

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

YXL

Support person present: No.

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

Background

2. I have eight O-Grades, six Highers and one Certificate of Sixth Year Studies (CSYS), which I obtained at Wallace High School, Stirling. I graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Maths from Edinburgh University and thereafter obtained a PGCE in Maths and Computing from Moray House Institute of Education, Edinburgh and a MSc in Information Technology at Stirling University.
3. My first job was as a catering assistant at Stirling University during the summer holidays between 1988 and 1990 and in 1992, after graduating, I secured a position as teacher of Maths and Computing at Academy. I remained there until 1996 when I took employment at Queen Victoria School, Dunblane (QVS). I remain in that position.

Employment with Queen Victoria School, Dunblane

Positions held and remit

4. My initial remit when I was employed at QVS in 1996 was to develop the teaching of Computing Science in the school, particularly at

Higher and CSYS level. I was also to manage and maintain the implementation of a new school network and record, manage and maintain the Desktop PCs within the school. [REDACTED]

5. My current remit involves [REDACTED] the Computing Science Curriculum, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

6. The role also has a boarding element [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] In 2007/2008 I temporarily fulfilled the role of Assistant House Tutor for six months to cover for staff absence

Recruitment process

7. I applied for my position with my CV and included two references, which were taken up. I had an interview at the school, which included a certificate check of all named qualifications. There was also a criminal records check and a security check (MOD) upon acceptance for the post.
8. As part of the contract there was one year probation and at the end of that first year the Headmaster would decide whether to offer a full contract, to terminate the contract or extend the probation period. I was offered a full contract.
9. I am not aware of any specific prerequisites; certainly being GTCS registered was not required when I joined, although I was. It is now required for all new teaching applicants.

Line managers – Teaching (including liaison/appraisal/training)

10. During my employment at QVS, my line managers for my teaching position have been Des Clark, Deputy Head Teacher (DHT), CKC [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED], Donald Shaw, DHT (Academic), Duncan McLay, Acting DHT (Academic) and Janette Scott-Laing, DHT (Academic).

11. Liaison between my line managers and myself included a formal yearly departmental review meeting, which also included discussion of exam results and departmental performance. In addition my line managers and another member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) would take part in classroom visits and crit lessons, both planned and drop-in. Feedback on these lessons would be given formally.
12. Training requests and professional development were initially more informal and part of the review meeting. Now and for the last eight years, training and professional development are part of the GTCS standards process and more formal in terms of the meeting and documentation process.

Line managers – Boarding (including liaison/appraisal/training)

13. My line managers for the boarding position I have held have been the various Housemasters [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
14. The key evaluative process within the Boarding House would be the House team meetings, which took place with regular frequency. These meetings are currently every three to four weeks and at the start of term. These meetings would be used to discuss aspects of our work in the Boarding House, to discuss issues and to look for solutions.
15. Courses relating to pastoral care would be offered to teachers who showed a particular interest in developing this aspect of their career. Mandatory training relating to pastoral issues would take place during in-service days at the start of terms.
16. I experienced less one-to-one evaluation with Boarding line managers in terms of my performance when on duty than on the academic side. There may have been a constant monitoring of my performance, but I was not aware of it formally.

17. The Boarding Housemasters would also meet weekly alongside the SLT to coordinate approaches.

Training

18. I have attended training courses on Networking - Novell Netware, which was to help with initial network management in the school; staff management; Timetabling; SQA courses and related Conferences; and professional development courses, for example courses provided by external firms on new courses and content in Computing.
19. I have also gained a Basic Expedition Leadership Award (BELA), a Summer Mountain Leader Award and a SFA Coach (First Level) award.
20. There would also be training sessions built into the in-service days at the start of the school term. Over the years this has covered a wide range of topics relating to education and boarding school life, often pertinent to a current circumstance. Topics covered included dyslexia, bulimia, coaching conversations, ADHD, E-Safety, Safeguarding - Annual Update, Spotting Abuse, ABLe, positive discipline, equality and diversity, adverse childhood experiences, unconscious bias, and academic matters.
21. In terms of induction training on the Boarding side, I shadowed the Housemaster for two duties, including a weekend duty. I recall having a long conversation with the DHT with regards to his vision for the Department, but I do not recall the formal nature of the academic induction process.

Policy

22. I have not had any involvement in, or responsibility for, policy in relation to the care, including residential care, of children.

