

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

YNT

Support person present: No

1. My name is YNT. My date of birth is 1967. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I am originally from . I had a bit of a disruptive childhood, my parents divorced when I was very young. It was a very challenging environment. My folks had went out to . In 1980 they came back. Unfortunately they separated soon after and my life was quite disruptive for several years after that.
3. I left school at fifteen and became a mechanic. I was then unemployed and did some Highers at night school through an access course. I thereafter went to Stirling University and gained a degree in and Education. I graduated in 1995.
4. I did a combined course at Stirling University. That was the goal after the background I'd had and it was the vocation I wanted to follow. I was twenty-eight years old when I graduated.
5. Almost immediately after graduating I did supply work at School in Callander. I then secured a post at School. I was there from August 1995 until I started employment at Queen Victoria School, (QVS), in 1998.

6. I have always taught [REDACTED]. I was a supply teacher at [REDACTED] High School in the [REDACTED] department. I was only there for three or four months through the summer term. I graduated in the February or thereabouts, so I did supply work from that point until the end of June. I was interviewed for the job at [REDACTED] High School in the June and started in August 1995. This was again in the [REDACTED] department there. I enjoyed my time at [REDACTED]. It is a huge school with about two thousand pupils. It is a state educational school.

7. A friend worked at QVS in the library and she said it was a great place to work. We were going through a bit of a transition at the time, we'd had our oldest son [REDACTED] and he'd had a bit of an illness in early 1998. We tried to manage it so that my wife [REDACTED] would be working a bit closer to home. What would have helped us was if she could take a career break, which she couldn't with Stirling Council at the time. So she resigned from her post after I got the job at QVS. It enabled us to exist on one salary. That was the driving force really, so that she could be at home with [REDACTED] or one of us could have been, but there was the option of me earning a higher salary and a secure position. Luckily we managed to do that and [REDACTED] was able to stay at home with [REDACTED].

Employment with Queen Victoria School, Dunblane

8. We moved to Queen Victoria School, QVS, in 1998 and I was there until 2005. We had a house in Callander and asked the school if we could remain there, but because of the role I was undertaking they didn't entertain that and said we had to live on site. So we eventually had to sell our house. We moved lock, stock and barrel into accommodation at the school. They had wanted us to move into the actual residency in the boarding house but we asked if we didn't have to do that. The assistant housemaster normally lived in the boarding house accommodation, but they gave us a house in the grounds of the school. There would have been a full disclosure check done when I started. It may have been updated, but I'm not sure if it had to be every three to five years. It may well have been.

9. I went to QVS as a [REDACTED] teacher and there was the role of assistant housemaster. It was the Board of Governors who interviewed me. I was told that I did so well at the interview they wanted to employ me and created a role for me, an additional teaching role, and one as assistant housemaster in the boys' boarding house. This was in Trenchard House, which was for the younger boys who were P7 to S1 age range. The transition from primary to secondary age group. The housemaster there was QYL [REDACTED].
10. As [REDACTED] teacher I followed the Scottish Education programme diet there, so it was standard grades, revised Highers then sixth year studies or advanced Highers. We taught through that whole range. That was the educational part and then there was my role as the boarding house assistant. I had duties within the house. You were in loco parentis I suppose as assistant housemaster. On Monday I would be on duty, wake up the children, get them ready for breakfast then school. I supervised lunch, then post school I would be back in the boarding house supervising. I would supervise dinner, prep and then supervise the bedtime routine. It was one long Monday every week.
11. On Thursday it would be the wake up part of it up to the boys going to school and then the late night part at the end of the day. At the weekend I would do Saturday afternoon, after classes through till eleven or twelve o'clock at night, supervising late night duty. In amongst that there were activities with various pupils. I was also a [REDACTED] coach, so I took training sessions as well on Tuesdays and Thursdays and was involved in matches on Saturdays. QYL [REDACTED] and other members of staff were on duty the rest of the week.
12. There were maybe sixty to seventy boys in the boarding house aged ten/eleven to twelve/thirteen. When I first arrived the boarding house was in the old main building and there were maybe five or six senior boys there to assist. They were S5 and S6. Their role was just chatting with the younger ones, almost like a big brother, talking to the boys. They could be your eyes and ears sometimes and come to you if there was an issue, if some of the boys were homesick or upset about something. They would come to myself or QYL [REDACTED].

13. I liked QYL. His heart was clearly on the side of the children coming through the door. I think he had been there many, many years, so he knew the running of the place very well. He was a good mentor because I came there fairly green. With my background I was unfamiliar with all the procedures, like prep, tuck and various other things. It was a really foreign world to me. He helped me navigate that. We had weekly meetings where we discussed the issues and reviewed the week.

Application

14. I compiled a hand written application for the post at QVS. Things weren't online then. I provided references, who were the rector of High School and I'd imagine it would have been my head of department at I think the references were taken up because there were sixty odd applicants for the one role. I was required to be registered with the General Teaching Council, (GTC), while I was at I'm not sure if I had to be for QVS.

Line manager

15. QYL, to an extent, would have been my supervisor/line manager in the boarding house. I also had Alan Kirk, who was the head of the department, so he would have been my line manager there. Along with QYL there was Alice Haney, who was the Assistant Headmaster, part of the Senior Management Team, (SMT), who was there at the time. Brian Raine was the Headmaster.

Annual appraisal

16. When you consider what happens now, there wasn't really as I recall an annual appraisal. On the side of things, how you were performing would have been seen by the results of the pupils, and at parents' evenings there was feedback. On the boarding side there wasn't as much. If you weren't sure you would ask and QYL would help you out. There wasn't any moment when you were reviewed apart from my first year, which was a probationary year, but no appraisal, concerns or training is just what I recall.

Training/Courses

17. I did one training course, but that was off my own back to try to get some understanding of bereavement counselling. I went on a course for that through Alice Haney. She left and it fell by the wayside. Other than that I didn't get any specific training. It was really just to shadow QYL as assistant housemaster. I did that on several occasions just to get an idea of how the day was constructed and operated, to see his interaction with pupils and how an independent school functioned compared to the state system, which was night and day really. I shadowed QYL for about the first term.
18. In the confines of the classroom it was much the same at QVS as it was in a state school, but everything else was really quite different. There was no induction pack really, you just had to have a plan in your head and ask questions. I don't have any pride that way, if I'm not sure I will ask. I shadowed QYL for the first term, then I had my own rota.
19. QYL had a flat within the boarding house, so he was always available. He would pop out when I was on duty just to see how I was doing, so I got support through him that way and we would do a hand over the following day. We had a diary and you would write it up, just saying what had happened, what child was upset, if you reassured them, or if one wasn't behaving as he should. So he knew what he was coming in to that morning.

