughout my time with
14 them. The activities we could do included going to the
15 Magnum Centre at Irvine where we could go ice skating,
16 swimming or other stuff. That was my favourite. We
17 could go fishing. We could pretty much do anything
18 within reason. I would say that this team was one of
19 the best things about Woodlands at the time. If this
20 team weren't on, you were pretty much confined to your
21 base. There wasn't many activities with the normal care
22 staff.

23 'At the weekends Bobby and Betty were not working,
24 what I got to do was dependent on my behaviour. If
25 I'd been put on a sanction then I would be confined to

1 the unit. Once I had been there long enough then
2 I would be given a pass to go out and play. There were
3 times when they might take you into town but only if you
4 needed to get something.

5 'The bungalow had their own version of Bobby and
6 Betty ... [a couple] who were married but kept their own
7 names. [The male] was a right horrible man. It was
8 said that he used to be a professional boxer and it was
9 easy to see with the way he could fight and the size of
10 the guy. He was over 6 feet tall with fair hair and
11 an amazing physique. He was a very intimidating guy,
12 even to the other staff. He used to take us to the
13 cellar for boxing lessons.

14 'Being in care meant I didn't have a lot of contact
15 with the outside world. I didn't know what toys kids
16 were playing with and that meant I was never interested
17 in toys. I was interested in other things. Even what
18 guys in the outside world were wearing and what sort of
19 trainers they had would be of interest to me ... It was
20 good making pals with guys who weren't from the homes
21 because to us they were normal people and we didn't seem
22 to be normal. It was also interesting to meet them as
23 they spoke and acted differently. Even if we went to
24 a member of staff's house and they opened their fridge
25 to get a drink of juice or something, you would see all

1 the stuff in their fridge. To me it looked too good to
2 be a normal house with a lot of shopping. It was
3 certainly nothing like my house. To see someone go and
4 help themselves to a can of juice and a packet of crisps
5 without saying anything to anyone and then go and put
6 the telly on was like nothing I'd ever experienced.
7 I think I would say I was fascinated with life outside
8 the home and that is why I took to a lot of people from
9 outside.

10 'In the last five months at Woodlands before my move
11 to Merton Hall, I would say I was getting quite close to
12 Bert Malcolm. He was bringing in some of his martial
13 arts stuff, like knives and throwing stars. He wasn't
14 giving me any of them at this time but he was letting me
15 use them and we would throw them at the trees. Everyone
16 would be away home and it would just be me and him.
17 There might be a few lassies left but they would be
18 doing make-up or whatever. Bert was also right into his
19 outdoor pursuits and he used to go to exhibitions in the
20 Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre in Glasgow.
21 He was like a wean in a sweetie shop. He would ask me
22 if I wanted to go and I would tell him that I wasn't
23 interested. He would say that we would have a great
24 day. I knew that if I agreed, it meant he could go all
25 expenses paid. He would jump into a hunting or fishing

1 shop and buy a new knife and would let me play with it
2 in the motor on the way home. He got excited about the
3 same things I got excited about. He was like a big kid
4 but a lot of people hated him. Being there for 30 years
5 meant he had a lot of history in the place. I think
6 certain staff take to certain pupils and vice versa.
7 Some of us can't understand why some of us like who we
8 like.

9 'Bert had a karate class that I went to every now
10 and then Secondary Institutions - to be published later

11 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

12
13 'We went to a place called Flamingo Land. I think
14 I went there three times when I was at Woodlands. That
15 was our go-to place. We went for a week at a time and
16 we would hire a caravan. There was a zoo, theme park,
17 nightlife kind of thing and caravan area. It was okay,
18 but some of the staff would start their crap with some
19 of the boys.

20 'For me, at the start, I was quite excited ... It
21 was all new and I was going through that many feelings
22 I was scared, excited and nervous. I didn't have one
23 particular feeling, it was a lot of feelings.

24 'The school was within the grounds at Woodlands. It
25 was like two Portakabins joined together and there would

1 be one or two auxiliaries or support teacher types who
2 would go between both classes. They were there for some
3 of the boys who needed special help with their reading
4 so I think they were there for specific people and not
5 just there in general. The classes were made up mostly
6 by those close in age rather than ability or level of
7 education.

8 'Before school, we all had to wait outside in the
9 yard for 15 minutes before classes started. It was
10 everybody, including the girls, all mixing. There was
11 a football pitch nearby and a climbing frame that we
12 could use if we wanted to. After the 15 minutes, you
13 would line up for your class.

14 'It was run just like a normal school. You'd have
15 a few lessons. Around 10.30/11 there was a half-hour
16 break where you went out to the yard again to play.
17 Then it was back to class until lunch, we went back to
18 our own units for lunch and then there was time outside
19 again before classes started. Then it was lessons again
20 in the afternoon. It was pretty much structured like
21 a mainstream school day although the classes would be
22 very different. After school, you were taken back to
23 your unit and you were there until the next day. On
24 a Friday, I think it was a half day then we had
25 an assembly and they would read out how much pocket

1 money everyone was getting.

2 'I suppose they tried to teach me maths and all the
3 rest of it but it was certainly a different way of
4 teaching from a mainstream school. With us it was
5 pretty much the one teacher was a jack of all trades.
6 They taught you all sorts. Most of the lessons were in
7 one class except for woodwork and mechanics. The
8 expectation was if you could sit down and do at least
9 a page, you have got the rest of the day to yourself.
10 If you could at least show something then it was do what
11 you want.

