

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Neville STORER

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is Neville Storer. I have always been known as Nev. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1948. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background / Qualifications / Training

2. I was a police constable in Nottinghamshire between 1967 and 1973. I was one of three officers that lived and worked in a small town. We were known as residential beat officers. In 1973, I began my teacher training at Trent Polytechnic. I concluded my training in 1977 and went on to do a Bachelor of Arts with honours until 1978. That involved attending placements in both junior and secondary schools. I also attended a 'Working with Young Offenders' evening class at HMP Lowdham Grange for four or five weeks.
3. In 1978, I took up a teaching post at a large, co-educational, comprehensive school in Ollerton. It was a temporary post that lasted one year. I was covering someone's maternity leave. In 1979, I became head of art at Retford Girls' High School in Nottinghamshire. I stayed there until 1980. At that time, due to personal reasons, I needed to find employment that came with accommodation. I interviewed for two different schools and accepted a job at Lendrick Muir School, a term-time residential school, which offered on-site accommodation. I was a teacher there until 1989 when

there were talks of the school potentially being closed down. We were all told that we were being made redundant due to lack of funding and social work cuts.

4. Between 1988 and 1989, I was offered free accommodation in a country house that belonged to someone I had met through Lendrick Muir School. I worked on the estate in exchange for my accommodation. That led to me being involved in a project on a boat called the Ocean Mist which was owned by the same people who owned the country house. It was being converted into a restaurant and bar. I worked on that project with a group of four or five teenage kids from Drake's Trust, which helped kids who had lost their way. The Ocean Mist is now moored in Leith.
5. In 1989, I went to Parkview School in Dundee. It was a privately run residential school for children with social and/or emotional difficulties. The school had a fifty-two-week residential provision, where necessary. I was initially employed as a temporary art teacher, covering maternity leave. I was then asked to cover an English class and latterly, I covered English and art before being appointed assistant head of the school.
6. In 1994, I took up the post of headteacher at Linnwood Hall, a local authority school. I had to retire from that position in 2001 on medical grounds.

Experiences at Lendrick Muir School

The Institution / Culture

7. Lendrick Muir School was in the countryside near Crook of Devon. The house was set in large grounds with lots of land, forest areas and playing fields. The school was coeducational with boys' accommodation in the main building and girls' accommodation in a separate property called Craigard House, approximately two miles from the school.

8. Lendrick Muir was initially set up for those with an above average IQ. When finances became tight, that requirement was lowered. When I worked there, the schools' purpose was to take children who were simply not managing in mainstream education. We worked with them to achieve educational success.
9. There was generally a good atmosphere at the school. There were of course some teachers who were not particularly liked by the kids but, on the whole, staff and students lived together amicably, and relationships were formed on a very individual basis. It was quite an informal setting with kids calling staff by their first names. We tried to take a fairly holistic approach because we all lived together and even when you were not on duty, you were around all the time. The informality allowed us to build better relationships with the kids. That said, there was recognition that, in the classroom, we were teachers and more formality was observed.

My role and recruitment at Lendrick Muir School

10. I was employed as an art teacher for the duration of my time at the school. I attended an in-person interview, and I believe I provided references. I can't remember who exactly my referees were, but they would have been from my previous employment.
11. As well as teaching responsibilities, because we lived on-site, the teachers also had a role in caring for the children, mostly in the evenings. The children mixed in class, during the day, but in the evening, the girls would be in their own accommodation, and I had no involvement in their care. I would be involved in arranging activities for the boys, taking them on outings, supervising showers and making sure they got to bed. Once they were in bed, we would let the headmaster know and he then had responsibility for the children overnight.

Staff structure

12. SNR [REDACTED] of the school was KVV [REDACTED], and SNR [REDACTED] was KMN [REDACTED]. There were approximately ten to twelve teachers all together. As far as I'm

aware, none of the teaching staff were childcare or social work qualified. They were purely appointed as teachers, albeit we did have some responsibility for looking after the children in the evenings. There was a senior social worker, Richard Russell, who was based at the school. He was the one who had most contact with the parents of the children and with the social work department.

13. The children were primarily looked after by housemothers during the day, and to some extent, in the evening. They were the ones responsible for the majority of pastoral care, any illnesses or ailments and administering medication. There were two senior housemothers, Margaret Aird and Marianne Bisset. Marianne lived in a cottage on-site with her husband Norman Bissett. He was friendly with the headmaster, but I don't believe he had any role at the school. There were also two younger, more junior, housemothers called Karen and Anne. SNR [REDACTED]'s wife, [REDACTED], was the matron in charge of overseeing the housemothers and assigning shifts.

Staff living arrangements

14. Almost all staff, with the exception of the social worker, Richard Russell, lived on-site, with their spouses and children, in cottages provided by the school. Single men, like me, lived in a room within the school building. I had a room next to one of the boys' dormitories. MKF [REDACTED] and Kenny Speirs also had rooms within the school building. SNR [REDACTED], KVV [REDACTED], his wife, and children initially lived in a large flat on the top floor of the school. He later had a cottage built on the grounds which he moved into with his family and KMN [REDACTED] lived in the top flat within the school.

Recruitment of staff

15. I wasn't involved in the recruitment of staff at Lendrick Muir so, I'm not aware of any recruitment practices or policies. The staffing situation was very consistent right up to the possible closure of the school, at which point, people started to find other employment and leave.

