

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LUS

Support person present: No.

1. My name is LUS. My date of birth is 1937. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I began working life as a Work Study Engineer. I changed to teaching in the early '60's. I worked for Dundee Education Authority for several years and then moved to Fife. In Fife I worked in Kennoway, Methil, Buckhaven High School within the Pupil Support Unit and then The Department of Child and Family Psychiatry, Strathdon Hospital and finally Ovenstone Residential school.

Qualifications/Training

3. My qualifications are MA, Med, MBA, Dip Ed, Dip Spec Ed and Dip SEBD (Social, Emotional, Behavioural Disorders).

Ovenstone Residential School, Fife

4. The school was in Pitenween in Fife. It catered for SEBD children from Fife mainstream schools.

5. My first impression of the school was that it was regimented and old fashioned.

Culture

6. I would say the culture was regimented and oppressive.
7. The relationship between staff and children was formal and strict.

My role and recruitment at Ovenstone Residential school

8. I was employed SNR [REDACTED] at the school from 198 [REDACTED] to 199 [REDACTED]. My role was all of the responsibilities of a residential school SNR [REDACTED]
9. The role came about after I was told by the Director of Education that he was transferring me from The Department of Child and Family Psychiatry to the school with no warning and he told me I had a six-month probation.
10. My line manager, while I was at the school, was [REDACTED]. I was required to report verbally and by way of a letter to him. I was also requested to keep a log of progress.
11. I was provided with no training for the role.
12. In terms of operating autonomously, I do not believe I was autonomous. I kept in close touch with psychological services and the [REDACTED]
13. In my role I was involved fully with the day to day running of the school. I also had interaction with the children through a morning assembly and a p.m. community meeting (like the 'heartbeat' of the school) and in many other ways.

14. I balanced the reputation of the school and the wellbeing of the children by liaison with the local community and various agencies linked to the school.

Personal Influence

15. I held regular staff meetings with my staff including daily community meetings at the end of the school day and monthly Interdisciplinary Meetings where we discussed our children. I also liaised with them during In-service days.
16. In terms of personally ensuring, so far as possible, that no child experienced ill treatment or abuse while at the institution, I encouraged staff to report to me anything untoward.
17. While I was SNR [REDACTED] I was able to gradually change the authoritarian ethos of the school to a more relaxed approach, i.e. the punitive, closed regime to a more open, tolerant, therapeutic approach which was more democratic and where all problems were brought into the open and resolved by discussion, where attending school was fun and enjoyable.

Policy

18. While I was SNR [REDACTED] at the school, I had responsibility for five-day residential care and liaised regularly with seniors and juniors in that sector.
19. I also had involvement in policy, following the recruitment of new staff, who were recruited to replace staff who were used to the old way of approaching childcare. This period lasted about eighteen months to two years as the Director was reluctant to move the older staff. All staff were recruited and appointed by the Department of Education.
20. It was also around this time, early 1983, that corporal punishment was banned in line with social and professional mores. A more relaxed, friendly and open environment was encouraged.

Strategic planning

21. I had no involvement with strategic planning, this was the preserve of Fife Education Authority.
22. As a school we tried to keep abreast of changing approaches to childcare through our regular staff meetings in service meetings and such like. [REDACTED] of the Association of child psychologists and psychiatrists, I was at the cutting edge.
23. The potential for abuse did feature in the school's strategic approach in that we abolished corporal punishment three years in advance of law. That said in all of the strategic planning we followed Fife council guidelines.

Structure and Recruitment of staff

24. Staffing at the school consisted of the Headteacher, Depute Head, Senior care staff, domestic staff, teachers and house parents. The appointment of a school hierarchy did not occur until at least 1983.
25. I directly line managed SNR [REDACTED] and Senior care staff.
26. I was not directly involved in recruitment of staff to the school, it was Fife Education Authority who allocated staff to vacant positions. They did however usually discuss their decisions with me, but not always. Because I was not involved directly with recruitment, I do not know what the policies were on recruitment.
27. In general, our staff had come from previous general teaching roles. They came from mainstream or behaviour units if in teaching. Childcare staff had usually worked with children before, but not always. They came from a diverse background but often from positions relating to childcare for instance teaching support or child organisations. Most had little or no formal training.

