

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MVX [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is MVX [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My earliest memory is living on a farm at [REDACTED] near Dunbar in East Lothian. I stayed there with my mother, [REDACTED] and father, [REDACTED]. My mother's maiden name was [REDACTED]. I have three sisters and two brothers. In order of age there is [REDACTED], [REDACTED], myself, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
3. [REDACTED] was disabled and lived in Edinburgh. I believe that [REDACTED] was adopted when he was born so I never knew him.
4. My mother and father were always fighting. It was that bad that I tried to kill myself [REDACTED]. I was taken to hospital. I was only five when this happened but I can't remember what treatment I received. Around about the same time myself and [REDACTED] thought about hanging ourselves [REDACTED]. Again this was because of how things were with my mum and dad.
5. I first went into care in 1970. I think it was because of what was happening between my mother and father. Me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and my brother [REDACTED] were put into a family group home at 67 Colgate Avenue, Tranent.

6. After I went into care I never saw my father again. When I was older I heard that he had married again. He also had another two children. My father died in either 1989 or 1990.

Family Group Home, 67 Colgate Avenue, Tranent

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Family Care Home

38. When I was expelled from the infant school in 1974 I think that the staff thought I had psychological and behavioural problems. It was decided I should go to East Fortune Hospital. Larry McCaffey took me there. I can't remember arriving at the hospital.

East Fortune Hospital, East Fortune

39. I don't remember much about my time at East Fortune. One of the doctors was called Doctor Wolf. She was apparently a very famous psychologist. The only other staff member I remember was a nurse. I think she was called Nurse MWE

Routine at East Fortune Hospital

40. East Fortune was quite a big place. It was all kids with perceived behavioural or psychological problems. It was very strict. A lot of the kids were wild.

Staff

41. There was different staff on all the time. They wore light blue uniforms. I don't remember anything about the staff other than Nurse MWE

Dormitories

42. I slept in a dormitory. It was all boys. There were about ten steel beds on each side of the room. The dormitory was always locked. Most of the time you weren't allowed out of your bed. Despite this every night there would be a lot of fights.
43. If you were caught fighting the staff would march you down the corridor with your arm up your back.

Medication

44. I was on medication. This was to try and keep me calm. I was given tablets. I think that because of this I can't remember much about East Fortune.

Leisure time

45. I was allowed to play in the gardens outside. All the time you would be closely supervised by the staff.

Abuse at East Fortune

46. Nurse MWE would give me a bath in scalding hot water. She would scrub me when I was in the bath. This would happen most days. I don't know if this happened to any of the other kids.