Staff training

16. I didn't receive any additional training, on top of my university training, when I took up my post at Lendrick Muir. There was no specific ongoing training, but if there were any changes to social work practice, Richard would update us.

Supervision / appraisal / evaluation

17. My line manager would have been SNR [REDACTED], KMN [REDACTED], but there was no real monitoring or appraisal as such. I recall when I first started, I gravitated towards Kenny Speirs, who wasn't an official mentor, but someone who had experience at the school. I looked to him for guidance. It was much more of a communal approach, rather than individual. If we had questions, we would ask each other and help each other. We had weekly staff meetings where we would discuss everything that was going on within the school and any particular issues or concerns.

Policy

18. I had no involvement in policy making or implementation at Lendrick Muir. Nor was I made aware of any particular policies that the school had in place. I wasn't given a handbook. It was very much a case of learning by example and experience.

Strategic Planning

19. I had no responsibility for strategic planning in the school. I was involved in meetings when the future of the school was in doubt, but nothing beyond that. There were of course certain things that KVV [REDACTED] had to guide within the school, but he generally didn't like to dictate and allowed staff to deal with matters themselves. Each member of staff had autonomy in the areas that they were responsible for. The school, both staff and children, was a community. We lived together, ate together and talked together. We were all in it together.

Children / Routine at Lendrick Muir School

20. Children came to Lendrick Muir, from all over Scotland, by referral from the Social Work Department and/or the Education Department. Staff had no involvement in admissions, but we were given general information about the background of children who came to the school. When I first went to Lendrick Muir, there were around eighty or ninety pupils, but that quickly reduced dramatically, because of lack of funding, to around forty pupils. The kids were between the ages of twelve or thirteen up to sixteen or seventeen and they resided at the school, during the school week, in term-time. Children could come to Lendrick Muir at any stage of their secondary schooling, but there had to be some indication that they could gain exam qualifications.
21. We had a number of extremely talented children. I remember one lad who was around fourteen or fifteen years old when he came to us. He was an accomplished pianist and went on to be a concert pianist. Equally, we had one of the first children to be recognised with, what was then called Latorre Syndrome, now known as Tourette's Syndrome. The head had explained to the staff that this boy was coming to the school and advised us of the symptoms of Tourette's. We believed that it might be quite a difficult placement for the youngster in terms of kids having a go at one another, but it turned out to be the complete reverse. He wasn't given any adverse treatment from his peers and did very well at the school.
22. The expectation, once children came to Lendrick Muir, was that they would stay for the duration of their secondary education and sit their exams. There was no real move to get them back into school in the community.

Mealtimes / Food

23. The staff and children ate in the dining room together, with staff sitting at tables with the kids. We all ate the same food, and I thought it was excellent. We had some permanent kitchen staff, and some local people came in to cook. All the kids' dietary

needs were catered for, but if it was a case of, they just didn't like something, they didn't have to eat it.

24. We had a tuck shop in the school. If the kids had pocket money from home, they could spend it there. There was also a tea trolley that went round before the kids went to bed. They were offered a hot drink and a snack.

Sleeping / Living Arrangements

25. All of the children slept in dormitories. The girls' accommodation was outwith the school grounds at Craigard House. The younger boys' dormitories were in one part of the school building and the older boys' dormitories were off the same corridor as my room. Each dormitory catered for around four pupils. Each child had a bed and cupboard for storing their personal possessions. I think one of the younger boys' dorms had bunkbeds in it.
26. We had a senior boys' accommodation section at the school which allowed the older boys a bit more independence in preparation for leaving. They had more freedom on the estate and more flexible bedtimes.

Washing and Bathing

27. All the kids had to have a shower each night. Staff were expected to supervise showers to make sure there was no horseplay. The shower rooms were communal, but with some degree of privacy. There was a row of three or four showers with a wall in front of them, but it was open at both ends. There was also an area for them to put their clothes and get dried and dressed.

Leisure time / Trips / Holidays

28. *The kids had downtime each day. The sports facilities were always open and available to them. There were also lots of activities put on to keep the children occupied and entertained. Individual staff offered different activities to the children in the evenings and at weekends, for children who didn't go home. I used to take kids out for a drive, and we would get fish and chips. It was a good opportunity to interact with the kids, engage them in conversation and to hear what they were talking to each other about as well.*
29. *Children had the opportunity to do things like ice skating, horse riding, snooker or billiards and play cricket or football. There were often staff versus children matches and competitions. We also had a pop group, made up of staff and students, which played concerts for the rest of the children. It was very popular.*
30. *It would of course be frowned on now, but at that time, staff, who lived on-site, could offer children what we called, 'at homes'. One or two children could go to a staff members home to spend some time there and get out of the school environment, especially if the staff member had their own kids. Staff also took small groups of children on trips. I used to take groups of two or three kids on camping trips to Loch Morlich during the summer holidays. I had a big, framed tent and used one part for the kids to sleep in and the other for me. Other teachers organised trips elsewhere.*

Healthcare

31. *If any child came to the school with an ongoing healthcare need, all of the staff would be informed of that. If something arose with a child, if they were feeling unwell or suffered cuts or bumps, one of the care staff would manage that. The care staff would also be the ones who administered any medication, if required. The teachers had no involvement in that.*