28. We did not have volunteers at the school.
29. I had no involvement with obtaining references for staff coming to work at the school, this was handled by Fife Education Authority.

Training

30. I was involved in training by training staff on the job. I did this through in-service training, arranging visiting professionals, ACCP and Psychology service and DCFP professionals.
31. There were times, especially in my early days SNR and for a period of about two years or more when I felt staffing was inadequate. It was during the change from an autocratic regime to a more democratic, child centred one. I also would say that access to training thirty and forty years ago was limited. Social, emotional, and behavioural disorders work was also not popular.

Supervision / appraisal / evaluation

32. I was involved in supervision and appraisal of staff. I followed the Fife scheme where staff were appraised once per term. In addition, regular face to face meetings took place with myself and staff where I would give feedback on performance and vice-versa.

Children

33. Children were placed at the school by Fife Education and Psychology services. I am unsure as to what assessments were made of a child before being placed with us.
34. We took approximately twenty children at the school. In the early stages we had about eight girls but gradually we moved to males only. The age range of the children was ten to thirteen years old.

35. There was no set time a child would stay with us. As we evolved as a school, the stays got shorter. There were various programmes of reintegration into mainstream school including local primary experience, part time attendance at a local school or attendance at an onsite adjustment unit.
36. Our ratio of staff to children was one staff to two children, latterly and approximately.
37. The children slept in dormitories, we had two dorms and there were approximately eight children in each.
38. The children were fed good wholesome home cooked food by our cook. The children were also provided with an alternative if they didn't like something. There was no pressure on children around food.
39. The children had a shower each day.
40. Leisure time at the school involved playing in the playground, at the adventure complex, playing football on the football pitch and they could also play general games. Sometimes the children would be taken on trips in the school minibus to the swimming pool, Scouts, interesting places for example a safari park, canoeing, hill-walking, horse-riding, lifeboats, et cetera.
41. The children were schooled in a normal classroom.
42. If there was a health issue with a child, they would be seen by the school nurse or if required be taken to the local Doctor.

Living Arrangements

43. I lived in my own house in St Andrews while I was SNR at the school. I was on call if needed.

44. Care staff lived in a bedroom adjacent to the children's dormitories. They were responsible for the residential areas overnight [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] I was too.
45. Access to dormitories was given to care staff, occasionally teachers and me.

Discipline and Punishment

46. SNR [REDACTED] I was responsible for the good order and smooth running of the school and the safety and welfare of its children and staff. Discipline was discussed at the daily community meeting and regular staff meetings and our discussions were very much centred and heavily weighted to positivity.
47. I do not recall if there was a specific policy or code of conduct around punishment and discipline. The type of behaviour that resulted in punishment was dangerous behaviour and aggression towards others.
48. Corporal punishment was permitted for some time during my time at the school, I was not an advocate but had to employ it during transition. Corporal punishment was always outside garments, never on the bare posterior. It was always minimal and recorded by the secretary. It was a restrained and very limited option when I arrived, and I always gave the choice of an alternative task. Use of corporal punishment was recorded in detail in the school logbook. The entry was witnessed and then sent to the Education department. It was [REDACTED] who was permitted to use corporal punishment at the school.
49. Other forms of punishment were administered by teachers, for example writing exercises. Ultimately there was a line of communication [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] dealt with the most serious cases that might involve say temporary suspension.