12 'On my first day at school I remember walking into
13 this yard and I was the youngest by far. I was tiny
14 compared to all the other guys. I think they were a bit
15 confused about what I was there for. I was getting all
16 the questions about where I was from. I was only in the
17 yard about 10 to 15 minutes before there was a fight.
18 One of the boys came and put his arm around my shoulder
19 and asked me if I was all right. I turned round and hit
20 him because of my problem with people touching me. When
21 someone asked me what I was doing, I did the same to
22 him. The two of them went for me but it was really the
23 rest of the boys who stopped it as they were saying to
24 look at the size of me. He wasn't being aggressive but
25 it wasn't a case of me saying to someone to get their

1 arm off me. Straight violence was my automatic
2 response. You don't get a chance to get hurt because
3 you hit first. There were staff there but by the time
4 they came it was all over.

5 'I think I opened the eyes of a lot of them because
6 I was so small. They were all asking me what I was in
7 for and if I smoked. Although I had a lot of problems
8 with some of the boys there, I think I became quite
9 popular, especially the older boys who were very
10 protective of me.

11 'In the classrooms if you misbehaved or absconded,
12 you were taken to a big room called the Office. It had
13 a stable door with the bottom part about the same height
14 as me or slightly shorter. A lot of time you could be
15 in there all day with nothing but a chair. You would
16 just be sitting there. There could be other boys there
17 too. It was like a dumping ground. If you were put in
18 there you were not allowed to leave at lunchtime. I was
19 pretty much in there every day, but at the same time so
20 was a lot of other boys. There would normally be at
21 least four or five boys who will have been sent there.
22 There was only one member of staff supervising and that
23 wasn't enough to control a lot of volatile guys who
24 would pick on me, who was the smallest and the
25 skinniest. When a kid catcher caught any of the boys

1 who were running about the grounds, he would take us to
2 the Office.

3 'On my first full day at school which was the Monday
4 after I arrived, there was an incident that happened
5 that led to a serious offence. I don't remember why
6 I was in the office but while I was there, my teacher,
7 who was a wee Welsh woman ... came in. I had been in
8 for a couple of hours with my head in my hands.
9 I didn't hear her come in. I was in a trance and my
10 head miles away. She put her arms around me and
11 straight away I have turned around and punched her.
12 Afterwards I was thinking to myself what was I doing?
13 It wasn't that hard of a punch but she was heavy and
14 a bit of an exaggerator. They got the police in and
15 I got charged with assault. It is on record as I did
16 assault her. That led to a series of events because
17 some of the boys quite liked her and all of a sudden
18 I had a problem with each and every one of them.

19 'It just so happened that her husband ... also
20 worked there. I don't know his role. He said he was
21 a trained teacher but he was always working in the
22 office writing out our incident reports. He seemed to
23 be a member of staff who did all the incident reports
24 and he seemed to have more of an admin role. After I
25 punched [her], [her husband] had been left in the Office

1 with me until the police arrived and he grabbed me by
2 the throat putting me against the wall choking me. He
3 was raging and threatening me about hitting his wife.
4 I was gasping for air but we could hear someone else
5 getting brought to the Office. I said to him that I was
6 going to get him and he told me that I would do nothing.
7 I just repeated something like, "I'm going to do you".
8 He was shouting at me, telling me I should call him [by
9 his formal title]. I continued to tell him he was
10 getting done and he just said that we shall see.
11 I don't know if it was a week or two weeks later but
12 I was in the Office and [he] went to assist with
13 an incident with another boy. As [he] was getting ready
14 to stand up I ran up and volleyed him right in the face.
15 It was a full-force kick. I think he had contact lenses
16 in and that did something, because the guy was off for
17 a while. I said to him that I told him I would do it
18 after he hurt me. I then got restrained. That was seen
19 as an unprovoked attack although I tried to say what had
20 happened when he choked me. I think that it was at this
21 point that I was taking the fight to them. I was the
22 height of nonsense but I had had enough.

23 'These incidents caused so much conflict for me at
24 school when I had the same teacher every day for every
25 lesson. It wasn't just having conflict with these two

1 teachers but having conflict with anyone who liked them.
2 This was before I knew anyone so no one had my back.
3 'Incidents became an everyday thing. Sometimes
4 I would just refuse point blank to go to school and that
5 would cause incidents. Pretty much in the early days it
6 didn't take very much to initiate getting restrained.
7 If you were refusing to go somewhere or not following
8 an order the staff would try grabbing me by the arm or
9 T-shirt and any sort of resistance of pulling back you
10 were down and they are on you. I was between 9 and 11
11 years old and was tiny. Even pulling your hand back
12 from them was seen as resistance.
13 'I tried to get to the local high school but they
14 wouldn't take me. It seemed to get brought up in
15 reviews a lot but deep down I knew I wasn't going
16 anywhere. For me, it was an angle worth using to try
17 and get out.
18 'During the school holidays, most boys went home.
19 If anyone from the Lowers was staying then they were
20 moved to the bungalow. It was a huge building with lots
21 of bedrooms. Bobby and Betty would spend at least four
22 weeks of their school holiday with us. They might take
23 the odd day off but they were right back. Holidays was
24 for them to cover and they were there 24/7.'
25 'Sean' then goes on to tell us about how he

1 developed a close friendship with some of the girls and
2 he would let the girls hug him despite his aversion to
3 physical contact. He goes on:

4 'I think it was once a month or once every two
5 months I got a social work visit. It was a bit of
6 everything. They would come in and talk to me on my own
7 but they would also want to see how I was. Thinking
8 about it now, they wanted to see how I was alone and how
9 I was in amongst a group of people. Sometimes they
10 would take me out for lunch. Incidents were still
11 happening when the social worker was there. It could be
12 her that was getting assaulted through me not getting
13 answers or the answers I wanted. I could go into
14 a rage. I wanted home or I wanted to know why
15 I couldn't be with my brother. These were basic
16 questions and I couldn't see why I couldn't get answers
17 from her. I became unresponsive and uncooperative with
18 the social worker and sometimes a bit violent to be
19 honest. I threw a big ladle of coleslaw in her face
20 once.'