Bereavement counselling

20. I noticed a huge difference between state education and QVS as an independent school. Although QVS is still state funded it's got a funny little role or position between independent and state. There seemed to be a bit of a gap because there were a lot of very vulnerable children from broken homes and some had lost parents in the theatre of war, and the fall-out from that, and parents suffering from PTSD. So once they had a position in the school it would be a real comfort to them, and you could see the anxiety rise when it came to the end of a term and that thought of

being away for several weeks was really eating away at some of them. Some of them would come back in peaks and troughs with emotions, because they had lost parents and I just felt inadequate that I didn't have the tools there to deal with that in a way. I wanted to be sure I was in a position to give good advice and recognise it. That was the reason behind the bereavement counselling course. Not that I was hoping to encounter a lot of bereavement, but it was a course that came up and I thought it would be a good thing to perhaps introduce. It was only myself that took the bereavement counselling course. Alice Haney got the funding for it for me to attend the course. They were looking to roll it out but then Alice left and it just lost traction really.

21. It was in the first year or going into the second year that I did the course. So once I found my feet I identified this and experienced the change in some pupils with their raised levels of anxiety and the ebb and flow of emotions.
22. My role didn't change in the time I was at the school. The only thing that changed was that there was a bit more onus on sport and I moved up the ranks in terms of coaching. I was working with the second and first [REDACTED] teams and I found it took an awful lot of time coaching [REDACTED]. As a [REDACTED] teacher there's a lot of marking, so to try and balance that and having a very young family, having had [REDACTED] in 1996, in 1999 my son [REDACTED] arrived, so we had two very young children to manage too. As such, there were long days with the teaching, the [REDACTED] and the boarding house so that's how my role had altered quite significantly, both personally and professionally. The whole time I was at QVS I remained teaching [REDACTED] and as assistant housemaster at Trenchard House.

Policy/Strategic Planning

23. I didn't have any involvement in any policy making. Anything that had been generated we would implement, but I wasn't involved in policy making. I wasn't involved in strategic planning either. Nothing at that level at all.

Other Staff

24. I didn't manage any other staff. As assistant housemaster we used to have members of staff that used to come in and do a duty on a day and I would come in and take over from them around nine or ten at night. When they finished we would have a handover but it was as an equal peer really, so no management.

Recruitment of Staff

25. I was never involved in recruiting or training any staff, or staff appraisals, supervision or evaluation.

Living Arrangements

26. The school initially wanted me to reside in the boarding house, but I stayed on the grounds with my family about a hundred metres from the main school building. Our house was in [REDACTED]. It was a three bedroom, semi-detached house. Typically M.O.D. as I understand now, with a nice sized garden, which was ideal for the boys when they were growing up.
27. I think there were four boarding houses. They were Trenchard, which was the young ones, Cunningham was the next house again, which was the S2 to S3/4 age group. Haig was for the senior boys and there was Wavell House for girls and that was a sort of separate part of the building. I never had to stay overnight in the boarding house. I always went home.
28. All the other houses had a housemaster and assistant or deputy that both stayed in the house. I was the oddity that I was able to live outwith but we kind of stood our ground to do that. With the young ones we didn't want interruption because I witnessed that with [REDACTED] QYL. There would be knocks on his door at various points of the night. We couldn't have that kind of disruption, but all the other boarding houses had a couple of apartments for the housemaster and assistant, living at the end of the corridor. These had access to the main accommodation for the pupils. [REDACTED] QYL

and his wife lived in the boarding house. I'm not sure what would have happened to the flat I was going to be allocated. I don't know if someone actually lived there, if another member of staff elected to stay on site just to have accommodation in the QVS grounds. There were matrons in each boarding house and they would have had accommodation in one of the flats there.

29. Any member of staff had access to the boarding houses. They weren't alarmed. There was an office at the entrance to the main accommodation and they should have come in and asked, "Is Mr QYL here?" or "is such and such a pupil here?", but there was no barrier. Other pupils could come in, but they would have been challenged because they weren't in their own boarding house. That was something that the pupils knew, they'd have to seek out a member of staff before entering another house.

Culture Within Queen Victoria School

30. The school's role was a key role in terms of trying to support a lot of vulnerable children. There was a bit of a conflict I suppose, after I'd been there a wee bit because it seemed to be almost run like a completely independent school, how I'd imagined one to be. That didn't seem to marry up because I think, I imagine, with independent schools there are people that come from, usually I suppose, quite financially stable families and perhaps stable backgrounds, whereas here you've got pupils who have come from very difficult backgrounds. It seemed at times you'd put a square peg in a round hole sort of thing and try to make them fit into an independent sector. Coming from the state sector it is quite different in terms of how the pupils were treated, but it didn't really marry up and I found that a bit challenging, I suppose.
31. I remember one lunch we went to and it seemed to just jar. In the first year you're trying to impress, so you want to attend everything. There was a lunch, I can't remember why it was on, but it was a significant date. There was a chap who was helicoptered in. There was an awful lot of expense going into dinners and events, while you've got these wee souls over here who aren't doing as well as they could

do. You think, that kind of money could have been put somewhere else, just have a more level system, almost like a state system, where everyone is treated nice and equally. I'm probably not making much sense but I found there was a bit of a conflict there from what, I thought, it was going to be compared to what it turned out to be. It seemed to be more towards that independent end, which conflicted with my wife's and my beliefs in a way. We were far more comfortable in that state system, which I thought it was going to be more like, but it wasn't. It was more geared towards the "posher" end of the independent schools.