Schooling

32. *The children followed a set curriculum and timetable, similar to a mainstream school. They would move from class to class to a specialist teacher for each subject. The kids were grouped according to age.*

Chores

33. *The children didn't have any chores, as such. They were expected to keep their own space tidy and respect other people's property, but that was it. There was certainly an opportunity to do manual work, but it wasn't mandatory. When I eventually moved into a cottage on the grounds, I wanted to dig a vegetable patch. I asked if any of the boys wanted to help and some of them did.*

Visitors

34. *There was one open day per year when parents would come to the school, but other than that, I don't particularly remember the children having visitors. When you consider the geography of the place, it wasn't particularly easy to come and go from. Generally, children were at Lendrick Muir from Monday to Friday during term time. Most went home at weekends and during school holidays. The staff would assist with transporting the kids home for weekends by minibus. For those who didn't go home at weekends, there were staff on duty who worked alternate weekends.*
35. *I do recall children's social workers visiting them, but I'm not aware of any other professionals coming and going. I would assume, children got to speak to their Social Worker in private, but that is not something I was involved in.*

Review of Care/placement

36. *I'm not sure if or how children's placements were reviewed at Lendrick Muir. I wouldn't have had any direct involvement in that. If there was anything of significance, on the*

social work side, that had to be discussed, or staff had to be made aware of, Richard would raise it at the weekly staff meeting.

Discipline and Punishment

37. There were consequences for poor behaviour, similar to those you would expect in a family environment. For example, if a child misbehaved when we were out doing an activity, they might be told that they couldn't go on another outing for a week or two.
38. When KVV [REDACTED] retired, towards the end of my time there, we had a new SNR [REDACTED] who had a different attitude towards the type of behaviour that was acceptable in the school. As a result, there were a number of suspensions. That was discussed at a staff meeting and the new SNR [REDACTED] asked my view on the matter. I'm not normally very contentious but I told him that I felt strongly that kids being suspended for things that they were previously not suspended for was not the best way to go about it. I felt like he was digging himself a hole and I think that reflected the general view of the staff. I wouldn't say we had a *laissez-faire* attitude before, but we definitely didn't react so harshly. Unfortunately, I can't remember the name of the new SNR [REDACTED].
39. The school had become less manageable by that point and the new SNR [REDACTED] did place more emphasis on behaviour. Perhaps we needed that change, but I just felt that these were kids who we had been working with for years and they had made good progress in that time. The new SNR [REDACTED] had not been there to see the progress they had already made, so perhaps was expecting a little much from them.
40. There was no corporal punishment used at Lendrick Muir, during my time at the school. There was also no segregation used as a form of punishment.
41. I don't believe that consequences or discipline were recorded anywhere by staff. That was a reflection of the times, and I appreciate that wouldn't happen now.

Restraint

42. There was no training on restraint and no formal restraint used at Lendrick Muir, that I'm aware of. I don't think Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) was around at the time. The only thing I remember happening, if two kids were having a go at one another, was the staff member getting in between them, to calm things down. It usually didn't take more than telling them to, "*Pack it in*". I don't remember any instances, between the kids, where things escalated beyond a bit of pushing and shoving. In those instances, the staff/child relationship was enough to de-escalate the situation.
43. My general view, not specifically in connection with Lendrick Muir, is that once TCI training came about, there was more of a propensity to think that restraint was the way to deal with most situations and I totally disagreed with that.

Concerns about the institution

44. I'm not aware of any external concerns about Lendrick Muir while I worked there. That said, I did have some of my own concerns. The atmosphere within the school soured at one point. There was a head boy chosen each year, normally by the headmaster. The head boy in my last year, was not a very nice character at all, neither were his friends. I'm not clear whether he was officially appointed head boy or whether it was an unofficial appointment amongst the children. He essentially became the head bully, along with his conclave of hangers-on. I can't recall the specifics, but his behaviour was concerning enough that the school had to close early for the summer holiday that year. There were also specific concerns about the safety of one particular teacher, and his family.
45. Unfortunately, there was also a period when solvent abuse was rife, not just aerosols but also packets of glue. We knew which kids were abusing solvents and we were very careful about who we allowed to do what. There was a particular area of woodland, within the grounds of the school, that the boys liked to frequent. The staff made a point of going there frequently to make sure nothing untoward was going on.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

46. I don't think there was any official complaints process when I worked at Lendrick Muir. The nature of the place was such that, if a child had a complaint, they would make it known to a member of staff. Children could approach anyone in the school they felt comfortable with, and situations were dealt with on a 'there and then', every day basis.
47. I don't recall ever being involved in the handling of a complaint and I don't recall any child making a specific complaint to me about another child or staff member. Children might make general comments about other kids winding them up, but that was it.

Abuse

48. I've been asked whether Lendrick Muir had a definition of abuse that applied in relation to children. I don't believe there was. It's not unfair to ask that question, but it wasn't a question at that time. You have to bear in mind, this was approximately fifty years ago. Undoubtedly, the attitudes towards abuse now are very different to the attitude towards it then.
49. I honestly can't think of anything that I heard of or witnessed at Lendrick Muir that in the context of the time, or by today's standards, would have constituted abuse. There was certainly nothing that I was aware of.
50. If a child had been subjected to abuse, I do believe it would have come to light. KVV KVV was a guy who was very caring when it came to the kids. He didn't necessarily make it obvious all the time, but he knew all the kids individually. He also knew what was involved in every minute of the day in the school. I have no doubt that if a child was being abused, it would have come to his attention and would have been responded to appropriately. Even if something was going on with a child that the child hadn't reported, I'm sure KVV would have picked up on subtle changes in behaviour.