21 'Sean' goes on at paragraph 186:

22 'Things got to a point that in my head it was a war
23 between me and the staff. I think it was really anyone
24 in authority. I had lots going on in my head and no one
25 telling me what was happening. I would get to phone my

1 mum and when I did, she was accusing me of talking to
2 these people. She would tell me she didn't want me and
3 that she wouldn't take me home. She would hang up the
4 phone on me. The next time she would say she did want
5 me. I was confused. I felt my future was so uncertain
6 and no one knew what was happening. I know my mum had
7 a very negative influence on me ...

8 'It was noted that I was a depressed, sad, lonely
9 wean but no one had ever tried to speak to me and
10 explain about mental health. It wasn't a thing that was
11 discussed. I was getting really bad bouts of depression
12 but I didn't know what it was or why I was feeling that
13 way. I ended up consumed with just anger, hate and
14 aggression which just kept building up.

15 'No one was helping me with my behaviour. I was
16 branded as if I was violent and very unpredictable, that
17 I would attack staff for no reason but I had never
18 assaulted any staff without reason.

19 'I know it was recognised that I was a disturbed
20 child but I had a strong passion for animals and nature
21 in general. This was well-documented and was brought up
22 in reviews. There were comments about me displaying
23 patience, kindness and love towards animals that I had
24 never displayed towards people. They said I had little
25 or no empathy towards people. They noted that when I

1 talked about animals I came to life. They had a no pet
2 rule but eventually they let certain people get certain
3 types of pets. I was allowed to have a hamster. It was
4 a dwarf Russian hamster.

5 'After I had been at Woodlands for a couple of
6 years, I was taken to see a psychiatrist or a
7 psychologist as my mental health had really plummeted.
8 They wanted me to take antidepressants and other sorts
9 of medication, but I said no danger. I knew I wasn't
10 crazy. It was more to do with what had happened and
11 what was happening in my life. I might not have been
12 school smart but I wasn't stupid. I think that being
13 alert made my frustration worse as did the fact everyone
14 kept lying to me ...

15 'In the last five months at Woodlands I would say
16 that me going up on the roof of the building became
17 pretty much a daily thing. After being in Woodlands for
18 a few years, you learn how to avoid situations and some
19 people. If a certain member of staff was on duty, then
20 we would decide to run or go up on the roof. It wasn't
21 like there was a lot of places to go so mostly when
22 I ran I was just in the grounds. I would say I was
23 feeling depressed a lot of the time. The uncertainty
24 around what was meant to be happening with me definitely
25 didn't help. I know I was frustrated but I had a lot of

1 mixed up feelings to be honest. Going up on the roof
2 was a good way to take time out and just try and think
3 beyond the drama and whatever else was going on.
4 I think I avoided people and I went into myself. I also
5 think I stopped interacting with people and I always
6 felt it was me against them, not just from Woodlands but
7 really from when I went into care. I just got wee bouts
8 of severe depression when I wasn't talking, eating or
9 taking part in group activities. I was doing a lot of
10 solvent abuse like aerosols and things. I would say my
11 behaviour was changing from being out there and violent
12 to going more into myself. The other problem was you
13 would make good pals with someone but they came and went
14 so it was temporary. I don't know what the staff
15 thought about my changing behaviour because I avoided
16 them like the plague. There were a few staff I did get
17 on with, but as soon as they talked about things that I
18 didn't want to talk about, then I was off.'

19 'Sean' then tells us that attempts were made to
20 celebrate both birthday and Christmas but 'Sean' felt
21 uncomfortable with the additional attention.

22 At paragraph 195, he says:

23 'I had very little possessions. The only things
24 that I held dear was the knives I managed to source.

25 'The minimum you could get was 75p. They wouldn't

1 give you anything less than that but it could go up to
2 £6 or £7 and I think you could get wee bonuses for good
3 behaviour. I think in the two-and-half years I got the
4 basic of 75p except once in assembly when I got 1.50
5 and I got a standing ovation.'

6 With regards to smoking permission, 'Sean' then says
7 that he would smoke. Sometimes, the staff would get
8 cigarettes and sometimes they wouldn't. If they did,
9 they would remove some from the packet and he would get
10 cigarettes from some of the other pupils there.

11 Moving on to paragraph 198, bed wetting, he says:

12 'I wet the bed quite a lot, especially in the early
13 days. I had to take the sheets off. I had to hold them
14 until I was told to put them down. This could mean that
15 wherever I went I was carrying my sheets because it
16 could be half an hour or a couple of hours. There was
17 a couple of times when I had to go for my lunch and drop
18 them in the living room and, after eating, I had to pick
19 the sheets up until instructed otherwise. I can't
20 remember which members of staff made me do this. But
21 I know it wasn't Ian Shankland.

22 'There were a couple of boys who wet the bed and
23 they got the same. You always knew who wet the bed
24 because they were the people who didn't laugh at me when
25 I did it. It took me a while to realise it was because

1 they have experienced exactly the same. People who have
2 not experienced that level of bullying or humiliation
3 would just laugh at you but those who had would just put
4 their head down.

5 'I never got any help for the bed wetting. I didn't
6 feel the staff were there to care for me. It was more
7 just to be there and look after me.

8 'Things were mad in the first six months or so. We
9 had to address the staff as Mr and Mrs or refer to them
10 as Sir and Miss. For most of the staff, they wouldn't
11 have you call them their first name, but Bobby was
12 a really positive wee guy and he would want us to call
13 him by his name. He would say that his name was Robert
14 and we could call him Rab, Rob, Bobby and anything that
15 was in reason. It was the same with Betty. With them
16 it was a completely different regime. They would tell
17 us they were there to help us and that we didn't need to
18 please them like that.

