

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PDK [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My full name is PDK [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1982. I was born PDK [REDACTED] that was the name on my birth certificate, but I now use an alternative spelling for my surname. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum is PMM [REDACTED]. She was PMM [REDACTED] when I was young. My real dad, [REDACTED] left before I was born. I did take on my stepdad, [REDACTED]'s name for a time when I was young, so I was also known as PDK [REDACTED] but that was only for a short time when I was in care.
3. I am the youngest of the four children my mum has. The oldest is my sister [REDACTED] who was born in 1976, then there's my brother [REDACTED] who was born in 1978. They both have the same dad, [REDACTED] and use the surname [REDACTED]. Then there's [REDACTED] who was born in 1981 and me. [REDACTED] and I have the same dad, [REDACTED]. We did both use the surname [REDACTED] when we were in care.
4. I was born and brought up in Dundee but my mum did move about quite a bit when I was young. [REDACTED] my stepdad was a drug addict and a violent man. There was always violence in the family home and it was always perpetrated by him. He used to physically abuse my mum all the time but he also abused us. He used to put hash in my milk when I was a baby, in an attempt to get me to stop crying. He also used to try and drown me in the bath as an infant. He would hold me under the water. It was

possibly as a result of that, that I developed epilepsy. I was diagnosed with epilepsy as a small child, my mum would know more about that.

5. My mum was with [REDACTED] for about twelve years and the abuse continued throughout that whole time. Whenever we were home, between care homes or the foster care placements, [REDACTED] would be violent towards us and to my mum and he was always taking drugs. The violence towards my mum was never ending.
6. As a result of all the abuse, and his involvement in drugs, the police and social work got involved and that was why all four of us ended up in care. One day social workers came to the house and took all four of us away.
7. There must have been some court process but I don't know anything about that. I just know that the first place we were put in care was Colonsay House in Perth. I also know, from my records, that Dundee City Council Social Work Department dealt with us. We were placed in care at Colonsay House, Perth on [REDACTED] 1985.
8. I know a police officer, WPC Linda O'Donnell, and a social worker called Margaret were both instrumental in having all of us removed from that family situation and placed in safety.

Colonsay House, Perth

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

9. I was three years old when I went to Colonsay [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

10. [REDACTED]

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Colonsay House

33. We did leave Colonsay for a weekend in foster care in Dundee but there was an incident and we returned to Colonsay. I'm not sure exactly when that was. We then left for good in 1987 and went to Duncan Place Children's Home in Kirkton, Dundee.

Dundee social work found that placement for us as it was closer to mum, in Dundee, and easier for visiting.

Foster Care, Dundee

34. When we left Colonsay for that weekend in foster care we stayed with a family in a place called Douglas in Dundee. I think it was only for one weekend and we were then returned to Colonsay House.

Abuse in Foster Care, Dundee

35. There was an incident in foster care and I called the woman a 'bampot.' She washed my mouth out with soap using a nail brush. It was a wooden nail brush with bristles like a road sweepers brush, and my tongue was bleeding. It was agony.
36. My mum went mental with the social work about that and that's why we were taken out of that foster care placement so quickly and returned to Colonsay House. My mum knows more about all of that as I was only three or four and I don't remember much about it.

Duncan Place Children's Home, Kirkton, Dundee

37. From my records I know we went to Duncan Place in 1987 and stayed there for about nine months. That may have been because the social work had made a place available that was closer to home for us all. I would have been four or five. I don't have many memories of Duncan Place either,

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - I was just moved on to other children's homes.

Seamab House, Rumbling Bridge, Kinross-shire

General

41. From my records I know I went to Seamab in 1989 so I was six or seven. I was there for over a year. There was a big, long corridor with toilets at one end and Mr PDV who was SNR at Seamab, had a room just off that corridor. My room was next to Mr PDV's room, he was a horrible man. I shared my room with a boy called who was the same age as me. He became my first ever best friend.
42. I remember they had square carpet tiles on the floor that were very itchy on your skin. We sat on them while we were watching television. I remember sitting on them and watching Neighbours for the first time. I think it first came on around 1986.
43. I remember that we played a lot with the other kids at Seamab, that was more or less the regime there. We did a lot of running about and cycling. The army came and built this assault course for all the kids and we played on that all the time.