32. It was some admiral that was helicoptered in to attend something and we were sitting down to dinner or lunch and some of the senior pupils were there in all their regalia. The headmaster was there and various other people and dignitaries. At one point this admiral looked at his wife and the helicopter was arriving and off they went. It was quite a dramatic entrance and exit. Helicopters were used with various other dignitaries.
33. My wife and I tended to withdraw from that after the first year, my probationary year, and dealt with the real side of education I suppose. They didn't have the budget for that, although it may have all been funded by the M.O.D. of course. But it just wasn't what I thought the school should fuss over, which was these potentially vulnerable children, from broken homes and things. So we didn't go to these functions if we didn't have to.
34. The chapel was the big feature in the grounds. Every morning after breakfast, the children would go in and the headmaster would give a bit of an account of the day's proceedings, what's coming up and there'd be a hymn or something. Minister John Silcox would then speak. There would be the daily service and there'd be chapel service on Sunday morning. We attended those reluctantly but when I got the permanent contract after a year we felt less pressure to attend. I didn't feel we had to go to the chapel and the dining sort of things. Some you had to attend, but if I could manage to avoid it I would.

35. Fagging wasn't a thing at QVS when I was there. I didn't witness or encounter it and nobody ever came to me about it. Certainly when I arrived it was alluded to by some of the seniors in the first Trenchard boarding house, before we moved to a new location and they had said that perhaps it had occurred. But it wasn't something that had occurred in my time there. The boys had heard from someone else that it had occurred years previous to my arrival.
36. [REDACTED] and I started to withdraw from things and you feel out of the loop in a way. We're quite private people, so we weren't part of the main core of staff, the popular ones maybe. The gossip in the staffroom sort of thing, it's quite insular I suppose. With the staff there it was a bit of a bubble in the school and in fact some of them had been pupils. Maybe after a little stint at university had come back into it. We always felt like outsiders in a way because we weren't from a military background. We weren't the same people. We weren't into socialising, we kept work and private life separate. We went to one or two parties, but it just wasn't us. We were all pleasant and got on but we weren't cut from the same cloth.
37. I think if there was any little rumour going around, I don't know specifics, but if you'd known about a member of staff, and you're always going to talk about pupils, or another member of staff who's had a tough day and the reason behind that could be whatever. So it's like a typical staff room in that way. But then the staff room would move to individual houses. They would say "I'll catch you later about that one". So we weren't really privy to some things, these conversations.

Discipline & Punishment

38. In relation to discipline and punishment, in the [REDACTED] classroom you could give someone a detention. You would always communicate with their housemaster because a lot of times when you knew what was going on in that house, it impacted in the classroom. Of course in a state school you may not know that, so it joined up and dovetailed there quite nicely.

39. In terms of the boarding house, the punishments were that you couldn't get tuck, crisps or sweets. You could get prep extension, there was maybe a little social time between prep and bed, so you couldn't go out and socialise with your friends, you would be isolated in the building. Other punishments were that privileges would be taken from you, certainly if you were a senior. If you were a captain or vice-captain then that could be withdrawn.
40. I suppose what didn't go down well sometimes was some people raised their voices quite strongly towards the young ones and when lights were out. When it was nine o'clock the lights would go out but inevitably come ten or eleven o'clock the boys would be sneaking around or reading a book under the covers or something. But you know that's what you did as a kid. You would then hear a voice screaming out. Certainly some of the senior pupils did that when I first arrived, and that was their method of making sure the younger boys were in bed and getting to sleep. That wasn't my approach certainly. I'd say "you're eating into my time now, you're meant to be asleep, I want to watch TV or do a report".
41. Sometimes the children may be upset, could be crying, missing home, issues may have arisen during the day. There was obviously no corporal punishment then. I'm sure in the early eighties they'd get the cane or the slipper, but there was nothing I witnessed, no-one came to me and said they had been struck. Slipped or caned had been mentioned as being used as a punishment years before but were not used in my time. I didn't see or hear of anyone having received this punishment. The slipper was mentioned in general terms. If someone wasn't behaving, you know, lights out but they weren't in their room, then they'd get the slipper. That seemed to be the context of what the boys I spoke with said.
42. In my time, any member of staff could give out punishment. Whatever member of staff was on duty would come to me and say, "whoever has misbehaved". We would put it in the diary and QYL and I would discuss what punishment should be given. If it was a misdemeanour we could talk it out with the boy, or if it merited a punishment it would be no tuck or an early bed or something. QYL or I would

issue that. Major issues would be passed to QYL and if he deemed it necessary he would pass it on to the Senior Management Team, (SMT).

43. Essentially, QYL was on duty all the time. There was no respite for him. If there was an issue a member of staff could knock on QYL's door and speak with him at any time.
44. Senior pupils couldn't give out punishments. When I first arrived, because I was new to it and didn't know how it all operated, senior boys may have withdrawn tuck, or something like that. The danger of that I suppose is that someone could be targeted. But as time went on and I understood the mechanism, you're more alert to that kind of thing, then this dissipated.
45. There was a discipline policy if I can recall, but it would be the basic things in terms of what is expected of a pupil, much the same as in a state system. There would be consequences for certain actions, from detentions to withdrawals of tuck, to not being allowed out on an excursion. Parents or carers would be contacted if something was to escalate, so that would impart the behavioural discipline policy.
46. We would have had a staff handbook and a house handbook as well. It would have been up to us to read these. With the best will in the world sometimes you would get that big folder coming on to your desk and you've got Higher marking here, policy documents there. But if there was any changes there would be a mention that there's a significant change as per page whatever.
47. For the pupils, I think it would have been displayed on a board, but when they first arrived they may have got a little pack, just a reminder of what's expected, as well as on the noticeboard, 'This is the expected behaviour. Please try and adhere to it', and there would be consequences if not adhered to. They would have been aware for each level of indiscipline there would be another sanction perhaps. So they would be aware that there was an escalation of events if they didn't adhere.