19 'There was a big mix-up with the staff after
20 I'd been there six months. I'm not sure what was
21 happening but I think a lot of people were getting made
22 redundant and a lot of people had to re-apply for their
23 positions. Nothing was ever explained to us but we knew
24 that pretty much everybody had to re-apply for their
25 jobs. I think most of the teachers were safe as this

1 was mostly for the care staff. This meant that those
2 staff who were normally heavy-handed or using bad
3 restraint techniques improved as none of them wanted
4 complaints about them. Everything became kind of
5 chilled and the staff would talk to us with respect.
6 They treated us the way they should. It was like the
7 staff were all walking on eggshells. For us it was like
8 breathing space. We could deal with our own problems
9 without worrying what they were going to do or say to
10 antagonise us.

11 'After that it was like they tried to change the
12 full system. They were trying to make it easier for us
13 I suppose. They tried to relax things like reading out
14 who was getting what pocket money and we were told we
15 could call the staff by their first names. A lot of
16 staff didn't like this and still told us we would call
17 them by Mr and their surname. We didn't see much of
18 a difference especially with the staff. To us it was
19 the same people in the same positions. After their jobs
20 were secured it didn't take long until it went back to
21 normal.

22 'The kids who were part of ... a clique would just
23 try bully tactics, walking past me, giving me the
24 shoulder and calling me names. I was never a tough guy
25 but I was always game. I had learned from a young age

1 if you let someone come and just batter you then you're
2 at their mercy but if you put up a bit of a scuffle and
3 just fly in amongst them, you are going to come out less
4 damaged. That was my outlook then. The bullying went
5 on for months and months and I think it came to the
6 point that they didn't even remember why they had
7 a problem with me.

8 'Over time, I started to become more popular with
9 the boys ...'

10 'Sean' goes on at paragraph 206:

11 'It was all the wrong stuff but to them they were
12 probably impressed and, thinking about it, I probably
13 played up a wee bit to be accepted. I always played up
14 to the older boys.

15 'Most of the time the police charged me it was in
16 the home unless sometimes where I had ran away, there
17 had been an incident. Only sometimes would I have
18 a member of staff with me but more often than not it
19 would be me on my own with the police. It got to the
20 point the police were calling all the time mainly if
21 I was being restrained and I would get charged with some
22 sort of assault.

23 'There would be days when I had no problems but one
24 of my pals did and we'd back each other against staff or
25 boys. At times, I was easily led and sometimes I got

1 involved because of the relationship I had with
2 a particular boy at the time. Initially, there weren't
3 many boys from the west as in Paisley way but, as time
4 went on, we got some younger boys from there who were my
5 age. I gravitated towards them and it was just because
6 of the accent. That was the same for staff. There was
7 a member of staff called Cathy Douglas and because she
8 had a strong Glasgow accent I loved this wee woman.
9 I hadn't heard that accent for so long and it was so
10 familiar. There were some staff I had a fairly good
11 relationship with compared to the rest of them.

12 'A lot of us were there for years and I would
13 describe our friendship as becoming like brothers. They
14 were in different units to me but they went through the
15 same thing I went through. It was well-known what
16 certain staff were like towards pupils.'

17 'Sean' goes on to say that he ended up on the roof
18 a few times. He says:

19 'Sometimes it happened because incidents would
20 escalate or sometimes it was because of how I was
21 feeling. If I was with other people, it was because one
22 of the things had led to another and if I was alone it
23 was usually to stay away from staff, pupils or just get
24 time to think. I wouldn't say I was suicidal but
25 I would say a lot of things up on the roof about harming

1 myself because that's how I was feeling at the time. If
2 I had problems with the boys or staff, going up on the
3 roof gave me an advantage. I was tiny compared to them
4 but if they were coming up to carry out their threat to
5 throw me down then for me it was a kind of safe place.
6 If they tried to come up, I would kick them off or hit
7 them with a slate. Bobby would calm me down and ask me
8 to come down so we could go somewhere quiet and just
9 talk about things. I would huff and puff but I came
10 down. Other staff would restrain me when I got down and
11 they might remove my shoes or dock pocket money. Other
12 than that, there was nothing they could really do to me.
13 'We got official visitors and called them committees
14 at times. We would be told there was a committee coming
15 in. They were definitely outside people and I remember
16 one was Who Cares? Scotland. It would depend on our
17 individual behaviour if we got to see them or were
18 isolated during the visit. They would do their rounds
19 to every unit but if we were kicking off at the time or
20 had something to say, we were not allowed to speak to
21 these people. I did speak to them on a couple of
22 occasions and they showed interest in what I had to say.
23 They asked about the day-to-day stuff, how the staff
24 spoke to us, how they behaved when we were aggressive
25 and how they used restraint techniques. My answers were

1 straight off the bat and I think they were interested in
2 what I and the other guys had to say. I suspect a lot
3 of these visits, I was always unavailable with some
4 appointment or something like that.

5 'I got in touch with Who Cares? Scotland because my
6 main concern was that I was stuck in Woodlands and no
7 one knew the plans for my future. There were also
8 flyers up on the notice board about them and how to get
9 in touch with them. I know they did chase things up for
10 me. I think because I didn't get an answer, I was quick
11 to cut ties as that was what I was like then.

12 'At that age, I understood that Who Cares? Scotland
13 were there to help people like me in care. They were
14 pretty much like an internal affairs team to make sure
15 we were not getting abused. In those days, though you
16 never heard the words "child abuse", it wasn't
17 understood like it is now. We just got hurt or battered
18 and that seemed to be acceptable. All the mental and
19 psychological abuse were not really things that were
20 spoken about. They would ask us if we got hit or if
21 they used restraint techniques. I believe they took
22 a bit of interest, which was unusual. I don't remember
23 a lot about my contact with them but they were taking
24 notes. If we were talking to them then there must have
25 been something about them that we felt we could trust.