Mealtimes/Food

44. I remember being made to eat seaweed at Seamab. I didn't know it was something you could eat. I thought it was being picked off the beach and we were being made to eat it as a punishment.
45. I was made to eat beetroot as well. It was beetroot and seaweed almost every other day. It was horrible food at Seamab, we had pickles and this soup with these leaves in it. It was just all the wrong foods to give to six year olds. We weren't allowed to leave the table until we had eaten all the food on our plate. We would also get the same plate of food back in front of us the next day if we didn't eat our food.
46. Sometimes, if we didn't eat the food that was put in front of us, we would be taken out and made to run up the hills, that was a punishment. That was the punishment all the time for everything at Seamab.

Trips and holidays

47. I remember going on holiday to a place called Carrick when we were at Seamab. It was by the sea but I didn't like it very much. It was cold, rainy, and noisy, I didn't like noise.

Schooling

48. There was a school on site at Seamab. I remember we sat at these old square school desks that you could open up and keep things in. They had a hole for an ink pot on the top.
49. I vaguely remember a Margaret Anderson and a guy called Ted Noble, and his wife. They were all teachers at the school and they all lived close by. They were all lovely people. Ted used to collect fancy rocks and stones and things like that.
50. I also remember that we had school classes outside in the car park during the summertime.

Family contact

51. Mum visited me a few times when I was at Seamab. I got to stay some weekends at home in Dundee as well. I remember [REDACTED] and mum taking me back to Seamab from Dundee on one occasion, it would have been a Sunday night or Monday morning. I was in the Jaguar, [REDACTED] always drove a Jaguar, and I had locked myself in with the keys because I didn't want to go back to Seamab. I wouldn't get out the car because I knew I was going to be punished for something. I did eventually come out and then, after my mum and [REDACTED] left, I was punished by Mr PDV [REDACTED]. He was waiting for his moment after they left to punish me and he beat me up for that. He pulled my breeks and pants down and skelped my backside. He had massive hands and would hit both cheeks with one smack of his hand. It was quite frenzied, about five or six smacks. It left red marks and it was quite sore.

Abuse at Seamab House

52. I do remember a Mr PDV [REDACTED] from Seamab. For misbehaving I used to get beaten up by him, everyone did. He would put you over his knee and smack your bare backside with his hand. It was quite hard and it was painful, just as I've described.
53. I remember he would come for me, whether I was in the classroom, eating lunch or playing with other kids, it didn't matter. It could be for the slightest misdemeanour he would come and get you and punish you.
54. He also used to get changed in front of me. It was in a room in Seamab, I can't remember where. He wore a t-shirt and these blue shorts, with a single line down each leg, I remember that. He also wore these hill walking boots. He would take me away in his car, just the two of us, and I had no idea where we were going the first time. He would drive to the Glenochil Hills then drag me up the hills to go running.
55. Those runs were never ending, he was super fit and he would have me running up and down the hills. He would also grab me and physically launch me over walls and ditches and little trench things. I once landed on the ground and hit my head on a rock.

I've still got the scar from that. I remember I was screaming and crying and just felt helpless and hopeless, isolated, alone, frightened and terrified.

56. He would also lie on top of me and shout in my face while punching me in the ribs. After all that we would run back down to his car and he would drive back to Seamab. He did that with me nearly every other day. I didn't ever see him do that with any other boys. I firmly believe he only did it with me and I have no idea why he picked on me. I hated that and I've never been hillwalking since. I don't even go out into the countryside because of that.
57. I remember seeing other kids in Seamab being abused as well. I do remember this girl called [REDACTED], which wasn't her real name, who was being abused in many different ways. That was probably by Mr PDV [REDACTED], who I think may have been the only male member of staff. I don't remember any others but there probably were.
58. I did have sexual contact with [REDACTED] but I wouldn't say it was sexual abuse, not looking back now. I think I experienced the abuse that was happening to her. I think the things she did to me were indicative of what someone who had been abused would do. I didn't actually see her being abused so I can't say that for sure but they weren't things a seven year old would know anything about. We were both about seven at that time. She was snogging me and touching me in different places and seemed to know what she was doing. Looking at it now as an adult, a child of that age shouldn't know how to do or perform those things.
59. The impact of the abuse on [REDACTED] seemed to be that she was acting out what she was being subjected to. The abuse in her life was so ingrained and entrenched that it was probably normal for her to do these things. They weren't the things a seven year old should know anything about.
60. My friend [REDACTED] sent me a birthday card when I was fifteen and staying at Balnacraig School. That was the last contact I had with him. With the card there was a cassette tape. On that tape he confessed to me about all the abuse he suffered when he was at Seamab. He asked me to destroy the tape, which I did, and I've done my

best to forget about that since. He described sexual abuse that he had been the victim of, I don't want to describe that any further.