50. The form of discipline generally used would be talking to a child about the issue.
51. If children were physically disciplined, all details would be written in the school logbook and after that discussed at a multi-disciplinary meeting of all external professionals.
52. In addition, the secretary kept the details of punishments and sent them to Fife Education headquarters. The purpose of recording and sending details to headquarters was because I had initially agreed with the Director of Education and principal psychologist that [REDACTED] I should administer discipline and that it should be recorded and sent to headquarters with a copy sent to the principal psychologist.
53. Some staff at that time were suspected of using abusing punishment so they were not allowed to punish in any way but to refer to SNR [REDACTED]

Restraint

54. Restraint was used at the school. It was generally used when a child was liable to hurt either him/herself or others. The child would then be held safely. I personally do not recall restraining a child.
55. I do not recall the training that was given to staff around restraint, but it was provided in-service and out-service. The general guidance was the restraint had to be minimal and not injurious to the child. I believe the restraints became more professional after training.
56. I never saw excessive restraint of children at the school.
57. Children were never placed in a room alone, that was expressly forbidden at the school, although it was a part of the previous regime to mine.

Concerns about the school

58. I am only aware of the school being subject of concerns on one occasion. It was an incident where a child was placed in a locked cupboard alone. When I became aware of this, I contacted the Director of Education to come and remove the member of staff involved.
59. Parents were made aware of such concerns about the school immediately by telephone or by way of monthly progress multi disciplinary meetings or sometimes by letter. Parents and social workers were expected to attend these meetings as a face-to-face review of child progress.

Problems at the school

60. In the early days SNR I did have some concerns about the school in some areas and took my concerns to the Director of Education and principal psychologist. I had meetings with both of them around those concerns.
61. I found the response exceedingly slow in certain matters including the issue of undesirable staff. I had to threaten resignation in order to have leading troublemakers Alexander, Eddington, GBB and Shaw removed.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

62. If a child in the school, or another person on their behalf, wanted to make a complaint or report a concern about the school then it would be done through that child's parent. They would report it directly to the school or through the child's social worker where it would be progressed through a multi-disciplinary meeting. This process was used on occasion, but I am unable to recall the frequency.

63. If a complaint was received then the details of the complaint would be contained in the multi disciplinary meeting minutes which were circulated to staff, parents, professionals, Social work and the Director of Education.
64. The main way for staff to raise concerns was through our regular multi-disciplinary meetings. Also, my door was always open, and all staff were aware that direct communication to/with the Director of Education was open.
65. I personally was not aware of any complaints of abuse.

Trusted adult/confidante

66. A child could speak to their parents, social worker, educational psychologist on site, or allocated member of care staff if they had any issue they wanted to raise. I know this practice was used as I recall it being used. I do not however recollect any specific episodes.
67. This process did not change substantially over time.

External Monitoring

68. I never had Inspectors visit the school while I was SNR

Record Keeping

69. There was no record keeping that I was aware of when I first started at the school.
70. Logbooks started being used for all notable school incidents, but I do not recall when that was. I think it was from my start at the school.

Abuse

71. The definition of abuse at the school included imprisonment, forced feeding, physical assault, sexual impropriety, educational intolerance or ignorance. These things were spelt out when I started and changed when I [REDACTED] I outlined to staff what abuse was at staff and in-service meetings. Arranged fights and punishment for bed-wetting were abolished, as was forced feeding, and imprisonment.
72. I did see abuse once at the school where a child was imprisoned in a locked laundry cupboard. On that occasion I telephoned the Director of Education and asked for the staff member to be removed permanently. At this stage I issued a formal warning to all staff. This is recorded in the logbook.
73. I do not recall any specific episodes of a child reporting abuse to me.
74. Looking back, I can be confident that if any child was being abused or ill treated it would have come to light at or around the time it was occurring. It may be possible that abuse went undetected, but I think highly unlikely.

Child protection arrangements

75. Child protection was discussed on a regular basis at in-service and out-service training, staff meetings and daily community meetings.
76. The protection measures in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse were that senior staff monitored ordinary staff work with children. Regular visits were made by external professionals to children at the school. There was an external psychologist in school at all times to whom children could discuss problems with. I believe this appeared to work.
77. Looking back, improvements are always possible.