Strategic planning

23. I have been involved in many iterations of whole school ICT planning, including the acquisition planning of networks, computers, iPads, Chromebooks and the use of these devices in the school to support education.
24. Central to this, though under the remit of DHT (Pastoral), would be the Acceptable Use Policy, e-safety policies, e-safety education, pupil and staff training and our on-going filtering and safety monitoring of pupil use. Potential for a framework of abuse risks through online activity would be part of the policy and the policy would be in line with the overall MOD schools strategy.
25. As far as I can recall, the MOD schools strategy regarding online activity was closely linked to the policies / best practices from the South West Grid for Learning Charity and involved following their good practice templates in education, monitoring and policy guidance. Each school maintains its own Acceptable Use Policy and specific e-safety policy. Improved use of MOD Schools SharePoint has been introduced in the last few years to centrally disseminate information and advice on online safety, including newsletters. A Global Safeguarding Team was set up within DCYP, around three years ago I think, to provide detailed advice to schools. Separate school networks have been consolidated to improve network support and monitoring of activity.
26. At QVS we are registered and committed to completing the 360 Degrees Safe and Digital Schools programme as recommended in the National Action Plan for Internet Safety. This forms part of the QVS ICT Strategy Plan and Whole School Strategy Plan for this academic year.
27. As I have not been involved in investigating online abuse risks, nor necessarily made aware of particular cases depending on confidentiality, I cannot accurately comment on the exact extent to which abuse risks through online activity have become. At no point has anyone intimated to me that we have an increasing problem in this area so I would have to say my feeling is that the problem is managed though vigilance,

training, education and an appropriate Acceptable Use Policy as previously mentioned.

28. I am aware of two cases where messaging apps were used to send toxic comments to another pupil. These were dealt with via the school discipline guidelines and, in one of the cases, Police involvement also. QVS has invested in technology that sits on top of the MOD network security to attempt to provide improved monitoring on these issues.
29. Central to the school's strategic approach would be the School Improvement Plan and the individual departmental plans that would feed into this plan. The school improvement plan would highlight priorities as established by the SLT and staff through discussion. This would generally link to 'How Good is our School' (HGIOS) quality indicators and have a set of tasks with measurable success metrics. The Lead for the task would establish a review date and an end date. The school improvement plan would cover a wide range of aims, including academic, pastoral support and training.

Other staff

30. I am [REDACTED] at QVS. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
A degree of mentoring, support and communication is built into my role [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Should performance levels arise, I would be involved in improvement planning and support.
31. I was [REDACTED] for two years, which involved training, planning work and formal evaluation of performance via the MOD framework.

Recruitment of staff

- 32. I have been involved in one interview and one teaching observation for a new computing teacher in the school. I also reviewed the advert and was a point of contact for teachers wanting information. I set the lesson parameters for the lesson observation.
- 33. I was not involved in recruitment policy or practices.
- 34. I was given access to the references of the applicants when I was part of the interview panel. The references were general in nature, highlighting the character of the individual being interviewed and from recollection they covered areas such as ability to work with others, ability to create resources, general work ethic and special skills or attributes.
- 35. I do not know whether referees were actually spoken to.

Training of staff

- 36. I have been involved in training staff on a number of initiatives relating to ICT. These included training on word processing, spreadsheets, GLOW, iPads, including iOS and Apps, building departmental websites and in Google Technologies, including Google Classroom. These would normally be completed on a workshop basis where I would create the learning materials. The particular need for training would depend on whole school priorities and needs as expressed through the ICT Committee.
- 37. Core Personal Development (CPD) would be discussed through your line manager and in line with your current Personal Development needs. A formal CPD meeting would be arranged each year. Should development opportunities arise during the year then they may be agreed depending on school priorities and staff availability to cover.

Supervision/staff appraisal/staff evaluation

38. I have been involved in staff supervision, appraisal and evaluation.
39. I was [REDACTED] for two years. This was carried out under the MOD staff review and appraisal framework and involved setting expectations and tasks for the year and then reviewing performance at set intervals. Exceptional performance could result in salary bonus. I would have a daily meeting with the [REDACTED] to discuss current tasks and on-going issues.
40. I [REDACTED] would carry out a yearly evaluation within the Professional Development framework. A degree of mentoring, support and communication would be built into my role. Daily talks and a weekly departmental meeting, with minutes being taken, would be used to support this. Performance and progress of classes would also be an agenda item.