61. I also remember getting drawing pins stuck in me at Seamab. That was by some of the other kids.

Leaving Seamab House

62. We did leave Seamab for a few months during our time there. I'm not sure exactly when that was but we ended up returning. We went home but my stepdad [REDACTED] never changed, he was always violent and was always on drugs of some kind.
63. Eventually mum jumped in the car and took me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to my uncle [REDACTED]'s house in Newton-le-Willows in Merseyside. We stayed there for a few months. I was in a school and quite enjoyed it down there. I wouldn't have minded living down there but mum got homesick and decided she wanted to come back.
64. We came back home, and there was all the abuse again. It was never ending other than when we were with Uncle [REDACTED]. He never laid a finger on us.
65. The four of us then ended up back in Seamab for a while. We left Seamab for the last time in 1990. We went home after that and it was between then and going to Argyll Street in Brechin in 1994 that I was in foster care with two different families.

Foster Care placements in Arbroath

General

66. I vaguely remember the first family I stayed with, I think their name was [REDACTED] and they lived in Arbroath. They were very nice but I didn't stay with them for very long.

67. I then stayed with another family just outside Arbroath, I think their name was [REDACTED] or something like that, but I can't really remember. They were nice as well but that didn't last very long either. I was about twelve or thirteen when I stayed with both families. There wasn't any abuse with either family.
68. I never used to go to school, I hated it, that's why I was moved from home to the foster care placements and then into Argyll Street.
69. I do remember going to some Children's Panels when I was in Arbroath, they were in East Abbey Street, that's all I remember. I was very young and I don't remember what happened at any of them. I don't remember any other Children's Panels or social work intervention, but there may have been.

Argyll Street, Brechin

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

70. From my records I can see I went to Argyll Street in 1994, when I was twelve or thirteen and I stayed there for about a year.

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77. I was christened as a baby, as a Catholic, and went to St. Vincent's primary school in Dundee, for a very short time after Seamab but I never learnt anything about religion. I never went to school, I hated it and never wanted to learn. I've only ever wanted to learn what I wanted to learn, the university of life taught me a lot.

Balnacraig, Perth

General

78. From my records I can see I went to Balnacraig School in Perth in 1996. I stayed there for about two years and left in [REDACTED] 1998 when I turned sixteen.

79. I'm not entirely sure there was any abuse at Balnacraig School, it certainly never happened to me when I was staying there. It maybe happened to other people, I don't know.
80. KRK [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] at Balnacraig. He was quite strict and could be verbally violent. I do remember that he once physically hit somebody but then he curled up into a little ball and started to cry about it. I think he realised what he'd done and that he could have lost his job and gone to prison. He never did that again. I don't know who he hit.
81. KRK [REDACTED] thing was just shouting at the top of his voice all the time and I hated loud noises. My mum is convinced I may have autism because of the way I acted as a child. I have a good memory, I don't like loud noises and I'm constantly washing my hands.
82. I do remember a really nice member of staff at Balnacraig called GHF [REDACTED]. She was an older woman with white hair. She was strict, funny, understanding and just really friendly. She was a church person and was good at talking to people and giving them advice.
83. I also remember going to Italy when I was at Balnacraig. It was a skiing holiday in Aosta Valley in Pila at the very north of Italy. That's a wonderful memory for me as the place was so beautiful, it was like something I'd never experienced before, it was just amazing.
84. Just after I had left Balnacraig one of the staff members there, PCW [REDACTED], gave me a telephone call and told me he stayed around the corner from where I was staying in Dundee. He invited me round to visit, so I went to see him. I remember his house was in [REDACTED] right next to the [REDACTED].
85. When I was there he put on this gay porn DVD, which was quite extreme. He was drinking cans of lager and asked me if I wanted a drink but I said no. I didn't feel comfortable, so I just left. That was about it, he didn't try to do anything to me. I think

I was too young to watch anything like that. I didn't ever see him again. I did hear, sometime later, that he had a heart attack and died while walking up the stairs into his house.