Allegations of abuse

78. There is currently a police investigation ongoing in relation to an allegation of abuse involving me. The allegation was not made at the time it has been made subsequently. I was interviewed by Police under caution on 6th January 2024 at Kirkcaldy police station.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

79. A member of staff was dismissed following abuse. It was an incident reported to me about false imprisonment of a child which I reported to the Director of Education.

Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

80. I was a witness for the prosecution at the trial of LUR [REDACTED]. I and my wife were interrogated at length by police at home and I appeared in the witness box against him. I was never party to the details of what he was alleged to have done. I still do not know, I have only heard unreliable rumours and tittle-tattle.

Convicted Abusers

81. I do know of a person who worked at the school who was subsequently convicted of abuse at the school. I was informed about this by the Director of Education over the telephone. I had no personal dealings with this person at the school. He left prior to my arrival.
82. I have no idea of that person's qualifications as that was not my area of responsibility.

Other Staff working at the school at the same time

KLE

83. I remember him very vaguely. I believe him to have been a houseparent, and he worked at the school around 1981. His role was also to take care of the children outside of school and overnight.
84. I remember him as a quiet person. He seemed comfortable around children. I did see him discipline children but just routine things. His discipline style seemed normal, although I was shocked that he allowed girls to play naked in the dormitory.
85. I know he abused a child once by false imprisonment, by locking them in a dark cupboard.

LUR

86. I knew LUR I believe he was at the school when I was there from around 1982 to 1987, though I'm not sure about those dates. He was a teacher. I was SNR at the time.
87. Although I didn't know him well, I remember him being a confident and assured person. He seemed a competent teacher and was bright, talkative and brash. He came with a high personal recommendation from Mr More of the Department of Education.
88. I did see him with the children and would describe him as being organised and competent around them. I did not see him discipline or abuse children.
89. I heard of him abusing in 2022, but I was never informed of what LUR had done, even when I was in court giving evidence.

KLG

90. I do not recall that person.

KLH

91. I do not recall that person.

KXB

92. I do not recall that person.

KUE

93. I do not recall that person.

Other staff continued – LUR

94. LUR was apparently a predator; in his private life. He abused his position as [REDACTED]. That is the full extent of my knowledge of LUR. I was never party to the details of his offences. I still do not know. The mother of one of his victims worked on the care staff.
95. LUR never asked permission to use [REDACTED]. Such would have meant a letter to Authority for permission, and none was ever received by me. I was never aware of his life beyond work.

Allegations that have been made to the Inquiry about me

KWS

96. I have been sent the redacted statement of KWS and can see in paragraph 18 he says, " ... *I was taken to see SNR and in his room, he had this big redwood desk and two massive Doberman dogs which were very well trained.*"
97. Doberman dogs belonged to SNR I am sure I did not know this boy. The story is without foundation. Neither I nor the staff would have countenanced such events. It is completely inaccurate.

LUW

98. I have been sent the redacted statement of LUW and in paragraph 42 he says, "*There was also a reward system which meant if you behaved you could visit the sweet van which came to Ovenstone once per week. You got to spend any pocket money your parents gave you which Mr LUS set as a maximum of sixty pence per week. If you didn't behave you weren't allowed to buy any sweets.*"
99. There was never pocket money or a sweet van, during my time.
100. In paragraph 43 he says "*I was allowed to go home every weekend to spend that time with my family, however, Mr LUS would sometimes punish me by not granting me permission to go home. He would inform my parents and as far as I remember the longest time I didn't get home was three weekends in a row. I really struggled to deal with not getting home so wouldn't react well when he told me.*"
101. This was a five-day school. No child would be prevented from seeing his family as a punishment. This is completely untrue. School was closed at weekends.
102. In paragraph 44 he says, "Mr LUR would discipline me by sending me out of the class to stand outside the door for what seemed like hours. Sometimes he would drag

me out of the class by the arm. I spent a lot of time standing outside the classroom. No teacher ever used a belt on me but if I had been really bad, they would send me to Mr LUS who would belt me or hit me with a trainer."