Child protection arrangements

51. I can't remember staff being given any direct guidance in relation to child protection. I think we each had our own expectations of what that meant and we tried to create as much harmony as possible. New members of staff learned from other members of staff with more experience. New pupils learnt from older pupils. If there was anything of concern that a staff member became aware of, it would be shared with all staff and an agreement would be reached as to how best to deal with it.

External monitoring

52. I don't remember any form of formal external monitoring taking place from either the Social Work Department or the Education Department. We did have a visit from a member of Scottish Parliament, but he came to have a look around the school, rather than inspect it.

Record-keeping

53. I'm quite sure there must have been some form of records kept because there were case conferences and things like that, but I can't remember any daily logbooks. My only involvement in any record keeping was writing education reports for the subject I taught.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

54. I was not involved in any investigations into abuse at Lendrick Muir.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

55. I was not involved in any reports of abuse or civil claims at Lendrick Muir.

Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

56. I am not aware of any police investigation having taken place during my time at Lendrick Muir.

Convicted abusers

57. I'm not aware of any member of staff having been convicted for the abuse of a child during my time at Lendrick Muir.

Other Staff – Lendrick Muir School

KIT

58. I believe KIT was the outdoor coordinator at the school. I think he did sailing, canoeing and things like that with the kids. I can't say I knew KIT very well as he wasn't in the school a lot.

KVV

59. KVV was SNR at Lendrick Muir. He was very definite in what he wanted to achieve in the school. He was also a very caring man when it came to the kids and very much in touch with what was happening individually with the children. During the period of time I worked at the school, I heard him telling kids off. KVV was very clear about the types of behaviour he would accept and that which he wasn't prepared to accept. If it was behaviour he would not accept, he would give the child a talking to. I heard him raise his voice on occasion, but I did not see or hear of KVV ever abusing any child.

MKF

60. MKF was at Lendrick Muir at the same time as me. He was another individual who lived in a room within the school, close to mine. MKF was a teacher who was a year or two older than me. I can't remember what subject he taught. He was a very quiet man, quite difficult to get to know. I certainly didn't get to know him, and I didn't have much to do with him. I always thought he was a bit distant. He did interact with the kids, but he didn't seem to be a person who children naturally gravitated towards. He didn't really come across as open and approachable. I didn't see or hear of MKF disciplining or abusing any child.

KDG

61. KDG was a well-established member of staff when I arrived at the school. I'm fairly certain that he was one of the few who didn't live on site. I think he was a bit older than me, and I believe he was a maths teacher. I remember him as being quite a fatherly figure with the children. I didn't see or hear of him disciplining or abusing any child.

KMN

62. KMN became SNR when I worked at Lendrick Muir. He was still in that role when I left. He was maybe eight to ten years older than me. He was a very approachable man, and the kids seemed to respond well to him. I didn't see or hear of KMN disciplining the children any more than was ordinary and I didn't see or hear of him abusing any child.

Leaving Lendrick Muir School

63. In or around 1988, we were told that funding was being cut and there was a possibility of the school closing down. I made the decision to leave to find other employment.

Experiences at Linnwood Hall

64. In 1994, I applied for the role of headmaster at Linnwood Hall. I think three candidates, including me, were interviewed for the job and I was successful. One of the other candidates was Derrick Bruce who was head of Rimbleton School in Glenrothes. I can't remember who the other candidate was.
65. Linnwood Hall was a Fife Council local authority school for secondary school children who had social, emotional or behavioural needs. As far as I'm aware, the children were referred to the school via psychological services. It was the first local authority school I had worked in, and I took up my position at the end of the summer holidays, before term started. I was given no information about what I should or should not be doing and I do not recall there being a school handbook, although one was created during my time as head teacher. I was made aware, at the interview stage, that the school had been without an appointed headmaster for quite some time. SNR [REDACTED], GLT [REDACTED] had been SNR [REDACTED] during that period.

Layout of Linnwood Hall

66. Linnwood Hall was a large country house set in its own grounds. When you go into the premises, there was a large entrance hall with a school office. On the right-hand side, there was a doorway which led into a very large dining room and kitchen. Next to that, was a very large room which was the headmaster's study. I remember, when I arrived, one whole wall was covered in A4 sheets of script. It appeared to be a thesis from the studies of the previous headmaster.
67. On the left of the entrance hall was another room which had a row of desks in it, maybe four or five, for use by the care staff. To the side of that room was a large social area used for meetings and recreational activities. Next door, was a science lab. The classrooms extended down a corridor on the left-hand side. Off to the right there was another corridor with a very small room off of it. That room had a couch and a table in

it and was perhaps big enough for three or four people. I learned that this was the staffroom.

68. The total number of children at the school was somewhere in the mid-twenties. At the time I became headmaster, some children lived at the school during the school week. The boys' residential rooms were upstairs and there was a very nice cottage next to the school for the girls. That was supervised entirely by care staff.