Reporting of abuse when in care

86. I have had a lot of bad experiences and I've always felt that if I told social workers or anyone about those experiences I just wouldn't have been believed.

Life after being in care

87. When I left Balnacraig I went to Dundee and stayed with a friend who was also sixteen. My first job was as an apprentice engineer. I lasted a week as I got an injury and got the sack.
88. I tried to join the army but I've got a squint in my right eye so I didn't pass my medical for that. I have gone on to have quite a few jobs though, over fifty since I was sixteen. That could sound quite bad but I like trying and learning new things, all the time. Most of the jobs were bar and nightclub work and I've really enjoyed it. I liked serving customers and meeting people. I've always been involved in catering and I've loved it.
89. I've also managed to get some education. I learned TEFL, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and I did that for a while.

Impact

90. Secondary Institutions - to be published later I also don't like it when people raise their voice in my face. I've hit people for doing that, my ex-wife, and I'm sorry for that but it's one of the things, it triggers me and puts me in a place of fear. It's something I can't explain, it's a proper crippling fear, and I just have to lash out and

get it away from me or run away or go away. That's what I've had to do in relationships, just get away from it all.

91. I took the path of domestic abuse in my life. Although it didn't manifest itself until 2005 when I hit my very first girlfriend. We were due to be getting married and we had a son together. I was working in Arbroath at the time and I found out she was an escort and had been having sexual relationships with other men. I assaulted her and was arrested and charged by the police. We didn't get married, I left and ended up in a homeless unit and my son was taken off me. She signed my son up for adoption after that and although I fought for custody, I lost and I've never seen my son since.
92. Then in 2008 I got involved in another relationship and I lifted my hand to her as well. I couldn't stop hitting her and I didn't know why I was doing it. That was also dealt with by the police and that's why I'm in prison now. I was abusive and I didn't know why.
93. I didn't know why I was doing what I was doing. Nobody had ever shown me or taught me how to deal with emotions when you feel certain things. There is a possibility that a lot of that could have come from being in care and the lack of experience I have had with relationships. There is a lot of emotion when you're in a relationship and I just never knew how to deal with any of those emotions.
94. I'd never felt love before. When people came to me and cuddled me or tried to become intimate I was shoving them away to begin with. I've never been somebody who likes all that affection. In theory it sounds nice and romantic and cosy, but it's all a bit strange to me. I would like to be different and be a person that has all that to offer, and I probably have the potential now that I've done the group therapy and learned about each of the emotions I was going through. We've gone through each of the emotions that triggered me or set me off, and I've learned how to deal with each of those emotions when I experience them. I'm much more chilled out and calm now.
95. As a result of the group therapy, I have to attend, there have been triggers for me and in the last year or so, I've had to deal with flashbacks, nightmares and night terrors. I've been sleepwalking and sleep eating; I've woken up in the middle of the night

choking on biscuits and things. I've also been sleep phoning people, dialling unrecognised numbers on my phone in my sleep.

96. I never sleep well at night so I'm always tired through the day, I sleep three times a day. Nighttime scares me. I have to make sure my kettle is filled when I go to bed as I've woken up in the morning and it's been warm. I've obviously switched it on in my sleep and I don't remember that at all.
97. I love being on my own. I enjoy peace and quiet and isolation, I've always been like that. I love it to this day, being on my own with my own thoughts. I love to write, I'm writing a book just now and I've written about four short stories. One is to be published in a magazine and I've also received a platinum award for a poem I wrote.
98. My sister [REDACTED] doesn't talk to anybody in the family now. I've not spoken to her for two and a half years. She applied for her data protection request and after reading it she's never spoken to anyone in the family again.