103. My answer is, no belt. For a minimal time, corporal punishment with a sandshoe was offered as a choice rather than detention or early bed. This practice was discontinued in 1983. Girls were never given a choice of corporal punishment. The practice of corporal punishment was restrained, witnessed, logged, and sent to Fife Education Department.
104. In paragraph 46 he says, *"When I first started at Ovenstone there was lots of fighting and bullying from the boys who had been there the longest. It was like they had to stamp their authority. I tried to avoid it and initially I didn't fight back even though I got day to day beatings from other kids. After about three or four weeks that changed, something snapped, and I wasn't taking it anymore. I was caught fighting back with another boy, so Mr LUS took us into one of the playrooms and put adult sized boxing gloves on me and the other boy. He told us to fight but I didn't know how to fight, I was only seven years old, so I just tried to defend myself. It was one on one, and I was in shock, the staff and pupils had been brought into watch and the kids were jeering from the side. It just looked like a boxing match with two kids who didn't know how to box. This happened to me about five or six times, and it always made things worse as me and the other kid would hold grudges because we were boxing each other. Over the years ... and I looked out for each other and that helped as I felt I had someone to watch my back."*
105. This is completely untrue. There were never fights with boxing gloves. Staff would recall such episodes. That is also not the way to treat young people. My staff and the Educational psychologist would never agree to such treatment.
106. In paragraph 48 he says, *"I told my dad about Mr LUS hitting me when I was home at sometime within the first month of me being at Ovenstone. I know he was angry, and he phoned the school and spoke to Mr LUS. He told my dad that I was lying, and my dad believed him. As a result, I was punished by my dad by not giving*

me any pocket money that week. I learned my lesson and never told anyone about it after that. When I returned to the school Mr LUS spoke to me telling me that what goes on at the school stays at the school. He said it was my word against his and who would believe a troublemaker like me. Not being believed had a great impact on me as I only told my wife about being made to box recently after twenty-eight years of marriage. I have never told anyone else about the abuse I suffered."

107. This is just not true. There was a monthly progress meeting where parents and professionals were able to raise problems. Mr PDW did not raise this matter or I would recall it. I do not remember him attending these meetings.

PDW on behalf of deceased son KPV

108. I have been sent the redacted statement of PDW and can see in paragraph 31 he says, *"The school were very reluctant to have us visiting at the home. There was one time I was having to see SNR at the school as he had hit KPV with a sandshoe on the bare backside. I tried to speak to Mr LUS about it. He was not available at that time, but he was telling KPV to tell me to buy a set of boxing gloves. I went to the school and told him he did not need a boxing ring and if he came out of the school, we could sort it out. He threatened to get the police onto me."*
109. I do not remember the person making the allegation so cannot recall punishing the person. I also cannot recall the allegation. The passage of time has likely affected my memory as thirty years have elapsed. My staff have said that Mr PDW was a very angry man.
110. I cannot explain why this is being said about me. I also cannot say that if a child had been treated in such a way that that would be abuse, I would require to know a lot more.
111. I have been asked if I accept that myself or someone else abused the child, how was it possible for the abuse to occur undetected? My response is that I am not sure of the circumstances. Parents were always welcomed at the school. They were frequent

visitors at the monthly multi-discipline progress meeting where all problems could be addressed.

Documents/Log extracts - Alex Christie/Two unknown nurses and unnamed child suspected to be KUG

112. I have been sent an extract of notes, FIC.001.001.6365, pages 133,134,141 and 142. These are notes about Alex Christie, a nurse at the school also two unknown nurses, all of whom allegedly sexually assaulted children at the school. There is also mention of an allegation of a physical assault by me towards a child in October 1987.
113. I remember nothing about the person making the allegation and have no recall if I sanctioned or punished them. I did not abuse the child. My response to the allegation is that I have never heard of Alex Christie. The passage of time affecting my recollection of what is being said is possible but not probable. I can not explain why these things are being said. Because it is approximately 35 years since these alleged happenings, I cannot recall.
114. I have been asked if the child was treated as described, do I accept that was abuse? My response to that is that it seems this was before or after my time, and that 35 years have elapsed.