1 I am pretty sure I talked to them alone.

2 'Getting no home leave was a big part of why I was
3 losing the plot. I was seeing everyone getting away on
4 the Friday and coming back on the Sunday with all these
5 stories about what they had been doing with their family
6 ...

7 'I believed I had no home leave because of my mum's
8 accommodation but she had many addresses within this
9 time. I was under the impression I wasn't getting out
10 because I was waiting on her getting a house, because
11 that's what I had been told.

12 'The first visit I got from my sisters was when they
13 were in foster care and they came down with their foster
14 parents. I think we did monthly access which alternated
15 between them coming to Woodlands and me going to see
16 them at their foster parents. When I went to see them,
17 it would be a member of care staff who would take me.
18 Travelling there wasn't good for me. I would either be
19 tired, car sick or I'd fallen out on the journey. At
20 the same time, I would be nervous about the visit.
21 Generally when I got there it would be all right but
22 afterwards there was always some sort of incident
23 because I didn't want to go back. Contact ended in 1995
24 or maybe 1996 ... Since then it's only been the last
25 couple of years that I've had contact with one of my

1 sisters.'

2 At paragraph 217, 'Sean' then says that staff had
3 told him that his dad had wanted to meet him for the
4 first time. 'Sean' chopped and changed his mind about
5 this until he went to meet him. He says that the
6 meeting didn't go well and there was no support for him
7 afterwards. 'Sean' says that after this meeting he felt
8 confused and rejected.

9 At paragraph 218, he says:

10 'Eventually, about three months before the end of
11 Woodlands, it was decided that I needed some respite at
12 the weekends ...'

13 'Sean' then tells us that he went to Gryffe for
14 a weekend **Secondary Institutions - to be published later**

15 At paragraph 219, he says:

16 'Although I got no home leave during my entire time
17 at Woodlands, my mum would come down to Woodlands
18 usually once a month. We had a caravan there and that
19 was used every weekend for visiting parents. Most of
20 the time, she wouldn't come down. That set me off and
21 caused incidents. Woodlands' argument was that I needed
22 contact with my family and that I shouldn't need to
23 compete for her attention with a guy I didn't know.
24 Woodlands were right though, whether I chose to believe
25 that at the time, I was more influenced by my mum and

1 she would tell me to say that I wanted whoever she was
2 seeing to come with her.

3 'At my request, we tried to make any visits by my
4 mum when Bobby was on. That is when I preferred to have
5 my mum down. It made things seem more normal as the
6 other staff could antagonise me and cause a lot of
7 aggression. There didn't seem to be any aggression with
8 Bobby or his wife. They were good people is what
9 I'm trying to say. To the best of my knowledge, he
10 never ever betrayed my trust, whereas a lot of them did.

11 'Sometimes mum would come down when the other staff
12 were on anyway. It was mad because there would be the
13 usual trouble with the staff where we would be fighting
14 and stuff but then my mum would start. I know it sounds
15 terrible but in the anger it was always expressed with
16 threats of death, severe violence and stabbing. The
17 staff had to take these threats seriously. The
18 influence my mum had was severely negative.

19 'There were times when I didn't want my mum to come
20 and visit but I couldn't say to members of staff that
21 I didn't want to see her because that would go on a
22 paper and she would find out at the next review. Me and
23 my pals who were going through similar things decided
24 that if we wrecked the caravan, none of the parents
25 would have anywhere to stay. It worked for a certain

1 amount of time.'

2 'Sean' says that he was really close to his brother.
3 He then tells us that on one particular visit his mother
4 brought in a knife for him. Staff seen his mum give him
5 the knife and she was told to take it back off him. He
6 goes on at paragraph 224 to say that after the staff had
7 left, she gave him the knife back and told him that he
8 had to do the member of staff.

9 At paragraph 225, he says:

10 'Boys had threatened me when I got weekend leave
11 ...'

12 And they were going to kill his hamster. He says:

13 'These people would have killed it just for a laugh.
14 They were seriously messed up guys.'

15 Turning to page 64 and paragraph 226, he says:

16 'Every chance I got I would try to run away. If any
17 of us were in the Office, we all tried to dive over the
18 stable door and run off into the grounds. Once you had
19 left the Office, it was a few steps to the left and then
20 that was the exit to the back of the grounds, so that
21 there was a target place to go. Sometimes we would get
22 caught by staff doing things like breaking into the
23 pantry to get snacks.

24 'I would run away from anything from half an hour to
25 one or two days. Mainly I would be in the

1 Newton Stewart area. I would be with other guys a lot
2 of the time. We broke into a sports shed at the high
3 school which had baseball bats in it. We took them back
4 to Woodlands thinking we would be ready for anything
5 now. I don't think the police ever caught me when I ran
6 away and I normally returned when I wanted. Usually
7 when I got back to the grounds, you could be rugby
8 tackled and that would cause me to struggle. That
9 immediately went into a restraint. I could be
10 restrained four or five times on the way back to the
11 building.'

12 'Sean' then goes on to tell us that his care was
13 reviewed at Children's Panel and further reviewed at
14 a local authority review.

15 At paragraph 231, he says:

16 'There were sanctions if you swore and your pocket
17 money would get docked. If you broke anything or
18 smashed your room up, you had to pay so much to cover
19 the damage. After things settled down, after the time
20 when staff had to re-apply for their jobs, I recall the
21 docking of pocket money was done anyway.