48. In respect of records kept, I know we had a diary in the office. That was handwritten and I'm sure QYL would have kept, so he could refer to what date anything happened on, going back. I'm sure there was some sort of thing, like a blue print form, one part would go to the housemaster, one part in a file. So you'd have to physically look through a file if you wanted to see a real sequence of things and it would be up to an individual to perhaps look at that. There wasn't an alert system to say, 'They've had three issues, what's going on here?'. It would be up to me, or another member of staff to be vigilant there. But I suppose you would know the pupils as well as you can do, when they weren't behaving as usual, or were acting a bit unusual.
49. You would write in the diary at the end of your duty. I would just put in it whoever has had an issue that evening. It may be a discipline issue or someone upset or something and then I'd write, "Refer to QYL". So QYL would be aware from there. You would then speak to him, sit on it or take it further. I'm not sure if it was the diary entry that would be put into files. There were so many different members of staff on duty and everyone wrote their own thing. I'd imagine they'd try to give a summary. QYL may have read the summary and maybe bullet point it. I'm not really sure how that would have been transferred from one document to another.
50. QYL or myself would keep an eye on the senior pupils. They would have duties to do in the house, supervise tuck or the bed time routine, but sometimes they went missing. They would be elsewhere with their mates in different boarding houses or something and you'd have to round them up. When they were there they'd come to us and say, "That's the corridor nice and quiet", things like that. You would thank them for their help and they would stand down as such. They had different duties round the school, supervising lunch or dinner or walking the corridors or something. They had a little rota themselves and whichever house they were in they would be answerable to the housemaster.

Day to day running of the school

51. I wasn't involved in the day to day running of the school at all.

Concerns about the school

52. I wasn't aware of any concerns about the school in the way that children were treated by the school or an outsider. Certainly if something had been said to me I would have raised that. That was a way that was different compared to the state system. It's really quite clear in the state system where I had the head of my department, you also had the assistant principal of guidance and principal of guidance. So if you had a child welfare issue you knew who to refer things on to. There also seemed to be really strong links with outside agencies and social work. So I knew that line, but I wasn't sure in terms of what relationship there was between QVS and outside agencies, what involvement was there. I was never privy to all that. If pupils had a social worker assigned to them, I didn't know if that was the case. A lot of them lived in far reaching parts of the country, they couldn't have had a local social worker. So that may have been a missed opportunity.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

53. When I was at QVS I never had anything raised by pupils to me. There may have been a policy in relation to children having an issue but I wasn't aware of anything written out. I think it would be, if you have an issue speak to us, or someone you trust or you feel comfortable speaking with. It may be another pupil who would raise it on your behalf or it could be a member of staff from anywhere in the school, or an adult.
54. There may have been something more formal in place, but I wasn't aware of that formal line. We would say to them at the start of term, "If you have an issue or concern speak to us or the matron, or someone in a different house. Don't keep it to yourself essentially, if you feel you need to share something. Speak with senior pupils or your peer group, if there's someone you want to speak with in terms of the wider school community any member of staff". Heather Devlin was the matron in Trenchard House. Kate, I can't remember her last name, did a lot of the cleaning in the house.

55. If concerns or complaints were given to me there would have been a recording policy in place. If something was reported to me I would immediately report that to QYL or the assistant head teacher, Alice Haney, because I'm not sure if there was a child protection role at the school. If there were I'd have gone to them.

Trusted Adult/Confidante

56. I don't think the children were aware of a trusted person that they could go to. There was general talk by us but you weren't assigned anyone. In state school there is a guidance department which is pastoral. This was the case during my entire teaching career in the state sector. My wife has taught at schools since 1983 and since 1986/87 she had a role in guidance. I think it may have begun post the strike in 1984, when things changed in the system and guidance was a huge element in the state system.
57. I'm not aware of children going to others and making a complaint or saying they had an issue. I didn't encounter boys coming to me saying they were being bullied very often. I think you'd be aware in the house if there was an issue that needed attention. You would just be aware and nip it in the bud. It was pretty infrequent in terms of the bullying side. It was there. You would have an incident maybe once or twice a term that you would deal with, but it wouldn't be anything terribly significant. It would be things where we would sit down with the pupil and find out what the issue was and it was always resolved. I can't remember specifics. There would have been a couple where it was a bit unrelenting, so they would have gone through QYL and he would have taken it to the parents. If there was anything more serious it would be more in the senior houses, Cunningham and Haig. I'd imagine there would be more reports of it in the senior houses.
58. If there was a significant issue QYL would have communicated it to parents or carers. Serious issues would be serious bullying, assault, racial abuse. Mobile phones would be just coming in, so before this the boys were kind of just cut off. They would only have an opportunity to call home or to a relative or friend from a payphone, but when mobiles came in they were able to phone home. They would

call home and the parent would be in touch to say 'whoever' was upset because someone said something. But QYL would have alerted parents and carers if there was an issue.

59. The level of complaint wasn't any more serious than I had experienced at state school. I suppose it was raw because there was no escape for the pupil. In a state school you're only there for that particular window during the day and there was a form of escape by going home or non-attendance, whereas in QVS you couldn't not attend, you were there, that was your home. So with the best will in the world of keeping an eye on someone, bullies can be clever and they could seek somebody out. So I don't think it was more prevalent, but it could be more focussed and a bit more distressing because there was no escape from what was your home and school life.

Abuse

60. I'm sure the school would have had a definition of abuse and I'm sure it would have said what is unacceptable. Just being kind to each other and to not be physical with each other and treat each other with respect. So there would have been something in place but how it was written out as a policy, I don't know. There would have been a staff definition of abuse and of what was acceptable. I'm just assuming this was the case.
61. In the eyes of the school what would constitute abuse would be a member of staff raising their voice at a child, shouting at them, hitting a child and anything above that really. That's what I imagine it would have been. It is in mine. Basically just the way you treat people in general. It's just the way you're brought up. I don't know if it was written down. I don't know why it would have to be spelled out, but I'm sure it would have been. I assume it was.
62. It was challenging for me if other staff raised their voice to children. I'm sure I raised the issue with QYL on a couple of occasions, when I'd come in for a takeover a bit early and there was someone yelling down the corridor. It's very tricky when they

had been there for a period of time and they have this seniority and I'm having to tell them that's not the way to behave. It was challenging. Then you have this child crying in the corridor, "Mr 'whoever' yelled at me and all I did was this", or you'd come in the morning and they've been upset all night because they've been told, "Whoever gets in in the morning, you'll be for it". They are the only things I was aware of and wasn't comfortable with. I didn't feel comfortable and it was challenging dealing with that.