Living arrangements

41. When I was first employed at QVS, living on the school campus in accommodation provided was a condition of employment. This no longer became the case around the year 2000, I think. I lived on Victoria Green, which was a group of staff houses and flats set within the school grounds but separate from the teaching block and boarding houses. I moved out of the school accommodation in 2005.
42. Promoted Boarding House staff, i.e. the Housemaster and Deputy Housemaster, would live within the Boarding Houses in flats provided. The accommodation in each House is different [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
43. The children's accommodation is formed by individual rooms down corridors. Younger pupils share rooms, S4 and above have a single room. Boarding Staff would have access to the corridors when on duty, monitoring Prep and also during routines such

as morning routines or night time routines. Promoted members of staff, matrons and cleaners would be more present throughout the day

Culture within Queen Victoria School

44. Being a school for military only children and with all the pupils having this commonality, the school does have a military tradition which permeates through in some ways. In general however, it felt like any other school when in the classroom, with perhaps slightly better classroom behaviour than might be seen in state schools and the smaller class sizes played a part in this. The school has always had a strong sporting ethos, in particular rugby and hockey.
45. That military tradition led to the encouragement of manners, expectations and leadership qualities, for example dress standards and standing when an adult entered the classroom, which were seen as very important in my early days in the school. Now there is much more emphasis on pupil choice and supporting positive mental health and I would say there has been a shift to a culture where pupils are more involved in having a say in Boarding life.
46. I was not aware of there being a 'fagging' culture in my time at the school.

Discipline and punishment

47. Children were disciplined and punished through punishment exercises, 'reflections on behaviours' exercises, class and central detention, 'Drill for Dress', where drill practice would be used, level 1 to level 3 'Gating' depending on the offence and a 'Strike' system for minor misdemeanours within the Boarding House. There was also detention and suspension for more serious misdemeanours.
48. Classroom discipline management would be carried out by teachers and Boarding discipline by House staff, with the Housemaster having the final say. More serious discipline issues and their punishment would be handled by the Senior Leadership team.

- 49. There was a formal policy in relation to discipline and punishment, which was detailed within various publications including the 'Guide to Life in the School', 'Positive Behaviour Strategy' and the school departments' discipline strategies. There is a clear set of guidelines for each offence with minimum and maximum punishments detailed.
- 50. The school carried out an audit of its discipline strategy involving staff, pupils and parents in 2018 and following this, and training, we follow the Positive Behaviour Strategy guidelines.
- 51. Pupils can be put on academic or House support cards to help support them either academically or in the House.
- 52. Records are kept using the '3Sys' management system. All discipline, House and Boarding issues, alongside well-being concerns, are recorded on this system.
- 53. Monitors and Prefects have a remit that covers uniform/dress and behaviour in the Chapel and in the Dining Hall. They can issue a 'Day' sanction for disobedience within these areas. This Day punishment involves helping out in the dining hall and is supervised by House staff, the SLT and the staff member with the S6 Remit.
- 54. House Prefects help out with morning and evening routines in the Boarding House, ensuring, for example, that duties are done and pupils are 'on-beds' on time. This is supervised by House staff.

Day to day running of the school

- 55. I have not, at any time, been involved in the day to day running of the school.

Concerns about the school

- 56. I was aware of a previous member of staff, from the 1980s I believe, who made repeated intimations to the papers of alleged abuse of pupils in the school when he was a member of staff.
- 57. I can provide no details of the nature of the concerns, any individuals who were the subject of concern, nor the school's response, as it was before my time at the school. I am only aware of what was written in the newspapers.
- 58. I can provide no details of the extent to which the parents of the children were made aware of such concerns, nor who had responsibility for reporting to the parents, as it was before my time at the school.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

- 59. I am aware of the school procedure for reporting complaints.
- 60. That procedure involves the process of initial disclosure, observation, recording and reporting via an official referral form which is handed to Child Protection Office. The child should not be interviewed by a staff member. The Child Protection Coordinator collates all relevant details, which may include interview, and there is a meeting with relevant staff and the Head to make a final decision, which may involve external agencies. The pupil's confidential child protection profile is also updated.
- 61. I do not know how often the process has been used nor if any complaints were received.
- 62. I cannot comment on whether complaints were recorded and, if so, where, as I was not involved in the process.

Trusted adult/confidante

- 63. There was a person in the school that a child could speak to about any worries they had.
- 64. Housemasters, the SLT, Tutors and any member of staff are trained with how to deal with an allegation or concern made to them.
- 65. Over time there has been development of the Tutor system in school where a tutor would act as a guide/mentor for a group of pupils over their time in the Boarding House and there has been development of pupil mentors.
- 66. I am aware that in practice concerns have been raised in this way.