22 My Lady, I note the time is 3 o'clock at this point.

23 I have about another five or six pages at least to go.

24 LADY SMITH: Let's just take the short break now and then we
25 can finish the statement after that. Thank you.

1 (3.03 pm)

2 (A short break)

3 (3.10 pm)

4 LADY SMITH: Ms McMillan, when you're ready.

5 MS MCMILLAN: Thank you, my Lady.

6 Starting again from page 66 of the statement at
7 paragraph 232, 'Sean' says:

8 'The first mealtime was an evening meal because
9 I got there after lunchtime. I only lasted at the table
10 for 15 minutes before I was getting slapped and
11 restrained. We were sitting around the table and
12 a member of staff was telling me that I would do what
13 I was told in there and I thought I was a wee hard man.
14 It was the usual spiel to me. As soon as my elbows
15 touched the table, he started shouting and swearing at
16 me, telling me to get them off. He was telling me that
17 they had manners in this place and was calling me
18 a scumbag. This was my first introduction to what
19 people called table manners and it was all new to me.
20 I did what he said. Then he said that seeing I was the
21 new guy, I was to say grace. I asked him what he meant
22 and he said that before we eat the evening meal, they
23 say grace. I was starving and didn't understand so I
24 said the word "grace" and I went to eat. He was
25 screaming at me asking if I was taking the piss. He

1 told me to say grace properly. I had no idea he was
2 talking about some kind of blessing, like thanking the
3 Lord for this dinner. It was stupid in a way because I
4 thought he meant I wasn't pronouncing the word properly.
5 So I said it again emphasising the word clearly, I went
6 to eat and he told me I had one last time to say it
7 properly before he would slap me. The boys were looking
8 at me and were laughing. I think they thought I was
9 acting up. I didn't know any better. I said "grace"
10 once more clearly pronouncing every letter of the word.
11 [He] flew up in a rage, grabbed me, dragged me through
12 the room and slapped me on the face. I think he hit me
13 with the bottom of his hand as it sounded more like
14 a thud than a slap. He threw me into my bedroom and
15 shut the door. I was starving and I tried to come out
16 and barge past him so he grabbed me by the back of the
17 jumper and restrained me. I struggled and other members
18 of staff came in and helped restrain me. It wasn't for
19 long, maybe five minutes, then [he] threw me back in my
20 room. I just crawled into bed and stayed there.

21 'When we were at Flamingo Land on one of our visits,
22 there was a wee boy who had problems with the toilet and
23 was always soiling himself. It was a well-known fact
24 amongst everyone and no one ever gave him a hard time
25 about it. He was a good wee guy who just had a problem.

1 He soiled or dirtied his underwear in Flamingo Land but
2 he was really self-conscious about it, especially if
3 other people knew. Instead of saying to staff that he
4 had had an accident, he hid his underwear in a shoebox.
5 Don't ask me where this shoebox appeared from but he
6 carried a couple of pairs of soiled underwear in there.
7 [A staff member] aggressively asked him what he'd put in
8 the box and the wee boy said nothing. I was in the
9 caravan and saw all of this. He started swearing at the
10 boy, telling him to show him what was inside the box.
11 The boy's head was down and I have no idea if [the staff
12 member] knew about his problem or not, as I think
13 usually the boy went home at weekends. The wee guy
14 opened the box and showed him and [the staff member]
15 humiliated him. He went outside the caravan and was
16 telling everyone to listen up. He used to call it
17 a public announcement. He used to either shout, telling
18 everyone around to listen, or give an ear-piercing
19 whistle. When he had their attention, he would say that
20 he had a public announcement to make and then he said
21 something like, "Right, you dirty little bastard, would
22 you like to show them what you did?" The wee boy was
23 mortified. You had all these different people in
24 caravans and he told him to open the box. The wee guy
25 opened it but [the staff member] told him to take the

1 underwear out. He had to bring out his soiled
2 underwear. [The staff member] went on that he
3 apologised if he was ruining their holiday. He had no
4 clue, it was him causing the scene. [He] told everyone
5 that he apologised because the boy doesn't know how to
6 act and that he comes from a special school and all the
7 rest of it. He gave a big spiel for a couple of
8 minutes. The wee guy was made to carry the shoe box
9 about with him. There was quite a squad of us so we had
10 a few caravans, and although we did our own things
11 during the day, we met up later in a restaurant. One of
12 the guys asked the wee guy why he was carrying a box
13 about with him and what was in it. The wee guy just
14 said nothing. In the restaurant, [the staff member] got
15 up again and shouted "public announcement", he told the
16 wee guy to show the other guy what was in the box and
17 tell him what he had done. He humiliated the wee guy
18 again. It was those kinds of tactics he would use to
19 humiliate people and make them feel like nothing. He
20 made it out like there was something wrong with us when
21 he called it a special school and that we all had
22 special needs. It was a residential school and that's
23 what made it special.

24 '[He] did the same to me in a restaurant in Skegness
25 where we had gone for a weekend. I was bickering with a

1 boy because we hated each other. Every chance we got we
2 were either fighting or there were insults where we were
3 egging each other on. He actually made me stand on
4 a chair while he shouted to everyone to get their
5 attention before he apologised for disturbing their
6 dinner and so he went on. He told them we came from
7 a special school and I was made to apologise to everyone
8 in the restaurant. People were just looking at us
9 wondering what it was all about. To be honest, apart
10 from his humiliation tactics, I don't think I ever saw
11 anyone getting restrained by him. He was that fearsome.
12 Statistically I think a lot of the boys at Woodlands
13 were the most dangerous in the country at the time and
14 they wouldn't mess with [this staff member]. [He] died
15 about four years ago. He's the only one I've heard
16 anything about.

17 'When I talk about getting restrained, which
18 happened often, a lot of the staff would take the
19 opportunity to fly digs when they were rough handling
20 you. They would often get a woman to try and deal with
21 you first and the men would come in harder if they
22 thought you were resisting them. If during being
23 restrained, you happened to throw your arms around and
24 you accidentally connect with one of them then they said
25 it was assault. When it came to telling the police what

1 happened, it just seemed that every one of their
2 statements just happened to be identical. If you're
3 going to tell a story about what happened, it would
4 differ slightly because of the view they had of it.
5 They got their story straight every time before the
6 police came in. In the first year, I would say most of
7 the assaults on me were through being restrained.