Personal Influence

69. It wasn't until the staff returned from the summer holiday that I was able to see how the school had been operating. In the other schools I had worked in, there was something very comfortable about the situation between staff and pupils. There was a commonality amongst the staff and between the staff and pupils. I soon discovered that this was not the case at Linnwood Hall, and I set about making changes to rectify that.
70. I was based in the headmaster's study for a lot of the time, on my own. I became aware that the kitchen staff and the domestic staff tended to use a room right at the back of the school for their breaks and refreshments. The care staff tended to sit at the desks in the school office to have their breaks and their lunch. Teachers used the small staff room for breaks and worked in their classrooms. It was almost as if there was a segregation of posts within the school. Not necessarily deliberate, but possibly something that naturally happened over time and was not aided by the internal layout of the school. There was really no time, other than our regular staff meetings in the headmaster's study, when the staff were all together. There wasn't the same sense of togetherness that I was used to and that's not the school that I wanted.
71. There was something that I saw, in my early days at the school, that was an example of how I wanted the culture to be. One morning, when I was going into school fairly early, one of the domestic staff was trying to take the vacuum cleaner upstairs. A boy, who I had already identified as being somewhat troublesome at times, ran after this

lady and said, "Annie, come on. I'll take that for you". He proceeded to lift the vacuum cleaner and carry it upstairs for her. The kids were lovely with the domestic staff and kitchen staff and were on first name terms. It really brought it home to me that the non-teaching staff and the non-care staff were as equally important as everyone else in the school, and I had to do something to bring about a sense of unity.

72. Over time, I moved the headmaster's study and turned that very large room into a staff room for all staff. It created a more integrated group, rather than each group of staff going about their business and performing their roles independently of each other. The idea was to foster a more collaborative and communicative approach between the staff. Some kids might feel more comfortable sharing information with one of the care workers than one of the teachers, or vice versa. If you've got the staff talking to each other and working together, I believed that would create a more holistic approach to the benefit of both the children and staff.
73. One of the gentlemen who also interviewed for the headmaster post at Linnwood Hall, Derrick Bruce, went on to become the head of education services. He ultimately became my line manager, and he was not an easy man to deal with. We differed hugely in our approach to the school. I wanted a cohesive environment between all the staff and children, but he didn't believe in that. I think he believed that I should divide and rule. He had a big issue with the children all sitting down together, with an adult at each table, to eat. I don't know why he had such a 'bee in his bonnet' about it. To me, children sitting down to have a meal together, isn't book learning, but it is social learning and to me, that's what education is. Learning to read and count is important, but learning how to exist within the normal parameters of society is equally important.
74. I also introduced a breakfast club for the children, years ahead of anyone else. I think Linnwood Hall was possibly the first school in the country to do that. When the children came to school in the morning, when they got off their transport, they would come into the dining room and sit down at a table with members of the care staff and teaching staff to have a cup of tea and a slice of toast. It was another opportunity to interact with each other, and the staff, outside of the care setting or classroom.

75. One of the other things that I changed was in relation to the meetings that we had with individual children and social workers. Reports were prepared for those meetings which contained information about the children's care needs. I didn't feel that we were providing enough of the right information for those meetings, so I introduced individual education plans (IEP). In hindsight, that title might not have been the best way to describe the reports. It might have been more accurate to call them individual development plans as we looked at how far the child had come since the last meeting. I wanted to focus, not only on the educational needs of each child, but their development and the bigger picture.
76. We had a SNR [REDACTED] KZP [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED] the care staff. We also had two other qualified social workers, Pearl McBride and KNH [REDACTED] KNH [REDACTED]. They were based in Linnwood Hall and together, they looked after a group of around five or six care staff members. To help the staff and children build better relationships, we got the care staff to focus on smaller groups of children. I think we had two or three pupils allocated to each member of care staff. That allowed the care staff to provide valuable information for the IEPs. It also came to my attention that some children were being driven to and from school by taxi. I felt it would be better for care staff to take on this role. Parents or guardians were able to discuss things with the carers, or pass information via them, that they wouldn't necessarily share with a taxi driver. It was a way of maintaining a better link with the child's home.
77. I introduced a behaviour management scheme whereby teaching staff could award points to each child in their class for good behaviour. They had autonomy to award points as they saw fit. I think there were five, down to zero, points awarded to each child in each class during the school day and during break times. The teachers were given a book in which they entered the points and points could be awarded for things like behaviour in class or during break, completing a task, and attitude towards work. I've had sight of the school prospectus document with reference number FIC-000001371 that was disclosed to me prior to the session. Page twelve of the document refers to the behaviour management scheme that I've described.

78. Each Wednesday afternoon, we had activities, some of which involved going out of school. The children could do things like the motorbike club, which was run by one of the teaching staff, Gavin Sked, who was a qualified motorcyclist. He had three or four dirt bikes which he would put on a trailer and take to a bike track. The children would get to ride the dirt bikes which was very obviously appealing, but it was very safe because they would do that under Gavin's supervision. They could also go on various outings to places like St Andrews or the beach. There were all kinds of activities.
79. When I first went to the school, there was a rifle range. It was overseen by one of the care staff, Tom Eltringham, who was a territorial army reservist. There had been some issues within the local community with air rifles and a child had been severely injured by ricochet. In light of that, I felt that it was the wrong thing to have the rifle range in the school and there was no question for me that it had to go.
80. The children who were top scoring got the first choice of activity and the three children who scored lowest, didn't get a choice. I didn't consider the behaviour management scheme to be a punishment. It was to encourage the children. The pupils who ended up in the bottom three invariably tried to do better the next time to get their choice of activity. It provided an incentive for them.
81. We did have some children in the school with some very challenging behaviours and I can't say that everything I introduced to try to create a more holistic environment worked perfectly, all of the time. These were my small attempts to establish something within the school that may not have been reflected in the various attitudes of those in education services.