Abuse

- 67. QVS does have a definition of "abuse" that it applied in relation to the treatment of children at the school.
- 68. The school's definition is focussed on the five categories of abuse: Physical abuse and injury, neglect, emotional abuse/lack of attention, sexual abuse and non-organic failure to thrive.
- 69. That definition was communicated and explained to staff working at the school through all-staff in-service training.
- 70. I am not sure of the date the school's definition was introduced, it has always been part of the Child Protection Guidelines as far as I am aware.

Child protection arrangements

- 71. Staff are given guidance and instruction on how children in their care at the school should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate

behaviour towards them through in-service training, both internal and external, for example SCIS, through guidance documents, which must be read and signed, through on-line training, whole staff and House meetings and through e-Bulletins.

72. The guidance and instruction is given to staff on how to handle, and respond to, reports of abuse or ill-treatment of children by staff, other adults, or fellow pupils at in-service training on the Observe, Record and Report process.
73. Staff were expected to follow the procedures as outlined in the Child Protection Guidelines in relation to these matters.
74. The child protection arrangements that are in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse, ill-treatment, or inappropriate conduct by staff, or other adults, towards children at the school were as detailed within the Child Protection Guidelines and also through training of staff, the Cause for Concern Form, anonymous reporting within the Houses, Whistleblowing procedures and House policies. Additionally, there was remote learning, which included safeguarding guidance for staff, GIRFEC procedures and wellbeing Concerns via the 3Sys Management tool.
75. The Child Protection Guidelines is a clearly worded document, with clear processes and actions to follow. Child protection training is mandatory every year. Pupils can use an anonymous system of making a complaint or to whistleblow and whistleblowing procedures to raise a concern are prominent on the school's Intranet and has been used, I believe.
76. There are also House policies, which include safeguarding procedures such as knocking on doors and only entering when invited, respecting private space of pupils and these are also discussed in meetings. The remote learning guidance includes guidance with regards to best practices and safe practices when using remote learning technologies.
77. There are GIRFEC plans, including information gathering and the SHANARRI wellbeing plan with appropriate interventions, which is formalised into the CYP Plan,

a formal document that forms evidence of what support a person is receiving. The use of 3Sys makes sure wellbeing concerns are received and actioned by all relevant parties.

78. I believe these processes are effective and this belief is backed up by recent Care Commission reports.

External monitoring

79. I am aware that there have been inspections of the school by the Care Commission and the HMI.
80. I know that the inspectors spoke with selected groups of children, but I am not sure if individual children were spoken with. To the best of my knowledge staff were not present when the children were interviewed.
81. I spoke with the inspectors in a group of [REDACTED] Teachers, but I did not personally receive feedback from them, only through their final report.

Record keeping

82. As [REDACTED] I would be obliged to keep up to date academic records of pupils' work for the purposes of evidence. Historical records of exam performance would also be kept.
83. I am not involved in the process of staff or pupil record keeping, though I am aware that each member of staff would have an employment file that would be kept up-to-date in line with MOD and Civil Service guidelines. I cannot comment further as I have not dealt with or used records containing information kept after any allegation of abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate conduct was made by, or on behalf of, a child.
84. The policy on record keeping would be in line with MOD and Civil Service Guidelines and those required by external agencies. I cannot comment further as I have not dealt

with or used records containing information about how children had been treated in practice, and whether children had been reporting what they considered to be abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate conduct.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

85. I have never been involved in any investigation on behalf of the school into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of children at the school, or into inappropriate behaviour by staff or others towards children.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

86. I have never been involved in the handling of reports to, or civil claims made against the school by former pupils concerning historical abuse.

Police investigations/criminal proceedings

87. I am aware that there are ongoing criminal proceedings against the drumming teacher at QVS, however I am only aware that criminal proceedings are in process and that the teacher is no longer a member of staff. I know support mechanisms were put in place for the pupils but I have no awareness of the case or the pupils involved. Staff were informed by a whole staff briefing and parents were informed by letter.
88. I have given a statement to the police concerning alleged abuse of children cared for at the school. In November 2004 I was interviewed by Central Scotland Police about an allegation against me. I denied the allegation but agreed that a relationship, initiated by the ex-pupil, had taken place for around a year to late 2003. As we were both outdoors enthusiasts, this invariably involved meeting up at available weekends and holidays to go hill walking, cycling or golfing. The Police investigation concluded that no criminal offence had taken place at this time.
89. I have never given evidence at a trial concerning alleged abuse of children cared for at the school.