8 'Any sort of backchat was met with aggression. It
9 was like living with an abusive drunk stepfather. Not
10 all, but most of the staff would scream, swear and
11 shout, questioning what I or others had said. Staff
12 ramped things up and didn't respond proportionately to
13 things. They even brought my mum into it and either
14 would make comments about her or why she wouldn't want
15 me. It was mental and emotional abuse, especially when
16 it came to a Friday as it was well known that I was
17 probably the only one who didn't get to go home at all.
18 They used restraint a lot and I know that sometimes it
19 was needed but a lot of the time it wasn't. Even at
20 that age, I knew what was justified and what wasn't.
21 I do understand that the staff had to behave in
22 a certain way as they were dealing with boys, a lot of
23 them were big and they were some of the most violent in
24 the country. The way staff behaved or reacted with the
25 boys could cause incidents or escalate them. I would be

1 covered in bruises every week because of being
2 restrained so much and even though I got new clothes,
3 I still looked like a tramp because my clothes were
4 constantly getting ripped. They got rid of corporal
5 punishment around that time but they replaced it with
6 restraining kids instead but even then I got chokes,
7 slaps and slams being restrained.

8 'Sometime within the first eight to nine months
9 I dived over the stable door of the Office and got into
10 the grounds. This guy, the child catcher, was chasing
11 me all up and down but I was rapid on my feet. He
12 couldn't catch me at first and he was all out of breath.
13 He could catch about 90 per cent of the guys but I was
14 able to run rings around him. He hated it. I would be
15 ahead and I would stop and give him abuse, like telling
16 him to, "Come on mate". I would wait until he was quite
17 close then I would shoot off to the side. This time,
18 I was on the football field and I got too cocky and I
19 let him get too close. He came up behind me fast and
20 hard before he kicked the back of one of my heels. I
21 tripped and fell flat on my face. He then kicked me on
22 the thigh part of my leg before grabbing me by the
23 scruff of my polo shirt. He dragged me by the polo
24 shirt into the Office and by that time I was kicking and
25 screaming and trying to bite as I was trying to get

1 away. As we got to the Office, there was already
2 an incident kicking off with some other guys and he was
3 told I couldn't go there. He took me to my unit but
4 there was no staff there. He threw me into my bedroom
5 and shut the door but I came back out straightaway.
6 I tried twice. The first time he pushed me back in and
7 I fell. He held the door shut, then he pretended he was
8 walking away and I tried to make a run for it. He went,
9 boom, right away and punched me right in the nose. My
10 nose exploded and there was blood all down me. He has
11 kind of panicked and shut the door again. I was lying
12 in my bed in shock and I was trying to stop the blood
13 with my T-shirt as I had nothing else to use. I was
14 left for about half an hour and by that time my nose had
15 stopped bleeding. As I heard staff returning to the
16 unit, [the child catcher] just said I was being kept in
17 my room as I'd been kicking off. None of the staff had
18 seen me by then. I started kicking and managed to get
19 out. That's when the care staff saw the state of me and
20 asked what happened. I told them that [the child
21 catcher] had punched me but he denied it, saying he
22 threw me on to my bed. I think it was Ian Shankland who
23 questioned him. It took me by surprise that he was
24 questioning how I got injured. To me, this was foreign.
25 He started to pay attention then and asked him if he

1 threw me onto the mattress where is the blood? [The
2 child catcher] couldn't come up with the answers to
3 simple questions. I ended up getting angry and kicked
4 off again. Ian said he needed to take me down to the
5 office because it was all within school hours. I went
6 down there and told him I wanted the police involved.
7 My nose was broken and if you look at it now it's still
8 crooked. I never got any treatment. This happened in
9 the morning and by the back of 3 I was still sitting
10 there with blood all over my face and clothes. I felt
11 like no one showed any concern about my injury, they
12 were more bothered I was making an allegation against
13 staff. I feel they sat me for such a long time pretty
14 much hoping I would change my mind.

15 '[A female member of staff] would pinch and nip me
16 as she was restraining me. She would mess with my head
17 because she would act so nice and polite while being
18 evil. She would be restraining me, telling me to calm
19 down but at the same time digging her nails into me
20 trying to make me scream. Sometimes she would give me
21 wee winks and just behave all weird but she knew she was
22 causing conflict, not just with her but with some of the
23 other boys. People thought I was imagining her
24 behaviour but she pushed me too far, so I tied two
25 karate belts together and wrapped them around my hand.

1 I hit her a couple of times. Staff saw this as
2 an unprovoked attack and because it was a woman, they
3 came down fast and hard on me. She got involved in the
4 restraint and she was at my head and had me by the
5 throat. I don't remember what she said but she was
6 saying horrible things to me. She took her attention
7 off for one second and I slid my chin down and sunk my
8 teeth into her hand as hard as I could before I shook it
9 like a Jack Russell. She was screaming but I wouldn't
10 let go. I'm not proud of this but she was a very evil
11 woman. That incident was the final straw with her and
12 I snapped. Every time I saw her it was pure aggression
13 after that. It got to the point I didn't forget about
14 the things she did to me. She thought that things were
15 all calm and forgotten about after a week or so but she
16 was wrong. That was where my head was. I wasn't going
17 to drop anything like that. She didn't last long after
18 that before she left.

19 '[The child catcher] got the sack around the time we
20 started moving to Merton Hall because he battered a boy.
21 He battered a lot of boys but this time it was enough to
22 get him the sack. There were a few times like that
23 where a member of staff ended up in the office after
24 they kicked the crap out of a boy. They left but we
25 were never told anything about this sort of stuff.