Policy

82. I do not recall any written policies when I became headmaster of Linnwood Hall. In those days, it appeared not to be a requirement. I implemented a number of changes to the running of the school, which were recorded for staff information and became implemented as policies. Not all were written as formal policies. These were things

that were developed as and when required and were conveyed to staff at our regular staff meetings.

83. One policy that I did introduce was in relation to the children smoking. It came to my attention that kids were skipping off to a little woodland area next to the school and getting their cigarettes out. Obviously, smoking isn't a good thing, but I felt that we couldn't stop it and, rather than have children sneak off to do it unattended, I wanted to try to manage that situation more effectively.
84. I had a number of discussions with Jimmy McGregor in education services about developing a smoking policy. I developed a policy whereby, any child who wanted to smoke was added to a smoker's list and had to hand in their cigarettes to a member of staff when they came into school. They were then allocated a cigarette at break and dinner time. They had to smoke in a room at the back of the school, which had double doors that opened for fresh air, with a member of staff supervising. I believe it reduced the risk of bullying and coercive behaviour. If they didn't stick to the policy, they were taken off the smoker's list for a period of time. I accept there are down sides to a policy like that, but at least we gained some control over something that the kids were going to do anyway.

Strategic Planning

85. When I took the post of headmaster at Linnwood Hall, the local authority gave me no information about the long-term direction of the school. They didn't even tell me what the budget was or if there was a budget, despite repeated request for that information. So, as headmaster, I made changes as and when situations arose. That was an ongoing thing. I suppose I had autonomy to set the school's aims and objectives which is why I set about trying to create a more collaborative, holistic environment.
86. I think one of my most significant involvement in terms of strategic planning was when Linnwood Hall was set to close. There was a review of residential care in Fife towards the end of my time as headmaster. There was a move towards inclusivity and

schooling taking place in the local community. The review identified too many bed placements at Linnwood Hall as our residential input had gone down significantly. We were told by the local authority that they intended to close Linnwood Hall and sell the building. Then, we were told that the school was to be relocated to The Bridges in Rosyth on a non-residential basis. By this time, we didn't have any residential children at Linnwood Hall.

87. During my last two years at the school, I was only there around fifty percent of the time due to health concerns. Despite that, I wanted to make sure the transition was as seamless as possible. I wrote a report outlining what should happen during the interim period, prior to the new premises being available, and I attended some meetings with the architect in charge of the new premises.

Staff / training / supervision / recruitment

88. As headmaster, I was line managed by the head of local authority education services. That was initially Jimmy McGregor but changed to Derrick Bruce during my time at the school. SNR [REDACTED] of Linnwood was GLT [REDACTED], and SNR [REDACTED] was KNG [REDACTED]. We had three resident social workers. KZP [REDACTED], who was SNR [REDACTED], Pearl McBride and KNH [REDACTED]. We also had a very good educational psychologist, Carolyn Brown, who visited the children regularly. There were no volunteer workers that I can think of.
89. I was in charge of the staff as a whole, but in terms of the day-to-day running of the school, I managed the educational staff. KZP [REDACTED] [REDACTED] care staff but obviously, some of the decisions I made affected the care staff too.
90. I think all the staff at Linnwood were suitably qualified. Our teaching staff were certainly qualified teachers. We did have ongoing training where outsiders, including social workers, and external agencies would come in to talk about different topics. I can't remember exactly what those topics were. Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training (TCI) was introduced during my time at Linnwood Hall. The social worker that delivered

that training gave us a format of what she was going to be talking about, and she didn't deviate from that, she simply read it out. We also did a lot of teambuilding and delivered in-house training on how to write reports. I read every report that was prepared for a meeting. I would try to make suggestions about the best way to present the information. Sometimes, that meant taking it back to the person who wrote it or taking it to KZP to discuss it with the care staff.

91. There was no formal supervision or appraisal process in place. Staff monitoring was a continuous process, and staff had the ability to meet with any member of the senior management team. Those meetings happened as and when necessary but were not recorded in writing. I can't remember ever being appraised or supervised, in my role as headmaster, by Jimmy McGregor or Derrick Bruce, who became the education service manager under the new tier of management. That said, I had access to them, if the need arose.
92. In terms of recruitment of new staff, guidance came from the local authority, and they would carry out some background checks to see if a person had a criminal record. I wasn't involved in the recruitment of care staff, but I was responsible for interviewing new teaching staff and deciding whether or not I felt they would fit in at Linnwood Hall. Prospective staff would complete an application form and were asked to provide details of two referees. There was an expectation that the referees could be contacted, if I felt it was required. I don't actually recall having to recruit many teaching staff while I was there. I think there was one drama teacher that I recruited and that wasn't my best decision. He was very highly qualified, but just not the right fit for the school.

Discipline and punishment

93. There was no written policy regarding discipline and punishment at Linnwood, not at the time I was there. I believe Fife Council offered training in respect of managing challenging behaviours, but I can't remember them ever having any policy on it.