Specific alleged abusers – unless covered in responses to previous questions

YNT

90. I recall YNT and my employment at QVS coincided with his between around 2000 to 2004. I believe he was around thirty years old and he was a teacher of and a promoted member of Trenchard House Boarding Team. His role in relation to mine was as a teaching colleague, but I did not know him well and we did not mix socially at all.
91. He was a popular member of staff with the pupils to my recollection. YNT had a young family while at the school, he was musical and a good player of the guitar. He was friendly and, to my recollection, hard working. He was interested in developing his skills in pastoral care and the Boarding side of the school.
92. I only saw him with children when he was teaching or when on duty and he appeared to have a positive relationship with pupils to my recollection. I did not see him discipline children and cannot comment on how he may have disciplined children. I did not see him abuse children and nor did I hear of him abusing children.
93. I was aware that Mr YNT had a GTCS Hearing in 2008. I do not know the specific charges presented at the Hearing and cannot comment on what he was alleged to have done and when.

CKC

94. I recall CKC and my employment at QVS coincided with his between around 1998 to 2012. I believe he was between fifty and sixty years old at that time. He was the SNR and as such was my line manager. He was approachable in nature and supportive as a line manager. He had a wide experience in working life and was a good raconteur with regards to many areas of and especially the .

95. I found him personable and sociable. I did not mix with Mr CKC socially, but he was a supportive line manager and extremely positive in his outlook with regards to using in education. We both shared a common interest in sport.
96. I saw him with children and found him friendly and supportive in nature but able to effectively use a firm approach if required. I did see him discipline children in passing, for example addressing a pupil in the corridor and, as I have indicated, Mr CKC could adopt a firm, but professional approach if required, if, for example a pupil had been sent down to his office for misbehaviour in class. He was also an effective interviewer when trying to get to the bottom of an on-going issue. I have not seen him abuse children and nor did I hear of him abusing children.
97. I did become aware of a reference in an anonymous letter during my own Employment tribunal in 2005/6, but I cannot comment on what the allegation was, nor when it related to.

Specific allegations that have been made to the Inquiry in relation to me

98. I was interviewed in May 2002 by the Headteacher where he read out an allegation referred to in an anonymous letter, which I am led to believe the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is aware of.
99. The allegation specified that I was having an inappropriate relationship with a S6 female pupil. I was not having a relationship and I denied the allegation. I recall expressing concern at the way the allegation was submitted and for the pupil. I was informed that a school investigation was taking place into the allegations and that I should keep the contents of the interview confidential, which I accepted.
100. In November 2004 I was interviewed by Central Scotland Police about the same allegation. I denied the allegation but agreed that a relationship, initiated by the ex-pupil, began in October 2002 and had taken place for around a year to late 2003. I was not at any stage having a relationship with her while she was a pupil. As we were

both outdoors enthusiasts, this invariably involved meeting up at available weekends and holidays to go hill walking, cycling or golfing. The police investigation concluded that no criminal offence had taken place at this time.

101. In the [REDACTED] 2005, the allegations were informed to [REDACTED] and were [REDACTED] [REDACTED] naming the staff involved.
102. Following the conclusion of the police investigation, an employer investigation was initiated around [REDACTED] 2005 and this resulted in a formal Employment Hearing. The ex-pupil exercised her right not to attend the Hearing, but she did make a written statement confirming her statement to the police without amendment. This disciplinary process included an investigation interview, two Hearing meetings and a final Decision interview. It concluded in [REDACTED] and my suspension was lifted.
103. Following the conclusion of this employment tribunal, my professional body, GTCS, began independent investigations into the allegations in 2007 which led to a two-day Tribunal Hearing in 2008. This Hearing was attended by all pertinent witnesses. I was acquitted of all charges at the end of the Hearing process.
104. I have also been through an additional investigation by Disclosure Scotland via their Consideration for Listing Process.
105. I have never been the subject of any other complaint in relation to alleged abuse of children at the school.

Helping the Inquiry

106. There should be clear and obvious opportunities to raise a concern, whether anonymously or not.
107. Any serious concerns raised should be fully investigated in a timely manner. An independent body to the school should be used where appropriate.

- 108. There should be clear policy on record taking and records must always be retained.
- 109. There must be strict school policies regarding pupil/staff socialising within a boarding environment.
- 110. There should be frequent Care Inspections with clear signs of improvement being shown where required and requested.

Other information

- 111. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....

Dated..... 27 October 2020