63. I don't think what constitutes abuse was communicated to the staff. There would have been a policy I suppose. It's just something that would have been understood. I wouldn't have looked for it, I would just have expected it as being there. Don't abuse anyone and treat people with respect and as you'd want to be treated yourself.
64. It would have been communicated to me when I started. I would have raised it at the time, as you could have been vulnerable living there. I certainly raised that issue when they constructed a new boarding house for Trenchard and QVS became a co-ed school. The boarding house became co-ed and they were looking at getting senior girls to supervise as well and I raised that at the time as being questionable. I felt we were being left open to accusation, we were vulnerable because we were on duty on our own. So that was further down the line when we changed boarding houses.
65. I became acutely aware that there should be policies in place at that point. I did raise it that I was uncomfortable with the co-ed side of things. Initially there were three houses for boys and one for girls. Suddenly they were changing that to Trenchard House being for boys and girls. You would want another person on duty at the same time as you rather than being on your own in a house with thirty girls and thirty boys and senior girls as well.
66. I raised it with QYL [REDACTED] about us being vulnerable with the co-ed, that we could be open to accusation. I said we could be vulnerable here by introducing girls into a boarding house essentially run by two men. I can't recall having a meeting as housemaster/assistant housemaster/SMT or a child protection officer in the school

and saying, "Right, what's the best way forward with this and what are your feelings on this?". There was nothing formal that I can recollect.

67. The definition of abuse wouldn't have changed during my time at QVS. Abuse is abuse. What was expected of a teacher wouldn't have changed from when I arrived until when I left.

Child Protection Arrangements

68. In relation to child protection arrangements, I don't have a recollection of a written policy of how to behave with children. I'm assuming there was one. It would have been a glaring error not to have that kind of policy in place. I suppose it's an assumption that you would know and the expectation on how to behave.
69. I'm sure there would have been things in place in relation to the abuse of children. I'd have reported directly with QYL or Alice Haney, or Lynne Smith, who became deputy headmaster later on, but I never had to do that.
70. I suppose there was quite a bit of autonomy with staff disciplining children on the teaching side of things. They could issue detentions. If you were a duty member of staff during the day, if you felt something warranted a refusal of tuck or detention. So staff on a general level could issue basic discipline. Tuck, extra prep, isolation, no TV that night, bed early, those sort of things. I'd say there was discretion with staff on how to deal with disciplinary issues. If you knew there had been an argument over a petty thing, you'd maybe get those involved together, ask what it was about and get them to shake hands. If there was something more significant I would write it up in the diary. I don't know if that was policy, "A little issue there, seems to be resolved but please keep an eye on 'whoever'", and I'd discuss it with QYL. In terms of other staff, I don't know if they sat down with children.
71. There weren't child protection arrangements in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse to children by adults in school and in the boarding house. You would just have to be very careful not to be isolated with a pupil, try and have someone else around,

doors always open and try to do things in a common area. That would be a key thing. As I said, I raised it that we would be vulnerable when it became co-ed. If we were alone in the boarding house the gossipy nature of things, a little whisper about something and it becomes a lot larger. So I was pleased I stayed in a separate building but there were times when you were alone in the boarding house, in the morning and the late evening with senior girls and children. So it was something I raised and unfortunately it came to fruition.

External Monitoring

72. I'm sure we did have an inspection in relation to the educational side of things, which I think we came out of really quite well. I don't know if it involved the pastoral side of things too. It may or may not have been. I had the same inspector as I did at [REDACTED] High School. She was apparently quite fierce but she gave me glowing reports both times. They would have spoken to the children, a cohort from each year group. I'm hoping teachers weren't there so the pupils could speak freely. I can't recall sitting in on the inspectors while they spoke with the children.
73. The inspector would have spoken to me and you would have a debrief with the school. As a department I think we came out really quite well. I don't know if we would be named individually in that, but we'd been assessed and our department came out well.

Record-keeping

74. There were no other records, just normal report writing and carbon copies, but nothing else I recall. The only thing with the diary was that it was on the desk. It wasn't locked away, so anyone could have read it. QYL [REDACTED] would have taken that and recorded the information on some other system. I don't know how that was done.

75. I'd imagine that there were pupil files. Looking at the state system they had Pupil Profile Records, (PPR's). I would imagine there was something like that. I'm not aware of this though.
76. I would have thought that any pupil bullying incidents would have been put on file, as a history of that pupils' time at the school. I didn't ever see those files. I wasn't sure, it seemed to go into the ether somewhere. I'm sure there would have been a record keeping policy. Again, it's something that I don't recollect. I would have assumed there would be pupil files and staff files. There may have been a database but I didn't have that sort of access. I would have put things into the diary and spoke to QYL.

Investigations into abuse – Personal Involvement/ Reports of abuse & civil claims

77. I had no involvement in the investigation of abuse against children and no involvement in civil claims by former pupils in relation to historical abuse.

Police Investigations/Criminal Proceedings

78. I wasn't aware of any police investigations or criminal proceedings while I was at the school.

Specific alleged abusers

YXL

79. I knew YXL. I think he was and all the time I was at QVS YXL was there. He was the equivalent age to me, maybe slightly older. I think he was in House, which was for the S2 to S4 boys. He would have been in to supervise during the day and the housemaster would have taken over from him. I think that was his role there. He had no role in relation to me.

80. YXL was a nice chap. He was helpful with me. We would chat off and on. We were at different ends of the spectrum in relation to subjects we taught. In respect of sports, I coached [REDACTED] and YXL coached [REDACTED]. So we didn't really interact there at all.
81. I didn't know him very well, we were just colleagues and we would chat now and again in the staff room or out and about. If he was on duty in the dining room with me we would sit down and have a bit of a chat. Outwith work we didn't have a relationship.
82. I saw YXL with children when he was coaching at [REDACTED]. I would see him working with them. He was really positive, encouraging and supportive with the boys. There was a professional respect from them. He was respected and trusted. I didn't see him disciplining children. I knew he had a good classroom environment. I heard he ran a tight ship. The pupils knew he was a capable [REDACTED] and they respected him and I don't think there was much indiscipline there.
83. I did not see YXL abusing children. I only heard of his alleged involvement with a pupil from the anonymous letter, which stated he and I had a relationship with a senior girl at the school.

CKC [REDACTED]

84. I remember CKC [REDACTED]. He was at QVS when I arrived and was still there when I left. He was the SNR [REDACTED] to the academic side of the school. He was about ten to fifteen years older than me. He was one of the duty people in Trenchard House and he would do a day duty once a week or a fortnight.
85. As he was SNR [REDACTED] to the academic side, CKC [REDACTED] was involved with the Scottish Qualifications Authority, (SQA) and the boarding side was secondary to him I suppose. He did a bit of [REDACTED] coaching at the junior level, so he would get involved with sports and the boarding side. That's where I would interact with him.