94. The use of corporal punishment was gone by the time I went there. We also, to my knowledge, never isolated or segregated a child as a form of punishment. If that had ever been done, without my knowledge, I would be very cross about that.
95. I didn't think of it as discipline and punishment, I thought of it more in terms of rewards and sanctions. You had to have boundaries, not just for the sake of the young person, but for the effect that their behaviour could have on other young people around them. We all know that in any group of young people, you have your acolytes. So, you have to have some sort of accepted standard of behaviour that is consistently enforced by care staff and teachers. That's why I introduced the behaviour management scheme.
96. You cannot operate successfully with a child if they are constantly exceeding the limits put in place. In those circumstances, you have to look for alternative ways to manage that behaviour. That might include, losing out on privileges. My preferred way to manage behaviour, was through staff/child relationships. If each child had someone they could turn to and talk to, or a sufficient relationship with a staff member that the staff member would turn to them if they were acting out, that made a difference. We wanted a culture where it was clear that the staff at Linnwood Hall were with the kids and for the kids, not against them.

Restraint

97. During my time at Linnwood Hall, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) was introduced, but I can't remember exactly when that was. I had never heard of it before then. I had to accept that the local authority's approach to behavioural management had this TCI insert. Although, in all honesty, I never felt comfortable with it.
98. An external TCI trainer came in and all staff, including myself, had training to learn the basic principles; what it was about, when we should use it and what we should be doing. They demonstrated TCI being used, but as is the case in most training programmes, the demonstration is carried out in the ideal, textbook, scenario, which very rarely exists in practice.

99. Once you have a system in place, you have to stick to it, but I felt there were better ways to deal with situations, rather than TCI. Trying to intervene in passive ways by taking a child away from the immediate situation or trying to defuse the situation by talking to the child, were preferable to me. We certainly had ideals of deflection and de-escalation, but the child was not always receptive to that once they reached a certain point and the adrenaline was pumping.
100. I do feel that, after the introduction of TCI, incidents of restraints increased dramatically. Some of the staff seemed to think that it was the only way to deal with things. I accept that sometimes, it was necessary for example, in situations where two children were going at it and one of them was likely to get physically injured. Obviously, you have to intervene to try to stop that. If the child you were trying to stop continued to be aggressive, you have to have some sense of physical control over them, but I don't think that was the case every time TCI was used. I think, quite often it came down to a battle of will between the staff member and the child.
101. I should have been made aware, as headmaster, of every instance restraint was used. Every restraint should have also been recorded in the child's log and the daily logbook, which could be completed by one of the care staff or teachers. It was difficult to review whether or not restraint had been used appropriately because I felt it was very personal. Each staff member had to make the best decision they could, based on how they felt in the situation.
102. There were very few occasions when I personally had to get involved in a restraint at Linnwood Hall. I think, on a couple of occasions, I was called into situations that were already ongoing. I do recall one female resident who had been behaving in an aggressive way for some time. There were occasions when she had to be restrained, but her behaviour got so bad I felt it couldn't be contained within the school situation. On one occasion, I made the decision to call the police. The girl was suspended as a result, and I had a full meeting with her parents.

103. Restraint is often very difficult to do safely, especially if the young person is your height, very fit and very strong. That is ultimately one of the reasons I had to retire. I was obviously involved in a situation where, unbeknownst to me at the time, I damaged nerves in my neck. It resulted in me having symptoms of continuous migraines. So, you do have to be very careful with regards to the young person's safety and your personal safety. That's why I favoured other forms of behaviour management, where possible and using restraint as a last resort. I'm not aware of any staff member going straight to restraint without at least trying to de-escalate the situation. I also didn't witness, or hear of, instances where I felt restraint was used excessively.

Concerns / complaints

104. I had no concerns about Linnwood Hall while I was there. We would receive feedback from social workers and psychologists, but nothing that I recall being negative. The only thing I was uneasy with was TCI, as I've said. When you give people a checklist process, so to speak, it's easier for them to reach the top level.
105. There was no reporting process as such, but if a child wished to make a complaint, they could make it known to care staff, a teacher, the educational psychologist or their social worker. If a child had raised a complaint, it is likely to have been recorded in the daily log and brought up in one of the planned staff meetings. I can't recall any peer or staff complaints being made directly to me.
106. I personally received a complaint from the father of a young person. The boy had said that on one occasion, in the corridor, I had taken his arm and pushed it up his back. I distinctly remember the incident. The boy was storming down the corridor. I asked him where he was going, and he muttered a response but kept walking. I did take his arm and as he kept walking, his arm went behind him, but not up his back. The story had obviously been enlarged, and this child had a history of exaggeration. That situation was looked into. There was a review meeting, which the father of the boy attended paralytically drunk, and the child took a picture from the wall and skimmed it across the room like a frisbee. The complaint was discussed, and nothing more came of it.

107. I also had cause to suspend a female member of care staff. I can't remember her name, but she was in her thirties and from Perth. I had taken notice of her because she always seemed to have one lad, who was around fifteen, gravitating towards her. He started to come in to school with fairly expensive clothing, shoes and jewellery. I wasn't aware of anything that linked them, but it was something I took notice of.
108. Unfortunately, that female member of staff was caught shoplifting while she was employed at the school and was involved in a further incident that had something to do with her car. Under the circumstances, I felt I couldn't allow her to come back to the school straight away. I suspended her and she ended up leaving her employment after that.