Treatment/support

99. I've never received or even been offered any counselling. I believe it's as a result of that, that I find myself in prison today. I am here today for domestic abuse. I needed counselling for that and didn't get it, but there are other things, from my childhood, from when I was being abused in care, all things I needed counselling for, yet I never received any at all.
100. I have done group therapy in prison now and that's helped me realise that when I went into my second relationships, I had unresolved issues with jealousy, possessiveness and controlling behaviour, from the first relationship. Eventually it manifested itself through violence.
101. An issue I have had at the groups is that I've had to sit and listen to a paedophile speaking about what he's done to his son. That triggered things for me and within the first week of group sessions I referred myself to the mental health team. That was in

February 2023, and it's documented that I referred myself for counselling. Up until now nothing has been done about that, I haven't received any counselling. I have registered a complaint about that.

102. I am on an Order of Lifetime Restriction (OLR) so I have to go to and complete the group sessions or I will never get out into the community. I have to show a pattern of stability before I can be trusted back into the community. I have to show over a period of time that I'm not a problem. I have all these hoops to jump through and they're difficult.
103. It has been good and I have changed but it's very difficult sitting listening to these things that trigger me and it doesn't help that the staff taking these groups have absolutely no experience. Even the psychologists are trainees with no experience. They should be finding out more about the people that are on the group. If it's someone that's been physically, sexually and emotionally abused as a child then don't put them in the room with paedophiles who are talking about what they've done with little boys, because that's going to be a trigger. It's been a trigger with me.
104. The group sessions I go to have remained the same for the past twelve years but have changed name at least five times. They've done surveys on it and it's known that the therapy isn't effective so they change the name so they can renew the government licence. It's been called a construct programme, self-change, moving forward to change, making changes; but it's always remained the same throughout, it's just changed its name.

Reporting of Abuse

105. I've not spoken about my time in care or anything that happened to me when I was in care to anybody. It was someone who is in prison with me here and has spoken to the Inquiry that told me about it and gave me details. I had seen the Inquiry on the news but had never considered getting touch and providing a statement.

Records

106. We were covered by both Dundee and Angus Council social work departments when we were in care. I applied for my records about three years ago and I was provided with them by Dundee City Council, but Angus Council sent me a letter saying they were sorry but they had lost part of my files. I don't know what I can do about that.
107. I have been through all the records that were sent to me and I ended up shredding a lot because they were so upsetting. I know I shouldn't have done that but I didn't know about the Inquiry at the time. I would be happy to give the Inquiry access to whatever documents they want from the ones I still have.
108. There are sections that have been redacted from my records so I don't know what they are about. There is one that looks like quite a serious incident but none of our family know anything about that and as it's been redacted we have no idea what that is.

Lessons to be Learned

109. I don't know what it's like these days with people getting jobs in care homes but there does need to be proper disclosure when people apply for jobs. It needs to go back into the life of the person applying for a job. It needs to look at how they were treated as a child, because I have found out in prison that a lot of people who were sexually abused as a child, go on to do the same as adults, to other children. It's a continuous cycle.
110. The application process needs to be quite stringent and detailed and there should always be a period of probation. Each person should also be given a keyworker who is completely independent, who is allowed to monitor the progress of the member of staff, to ensure they are an effective member of staff, who can provide an effective level of care.
111. The early years of a child's life are the most important and if you get that right, hopefully the child will go on to make good progress and become something of value in life.

Children need to be encouraged to be creative. If they are abused as children and have long periods of instability they could end up like myself, in prison.

112. I'm not sure taking children out of the family home is always the best thing for the children. The social workers in Dundee thought there were problems in our family home and taking the children out of that home was the answer to those problems. There was violence in our home but it wasn't all the time and we were actually treated better at home than we ever were in children's homes.
113. CCTV should also be a thing in all children's homes wherever possible. If anything should happen there should be complete transparency for the kids, no one should be afraid to tell someone about any kind of abuse. The staff at children's homes should also have the kindness within their hearts not to be hurtful towards the people they are entrusted to look after.
114. I feel Dundee City Council could have done a lot more. They had too relaxed an approach to things. Our stepdad was beating us, hitting us with a belt and giving us cigarette burns, yet nothing was getting done about it. That's all recorded in my records.

Hopes for the Inquiry

115. I don't know a great deal about the outcome of these kind of Inquiries, but in my mind the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is an agency or body that looks at abuse that happened in care settings in Scotland. You build up a lot of evidence to get a picture and story of what happened in all these places and then a judge looks at it all and decides what can be learned from all the mistakes that were made in the past. I hope that can happen and things are learned.

Other information

116. 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.

PDK

Signed.....

Dated.. 15-01-2025