86. CKC was part of the SMT on the academic side, so anything to do with the classroom would go through my head of department then to CKC. On the boarding side, again he'd report anything in the diary for anything that occurred during the day. I think he tried to put a different hat on for each role.
87. He was a nice affable guy. He always seemed to be on the go, as a SNR would be. He used to play guitar. He got involved in the social side of the school a lot. I think he embraced that kind of environment. He stayed in a separate accommodation like I did, so he obviously had his bit of space away.
88. Like YXL, I only knew CKC as a colleague on the academic side and the boarding side. He was always professional, there were never any concerns. Socially we didn't interact. We kept social and work separate. It was pretty intensive weeks, sixty hours sometimes and with having the little ones, you just needed a bit of time on your own. My wife was working full time as well latterly, so we had an au pair in our house. It was pretty challenging working there, so socialising just didn't happen.
89. I saw CKC with children and there was a respect there. He was a smiley, upbeat chap and quietly spoken. He always reminded me of Michael Palin, like a favourite uncle. He was just a guy you could trust. I think if you needed to speak to someone he would be the type you'd go to. I didn't witness anything untoward or questionable. I didn't see him disciplining children. They knew his position and respected him. I never heard him raising his voice or being out of control. I never saw or heard of him abusing children.
90. The teachers that helped out at Trenchard House were CKC, David Garden, I think he was head of science, and David Gilhooley, who was head of art. I can't think of anyone else at the moment.

Allegation of abuse

91. I can't remember the period, I think it was in my second year perhaps, Trenchard moved to a new boarding house and became co-ed. At that time I would have raised

my concerns with QYL and I'm sure Alice Haney. I'm sure I would have raised it with other members of staff in conversation in the staff room. As a male member of staff I felt vulnerable on my own with a group of boys. There may be a house matron around, but it was a pretty big building. In a way you felt open to potential allegations and certainly as a co-ed. My concern was that you could be accused of doing something with the boys and girls and when we found out senior girls were going to be there too that was a bit disturbing. I just felt we were vulnerable to accusation. It was quite a gossipy environment and there was jealousy between the girls and boys.

92. When the girls came down there seemed to be talk of a lot of jealousy with the senior boys, why they weren't getting to come down instead and the girls seemed to be getting preferential treatment. The girls hadn't been there as long, as it was a boys' school originally. So they just felt things were happening for girls and not them. There was a bit of animosity between the senior boys and girls at the school because of that. There was also the thought amongst the staff that someone may want to rock the boat and make an accusation.
93. There was a teaching block and at either side was the girls' and boys' senior blocks. They were separated by this teaching block and a playground sort of thing. There was no real interaction between the two and there was this physical separation between them. It was just a bit of a historic thing that the boys felt they should have a bit more privilege as it was a boys' school until then. I think the boys thought, it's a new boarding house and there hadn't been one for a number of years, so they should have been allocated the senior position there. That generated tension and jealousy because they thought they should be given seniority in the junior boarding house. You could sense that there was a bit unhappiness there between the pupils. It was quite a deep rooted unhappiness between them. And even with the girls that weren't selected to come down to Trenchard, some thought there was preferential treatment for some individuals. It was quite divisive, because it was seen as a kind of reward.

94. The new Trenchard still housed P7 and S1 pupils, but it was co-ed. The girls' corridor was on one side and the boys' on the other. There was also a couple of senior girls, who would be seventeen or eighteen years old. They would monitor the girls' bedtime. The boys had no senior boys on their side, we would monitor their bedtime. We couldn't go into the girls' side unless accompanied by someone.
95. I don't know if my concerns were dismissed, but where it went I don't know. On the state side we're told, never be in a room with a pupil on your own, if you find yourself in that situation then have the door open. That's where it harps back to because I was aware of that, so when I raised it that was the reason for it. It would have been with QYL [REDACTED] and/or Alice Haney. I'm sure they said we'll take that on board or something.
96. Eventually we got a deputy house mistress, Gail Edwards, and she lived in the boarding house. She may have been given the role after my concerns. They may have seen there was a vulnerability, but certainly having a female member of staff I thought was critical. We had the house matron but having a twenty-four hour presence, like QYL [REDACTED], was good, and someone who could speak to the girls. But she had time off too, she had her own life. So you were still vulnerable. I think ideally if you're a male member of staff, then if there was a female member of staff on, you could buddy up.
97. Everything began when I was made aware of a letter. I think it was to Brian Raine, the headmaster, I'm not sure. I was doing a [REDACTED] class with twenty pupils or something, a whole range of ages, and I got a call from Brian to say can I come and see him after the class. I went to his office, it was just him and I, no other witnesses present. He told me he had received this anonymous letter and asked what I could tell him about it. I couldn't believe this accusation had come through. So it was just him and I and he took a few notes. I had no-one with me, you know, union representative, another person. It was just him and me and his notes. From that meeting everything just escalated and that's where our world imploded.

98. I have no idea why this anonymous letter was sent. It was really distressing. But after ten years of teaching I thought I was respected, worked long hours, well liked, I hoped by pupils, staff and parents. I had testimonials from parents during this process that would indicate that. So I don't have any idea why that came out. As I said earlier, there was a culture of jealousy amongst the senior boys and girls so you don't know if someone had an axe to grind against someone and unfortunately I was involved in that. If someone's read into a situation and misinterpreted it completely. It's still distressing.
99. There was an accusation contained in the letter. My wife and I kept all the records until the summer of last year. We destroyed them all because we thought we can't carry them to the new house. I'm thinking I wish I had kept all the records. I can't remember the specifics but somebody thought that I was having a relationship with a pupil in the boarding house. I don't know why and where that stemmed from and why someone would accuse me of doing such a thing, having given all to the school and to have this said about me. I don't know why they would accuse me of something like that.
100. I can't recall the exact details of the complaint that was made, it was meant to be an inappropriate relationship with a senior girl. I can't remember how involved we were meant to have been. Again, going back to that jealousy thing, before we had an au pair, and we had this authorised by the SMT, we had girls babysitting at home because my wife [REDACTED] went back to work full-time. I don't know if that was viewed as a kind of preferential treatment.
101. The school was an environment where there was a lot of gossip. As I said, the SMT were aware two of the girls, or in fact, two of the boys would babysit our boys. They were never on their own, so that when we got home they always had someone to walk back with. It may have been viewed as a preferential thing.
102. When Brian raised the anonymous letter with me I denied everything that occurred. Obviously I asked who had raised this and was told it was anonymous. I was told there would be an investigation into the complaint. It's my understanding that a

school, certainly in the state system won't act on an anonymous note or letter to protect the member of staff and/or pupil. There was no doubt they interviewed the girl named in the letter, I think the interviewer's name was Elizabeth Harrison. I think I was suspended for a period, then I was back teaching.