Child protection

109. Child protection and abuse weren't really talked about as a subject when I worked at Linnwood Hall. There was no real definition of abuse other than, it could take the form of physical or sexual abuse.
110. I think trying to protect children from abuse again came down to good staff/child relationships. You would hope that if a child felt comfortable with staff, or specific staff members, the child would talk to them about any concerns. Likewise, if you have staff who are very alert, you would hope that they would be able to pick up on potential situations.

Investigations into abuse

111. I was never involved in any investigations into abuse, nor was I made aware of any allegations of abuse being made by any of the young people.

Other Staff – Linnwood Hall

GLU

112. I remember GLU very well. He was the art teacher. I can't remember if he was already at Linnwood Hall when I became headmaster. He had a huge interest in making and flying model aircraft. He would bring them to the activity sessions to show the children.
113. GLU always appeared to be on good terms with the children. I didn't see or hear of him disciplining or abusing any child.

GLT

114. GLT was SNR of Linnwood Hall. He was SNR and then SNR. I think he was at the school the whole time I was there. He was absent during a period of illness, but I can't remember when that was.
115. GLT was responsible for a lot of the day-to-day running of the school, particularly in the lead up to my retirement. His office was next to the classrooms, and he took on the responsibility of the classroom floor when the majority of my time was spent dealing with the relocation of the school.
116. GLT was a larger-than-life character. He could be full-on one minute and then sulky and grumpy the next. I think he generally got on well with the children. He could be very loud and would give the children a good telling off. I'm sure he had initiated one of the restraints that I became involved in as it was ongoing. I never saw or heard of GLT inappropriately disciplining or abusing any child.

HPH

117. I don't recall a staff member called HPH

GLS

118. I don't remember a member of staff called GLS

GLQ

119. I remember GLQ. He was the sports teacher and was there throughout my time at the school. He was quite a character. He was never frightened to voice his opinions, sometimes rather forcefully.

120. GLQ was totally committed to the kids. He had a bit of a love/hate relationship with the boys. He made them do what he wanted, but I think they actually wanted to do it anyway because he was the sports teacher. GLQ was also involved in activities outside school and trips out. He raised his voice sometimes when he was out on the sports field for example. You almost expect that from a sports teacher. I never saw or heard of him disciplining or abusing any child.

KZP

121. KZP was SNR at Linnwood Hall. He was there before my time at the school and I believe he was still there when I retired. I do not recollect where he went when care staff were redeployed. He had his own office opposite GLT. My contact with him was to talk about things that I wanted to do which involved the care staff and keeping in touch, on an ad hoc basis, about the children.

122. KZP was a calm, collected man who I trusted to the care staff. From what I saw, he was always fairly measured in his interactions with the children. I didn't see or hear anything concerning him disciplining or abusing any child.

Leaving Linnwood Hall

123. I retired from Linnwood Hall in 2001 due to ill health. I oversaw the relocation of the school and then I left.

Disclosed documents

FIC-000001406 – File note relating to restraint of a young person, dated 23.11.1999

124. I have had sight of the document with reference number FIC-000001406 as it was disclosed to me prior to the session. The Mrs Buckle referred to in this document is now my wife. Buckle was her name at the time.
125. I believe this document is an excerpt from the incident log at Linnwood Hall. It refers to the girl that I had to suspend. I can't recall her name. Her behaviour had been increasingly aggressive, and on this occasion, she had to be restrained. I can't remember what set it off, but she was crashing around violently. The restraint unfortunately went on for some time as the young lady simply would not calm down. The police had to be called, and they attended the school. The girl then assaulted a female police officer.

FIC-000001322 – Document providing information on the current status of [REDACTED]

126. I have had sight of the document with reference number FIC-000001322 as it was disclosed to me prior to the session. It is a document providing information of the status of [REDACTED] who I remember as a pupil at the school. He is the boy that started coming in to school with expensive new clothing, shoes and jewellery. We all had our suspicions as to where the money was coming from to allow him to buy these things. [REDACTED] basically saw no further need for his attendance at the school.


127. I can't remember seeing this kind of report, in relation to this individual, during my time at Linnwood Hall. It looks to me as though it might have been prepared by one of the social workers, perhaps for the educational psychologists, but I can't be sure.

Helping the Inquiry

128. If allegations of abuse have been made about Lendrick Muir or Linnwood Hall, but the individuals or parents didn't complain to the school, at the time, then I have to wonder why. If a complaint had been raised with the schools, it would have been dealt with.
129. It's very easy for kids to exaggerate things that happened because it makes their case appear to be stronger. It's a difficult thing because if kids want to get back at you, they can do so in any number of ways, and it might be for something very minor like not getting to do an activity they wanted to do. But they are not always the innocent ones they appear to be. I think its very difficult to know where any allegations might generate from.
130. I think the best thing that can be done to protect children in residential establishments is to ensure that the adults, who work with children, are connected. It's no good having separate teams and departments. A unified approach is best.
131. It's also no good having children receive support in an establishment, but when they go home, they are unsupported. I know there are huge cost implications there, but we should encourage these kids the chance to realise all aspects of their potential.

Other information

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

Signed..........

Dated.....7.7.2025.....