Documents/Log extracts - KUG

115. I have been sent an extract of notes, FIC.001.001.6261, page 85 also FIC.000001135, pages 195-196. These are notes about KUG
116. I remember nothing about the person making the allegation described. I have no memory of the circumstances. I also have nothing to say in response to this allegation. The passage of time has possibly affected my recollection of what has been alleged.

117. I cannot explain why these things were said. I would say no comment to the suggestion that if a child was treated in such a way that it was abuse.

118. I do not recall if a complaint was made at the time of the alleged incident. Similarly, I have no recall of who it may have been dealt with or what the outcome was.

Documents/Log extracts – Unnamed children and KUG

119. I have been sent an extract of notes, FIC.001.001.6365, pages 8 – 10, 12, 47 and 87.

120. I remember very little if anything about the incident or complaints described. This was a period of transition from one regime to another. Eventually the turbulent transition settled down with new philosophies of childcare in place. In relation to whether my response was appropriate, I tried my best to make it so.

Documents/Log extracts – LUW

121. I have been sent an extract of notes, FIC – 000001260, page 25, 35, 44, 47, 48, 51 and 52.

122. In relation to page 25, I only have a hazy recollection of the incident. I probably did deal with the matter in the way described. This is not an allegation therefore I cannot comment as such. The passage of time could entirely have affected my memory in relation to this.

123. In this case the child denied the claim of being assaulted.

124. I do not know if a complaint was made at the time of the alleged incident.

125. From the notes it looks like the matter was dealt with at a review meeting with the psychologist. I cannot recall what the outcome was.

Documents/Log extracts – PJT

126. In relation to page 35 of those notes, I remember PJT very well. I don't know if I behaved in the way described in the notes. There was no abuse in how the incident was dealt with and I cannot see any other allegation. The passage of time will have undoubtedly affected my recollection of the events.
127. If a child was treated in such a way, I do not deem that to be abuse.
128. There was no complaint about the way in which the matter was dealt with at the time.

Documents/Log extracts – Mr KLG and an unnamed child

129. In relation to page 44 of those notes I remember nothing about the person being referred to in the notes. It is possible I behaved in the way described but I cannot recall.
130. There is nothing alleged against me. My reading of the notes is that the incident was an accident.
131. It is very probable that the passage of time has affected my memory.

Documents/Log extracts – Mrs Budd, school secretary

132. In relation to page 47 of those notes all I will say is that Mr Jack was known to 'stir the pot' and foment trouble.

Documents/Log extracts – PJT

133. In relation to page 48 of those notes, it looks to me like the matter was resolved to everyone's satisfaction.
134. I also want to highlight a quote from PJT [REDACTED] which I have taken from an [REDACTED] among former pupils of Ovenstone school: " *I was a pupil at Ovenstone school in the early eighties and never heard of any abuse of any nature during my stay. If it wasn't for the staff there, I wouldn't be the man I am today. I'm grateful for the care I got ... I welcome any of the investigation team to speak to me. Ovenstone was a safe haven for me.*"

Documents/Log extracts – unnamed children

135. In relation to page 51 of those notes it seems to be an accurate account.

Documents/log extracts – KLH

136. In relation to page 52 of those notes I have no recollection of this, but I know I did not wish to have staff who showed discontent. A harmonious staff group is important for SFBD children. Discord transfers to vulnerable children.

Leaving the school

137. I left the school on retirement.

Helping the Inquiry

138. There were ample channels for abuse to take place and that is why, although I did not see or hear of abuse, or have abuse reported to me, allegations have been made.

139. In order to protect children in the future there has to be much higher profiling of abuse: there must be appropriate channels for children to report. Also, staff must be trained and made aware.

Other information

140. I would like to add that I found this exercise to be extremely difficult from several viewpoints; It was complicated, difficult to understand at my age, and very stressful from a medical viewpoint. It has caused a severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder reaction.
141. 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.

LUS

Signed.....

Dated.....

11th June 2005