103. I don't know if there was another anonymous letter or something but two years later it came back again and there was this big investigation and we had Ministry of Defence, (M.O.D.), involved. I was flown down to London, into Whitehall, the M.O.D. offices to get interviewed by someone. You just felt vilified and vulnerable and bullied. There was no Human Resource involvement, no support at all. It was just me and this big machine and my Education Institute of Scotland, (EIS), guy, who was completely out of his depth. We just thought this was ridiculous. We couldn't believe it. We were sitting in this huge investigation, meetings and huge files and lies, reports and conjecture and lies about my wife, who could verify things, at every turn. We didn't have anywhere to go really.
104. The first letter and investigation was in 2002 I think. It's such a blur, that whole period and the process starting up again. I seem to remember I was teaching again and involved in the school because we were in that environment. It was just dreadful because you have the gossip and you just felt you were tarnished. So it was a very uncomfortable period. It was a difficult environment to live, work and teach. It was really challenging.
105. It was about two and a half years later that it cropped up again and there was this huge investigation. There was huge media interest and there were leaks to the press. Dunblane of course was a really interesting place because of the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] CDQ [REDACTED] We had all the tabloids at our door asking for information and things were published. There was an article in the front page of [REDACTED] next to an image of [REDACTED] CDQ [REDACTED]. It was just terrible. And of course, in this close community, where our boys went to school locally as well, we felt like prisoners and literal prisoners within the school. You couldn't be yourself, there's no anonymity and of course everyone locally and in the school were reading these national newspapers and making up their own opinion. It

first came to light in 2002 and then it came around again in 2004. It's very blurry in relation to timelines.

106. I never believed the 2004 investigation would lead to the outcome and circumstances that it did. If this had been in the state system things would have been dealt with and you would have been represented and things would have gone through due process. Here we had the dual thing of the school and the M.O.D. You had this huge institution against me and I totally regret leaving the state sector now. I think they were far better regulated, whereas QVS seemed like they were a law unto themselves and they used the full force of that against me for some reason. I'm still bewildered by it.
107. Ultimately what happened in 2004 the whole procedure took place in some sort of cadet hall in the school grounds. So we would be going down in the morning for a trial in some room. Pupils would see you going down there and staff would see me going in and out.
108. Going to the M.O.D. offices in Whitehall with my union representative was for me to give my response to the allegations. I was flown down to London with my union rep and I was told they were pursuing this anonymous complaint. I was interviewed and flown back home again.
109. I can't remember who was at the trial in the cadet hall. I had a union representative and the school had a representative and the M.O.D. I think, and this huge folder of information. The girl had been interviewed. They had interviewed staff and pupils in an attempt to get evidence on me. We were just saying this is not true, it's inaccurate. There were things that were patently untrue and things that had gone to the press, local gossip, and things were made up. An example of this is that the school matron had said she saw girls underwear in my washing, but it was my wife's. Our washing machine had broken down and we'd used the Trenchard washing machine and from that she thought it was pupils' underwear.

110. The whole process was dreadful. We would be down in the morning to start at nine o'clock and walking through the playground, past Trenchard House. I'm sure it would be talked about once the morning session was over. People would teach in the morning then come out and speak about me in the afternoon. So we felt really vulnerable to conjecture and false accusation.
111. When I met Brian Raine in that one to one meeting at the beginning, which triggered everything from the anonymous letter, I should have had some sort of representation to verify what had been said and recorded as accurate. In hindsight I would have had someone present at that original meeting but I didn't do that.
112. The trial thing lasted over the course of a week perhaps. It may have been a couple of days but it felt like an eternity. Witnesses were called, members of staff, I don't know if pupils were called. The EIS person was my representative. Maybe a month or two later I tendered my resignation. We were waiting on the outcome and whatever that would have been we could maybe appeal, but we just lost all fight in us, and we couldn't control the media intrusion. We lived in a goldfish bowl in a community in Dunblane. [REDACTED] was at school and [REDACTED] was at nursery. We just needed to get out of there and that's ultimately what we did. If we'd had the resources, both emotional and financial, we would have carried on. So we thought we would accept an offer of some kind of payment and a reference and just start anew, which we did.
113. We moved out, secured a job and started anew. We rented a place down the road so the boys' schooling wasn't interrupted. At one point there were tens of thousands of pounds mentioned in terms of compensation, but eventually it was whittled down to a thousand pounds. We thought let's just take something and if we get a reference from this it's something at least. I wasn't aware that my leaving was put down to constructive dismissal. As far as I was aware I tendered my resignation.
114. You are just so raw and just looking for some support from the union. They directed it I suppose, but I thought if tendering my resignation brought an end to this process, then let's do that and start again. Three years of living with it, there was no escaping

it. There was no appreciation taken for health and wellbeing. I had great support from certain members of staff and parents, but nothing seemed to count in my favour. It just seemed to fall by the wayside against the might of the M.O.D. and the school. You could say in the end I lost faith in the process. It was such a lengthy process to clear my professional reputation. Following that process I went on to gain a position in a state school again, which seemed like a breath of fresh air. With procedures in place, you felt protected and I felt like I could do what I wanted to do in respect of teaching. It had all been a hugely damaging process.

115. It's still having repercussions now. We're in 2020 and that was in 2002, nearly twenty years on and that raw emotion is still there. Anxiety, stress, sleeplessness from the whole process from being told of the anonymous letter by Brian Raine. It just escalated from there. There was no inappropriate relationship. It was just dreadful and we weren't protected at all, as an individual or as a family. We were just really hung out to dry in a way. Vilified I think is the word. It was trial by media. All the staff and pupils would have seen this, which would have fuelled the gossip. Someone who thinks they have knowledge of it and didn't, and it just adds to it. It all goes back to what I had raised in the early days, we were most vulnerable potentially in a co-ed house, and I was proved right. Maybe I should have fought more to be more protected. We weren't protected and the false accusation is what has led to this.