1 After I told staff I wanted the police notified
2 about [the child catcher's] assault on me, they kept me
3 in the office all day past 3.00 pm when I should have
4 been back in the unit. They were asking me if I wanted
5 to change my mind about the police. I think they were
6 worried because they had reason to believe I was
7 assaulted. Eventually the police came in and they
8 didn't believe me. Well, I actually think they did
9 believe me but they were asking me if I was at it and
10 I'd done it to myself. I gave my statement but I don't
11 know where that went.

12 'I can identify that my behaviour got out of control
13 and it was atrocious. It was mainly the violence from
14 me towards staff. Me and a couple of other guys had had
15 enough of how some of the staff treated us and for me my
16 mental health had become very much worse.'

17 'Sean' then goes on to tell us about his experiences
18 at Cree Lodge. He then also mentions his experience at
19 Balrossie, which is evidence that the Inquiry has heard
20 before, followed by his time within Kibble.

21 'Sean' goes on to talk about his life after care.
22 He didn't stay with his mum and he was sofa surfing. He
23 has spent time in and out of prison, but has tried to
24 change since the birth of his son in 2009.

25 He has had three more children now. He remarks that

1 while he could earn money through his criminal
2 activities, he will not do that because he does not want
3 to risk his own children going into care.

4 He now stays in Dumfries.

5 Insofar as the impacts and lessons to be learned are
6 concerned, 'Sean' provides detailed reflections.
7 Summarising some of those, he says, firstly at
8 paragraph 379 on page 109:

9 'One of the most important points for me was the
10 lack of decision-making from social workers and the
11 other agencies about care. If they had removed parental
12 rights right at start or early enough, things would have
13 certainly been different. I can't say if they would
14 have ended up better but I would have got used to it.
15 It ended up with me being put through the care system
16 and kicked out back to my mum, who wasn't bothered about
17 me. It resulted in me being in Woodlands for
18 three-and-a-half years with no focus. It built up
19 resentment, left me with no focus on where my life was
20 going and it affected my mental health in my childhood.
21 It was all so unnecessary. If you look at my records,
22 why would I ever have been put back to my mum? Before
23 care, it was horrific. At what point do the authorities
24 say enough is enough and decide that my mum was a danger
25 to kids? I don't know if I've the right words but they

1 fucked about too much. There was a lot of trauma before
2 I even went into care and they should have done
3 something because it's well-documented that my mum
4 wasn't safe and was a bad influence.'

5 At paragraph 382, he says:

6 'I have no trust in authority and especially social
7 work. That's meant all my life I wouldn't talk to
8 people in authority. Not just social work people but
9 people like probationary or community services. This
10 has all brought problems and made life harder than it
11 needed to be because I don't trust any of them. Even
12 a few years ago, I couldn't have spoken to the Inquiry.
13 When you think, someone with my background managing to
14 bring up children and have no social work involvement
15 with us is probably rare.'

16 He says that his time in care affected his
17 relationship with his brothers, his sister, it's
18 affected his role as a father and his mental health. He
19 gets flashbacks. He says he left care without any
20 education or qualifications and he feels that he was
21 kicked out of care without any guidance to prepare him.

22 'Sean' then talks about the lessons that he hopes
23 can be learned. He says, at paragraph 413:

24 'No child should be left with no direction in their
25 life. They shouldn't feel like they are just dumped

1 somewhere and left with no plan. With me, there were
2 things going on behind the scenes but I was never told
3 anything. I think children should know what the plans
4 are so they can prepare themselves for it. Surely if
5 things were not progressing and being positive, then
6 they should have been reviewed. No child should just be
7 left to sit and rot for years feeling forgotten about.
8 There should be deadlines so if things were just the
9 same then they have to look at other options. Not only
10 do I feel the time I spent in care ended up being
11 a waste of years but I also wonder if they made a
12 decision that the plan for me was to return back to the
13 life my mum offered. I might not have been at physical
14 risk but all the other risks remained.'

15 At paragraph 419 he says:

16 'I think it would have been better that there was
17 training on things that I needed for the outside world,
18 things like how to apply for a job, fill out
19 an application form, apply for benefits, open and manage
20 a bank account and things like that ...'

21 At paragraph 422 he says:

22 'You would think there would be better ways to
23 choose the staff working in care homes. In Woodlands,
24 it was crazy. It was husband and wife teams, cousins
25 and uncles, nephews. So it was people who just knew

1 someone and were pretty much from the job centre rather
2 than being specially trained. I don't think any of them
3 had any qualifications. So I think you need better
4 training for people who are looking after vulnerable
5 children. I'm talking from years ago, so I don't know
6 what it's like now, but it should be that people who
7 want to work with children who have the right
8 qualifications and training.

9 At paragraph 424 he says:

10 'I think there needs to be more individual care for
11 children who have come into care from really traumatic
12 and abusive situations, specially trained staff should
13 be there to deal with children who are showing behaviour
14 like violence, mental health problems, lack of trust,
15 anger management or anything else that is clearly coming
16 from how they have been treated. I don't think you can
17 expect children to be dumped into a care home and expect
18 them to just adjust. Fair enough, my behaviour wasn't
19 great but no one thought why I behaved like that or did
20 anything to help me understand and change what I thought
21 was a normal way to behave.'

22 At paragraph 427 he says:

23 'I have no objection to my witness statement being
24 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
25 I believe that the facts stated in this witness

1 statement are true.'

2 And he has signed his statement and it's dated 15
3 November 2021.

4 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

5 So that's it for now.

6 MS MCMILLAN: Yes, looking forward to next week, commencing
7 on Tuesday, with further oral evidence, there will be
8 applicant evidence and then Wednesday, more provider
9 evidence from Fife Council.

10 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much. I wish everybody a good
11 weekend and I'll rise now until 10 o'clock on Tuesday.

12 (3.30 pm)

13 (The Inquiry adjourned until
14 10.00 am on Tuesday, 10 June 2025)

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