Police Involvement

116. The police were involved and I was interviewed by them at one point. They asked if I'd had an inappropriate relationship with a pupil. To which I said of course, 'No'. I think they may have conducted something on their own and they referred it back to the school. They felt that it had been investigated. I was interviewed again two years later and they put it back to the school again. They felt comfortable about what they'd done and what I'd said and they didn't pursue things.
117. I can't recall the police findings being brought up at the trial. I'm sure they would have been in the file. I felt the police had believed me, they felt there was nothing to investigate so I thought that would be the end of the process there, but obviously it

wasn't. I'm sure that would have been part of the huge document and I'd think there should have been some weightings there, but no, it was just dismissed. They interviewed the girl in question and she said there hadn't been any inappropriate relationship. That's something I recall from the document.

118. There would have been discussion with my EIS representative and the school because I didn't have any face to face interaction with the school at that point. It would have been through the rep, so he would have spoken with the school's rep and part of the discussion there would be, what would be a good outcome here. We couldn't carry on if there was an appeal. So many months of the same thing. We weren't sure what the outcome was going to be at that time. It would have been looked at, was there an option that I could resign with a reference and then draw a line under it. That was brokered there. The reference came from Brian Raine I would imagine, a bland reference. I can't recall what it said. It was bland but nothing negative.

Leaving the school

119. The school was such a goldfish bowl. Eventually because of all that, there were huge stresses on us as a couple, as a family. The union weren't as effective as we were hoping they would be and we just thought we couldn't go on with it. We'd lived with this for three years almost at that point. I tendered my resignation. There was a lot of back and forth between their solicitors and the EIS solicitors. I got some form of payment, a thousand pounds, and some bland reference from the school and that was that. I was devastated, absolutely devastated.
120. I managed to secure a post at [REDACTED] and worked there for three years after that. When looking back at people leaking stuff to the press, and all the while I'm sticking to my word and I'd signed the Official Secrets Act and not relented and spoken a word to anyone. There's no-one, the EIS, no-one could have understood what we'd gone through as a family.

121. I left teaching in 2008. The reason for leaving teaching was that the GTC became aware of what had occurred at QVS and why I had left there. So someone had been in touch with the General Teaching Council to let them know that I had gone through some sort of process there. I got a letter from them to say they were going to investigate it now and then I was suspended from [REDACTED]. I wasn't suspended in 2007, at that point I think I was in [REDACTED] 2008. We just couldn't believe it. I'd been in another job for three years on the pastoral side and I'd been through the full disclosure and things and suddenly this came out of the blue. My head teacher and head of department were absolutely floored and they backed me to the hilt, but I thought, we just can't have this following us around forever more.
122. Every time I seemed to be going somewhere this is still following me. Because this is anonymous, they would have had to have gone to some public forum where press would have been and your name could have been published. We just thought, having gone through the media intrusion way back, we just couldn't do that. The boys were a bit older, we had re-established our life, albeit they were still at the same school and we couldn't put them or us through it and that was the reason for leaving. It was a challenging decision because I saw that as my vocation really. I stopped in [REDACTED] 2008 and that was it and I went into a different industry.
123. I think it all started again with a letter to me from the GTC to say they were going to investigate inappropriate behaviour that had been raised at QVS. So they would have been informed of this by someone from that school or some other body, to say I had been under this investigation, and three years later it's suddenly coming to me again. So I went to my head teacher and head of department to say I had received it and they were backing me to the hilt. They had been unaware of the previous investigation.
124. I am not aware of a hearing taking place and any charges being proven during my time at QVS and me being removed from the register by the GTC. There was an accusation of some sort of sexual relationship with a pupil on 'Grand Day' or round about that day. I don't know what year that was, and that was all part of the original allegation. I was suspended from [REDACTED] after the letter from the GTC and that's

when I tendered my resignation. I know that there was some sub-committee that I was going to be brought in front of to explain things, and I know that's where media would have been present. So we just said we didn't want to take part in that. So I knew in not attending, or not pursuing it and not defending myself that I would be removed from the register at that point. We would have but that's one of the reasons we pulled the plug on it, because of the intrusion and the financial and emotional accumin to try and navigate through that. We had EIS representation and they were willing us to fight it, but we just couldn't and that was the consequence. You realise if you don't attend then you'll be removed from the register. So the alleged inappropriate relationship would have been marked on that, and that's something that really sticks in the craw.

125. I got in touch a couple of years ago to see what the process is for rejoining and they again said you'll have to go through a process and then it would all be in a public forum and your name would be out there, so I said we couldn't do that, particularly as the boys are a lot older and far more aware. I have never been the subject of any other complaint.

Helping the Inquiry

126. I think transparency is absolutely key. To my vague recollection of policies and procedures, certainly in a boarding and pastoral environment, they would have to be key. They have to be key to protect pupils and staff. Everyone has to know exactly what their roles are and to be clear on what is appropriate behaviour and what isn't. Pupils should also know there is a point and a person they can speak with as a pupil, and not just one person because that might be who the issue is with, whether that's another pupil, a member of staff or support staff.
127. If you know the policies and procedures are there then the environment would really be quite positive. I don't know what it's like now. It's terrible that I spent so long in that school and I don't look at it at all, and I pass it often on the A9. You can see it and it gives me that nauseous feeling. You just hope that it has changed from that

time and everyone in there is protected from accusation if they are false. There should be support there. We had no support if there were false accusations.

128. There would have to be a huge learning process. If I could be part of that, if we could help others, I would welcome that. I don't think anyone would know the situation we have been through, the processes and how damaging it was. It's about the protection of individuals.
129. In the state system you are protected and there are layers and you know who to go to. When I was at QVS it was all vague. You were vulnerable in a lot of areas, even when coaching [REDACTED], driving round the countryside with all these young boys. It's the Human Resource and Occupational Health side of it. Making sure, as a member of staff, you have someone there you can speak to and discuss things. You would want to go into any environment as a member of staff and feel you were protected, that you weren't left as vulnerable as I was. You could keep going on about what could be learned.

Other Information

130. 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..... YNT [REDACTED]

Dated..... 25 November 2020