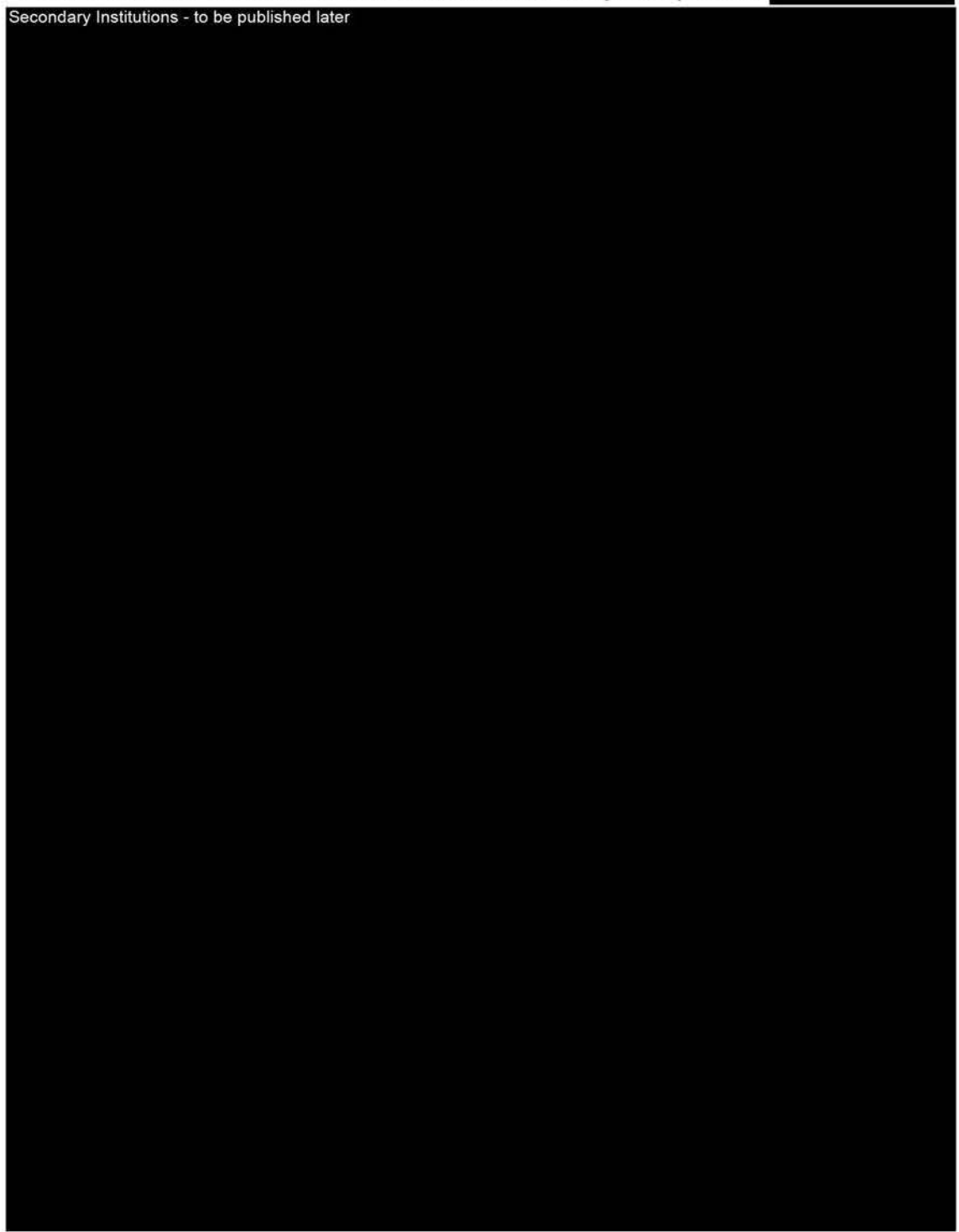
Leaving East Fortune

47. I was at East Fortune for about two years. When I left there I went back to the Family Group Home at Tranent.

Family Group Home, 67 Colgate Avenue, Tranent (second occasion)

48. I was about nine or ten when I went back to the Family Group Home. Secondary Institutions -

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving the Family Group Home

57. I was expelled from school again. I was at Tranent Primary School by this time. This was for throwing things at the teacher Secondary Institutions - to be published later I think I was about eleven or twelve when I left the home and went to Harmeny School at

Balerno. It was run by Save the Children. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Harmeny School, Mansfield Road, Balerno

58. When I first arrived at Harmeny School I stayed in the big house. Everyone who came to Harmeny started off there. You then moved to a separate cottage in the grounds when you were older. I think that there were about eighty to ninety kids there. They were aged between eight and thirteen.
59. The main house had three floors. The girls stayed in the middle floor. The boys were on the one above. There were about twelve boys in my dormitory. All the boys were about the same age as me. The dormitories had six wooden beds on each side of the room.
60. There was quite a bit of ground around the home. This had a large wall around it. I would say the home was secure. You couldn't come and go as you wanted. You weren't allowed out the grounds without permission. If you were in the grounds the staff would supervise you.
61. I had the same group of friends for almost the whole time that I was there. Their names were PHB [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I can't remember [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]'s surnames.

Staff

62. I don't know who was in overall charge at Harmeny. There were about ten staff who worked at the home. The ones that I can remember were MWV [REDACTED], David Brown, Harry Leask, MWG [REDACTED], MWH [REDACTED], KVM [REDACTED] and MWJ [REDACTED]. David Brown, KVM [REDACTED] and Harry were nice. The rest of them weren't. I don't remember KVM [REDACTED]'s surname.

63. I don't know if all the staff stayed at the home. Some of them did because I know they had their own rooms upstairs in the main house.

Routine at Harmeny

Mornings and bedtime

64. When you got up in the morning everyone went for breakfast together. There was one big dining room where we all had our meals.
65. At night it was chaotic when we went to bed. Everyone would mess around. The staff would come in and tell us to calm down. If we didn't do it then the staff member would stay in the room until we were asleep.

Mealtimes/Food

66. You would get your food in plastic bowls and cups then take it back to your table. The meals were okay but it was always unruly during them. There would be food getting thrown about all the time. Sometimes the staff would just let this happen. Other times they would stop it and there would be punishments. I can't remember what these were. There was always guaranteed to be a fight most days at mealtimes. This would be boys and girls.

Leisure time

67. There was a playroom on the ground floor of the main house that we could use.
68. When it was the year of Save the Children in 1977 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

69. Around about this time I started to do boxing. I think I had been fighting and one of the staff, David Brown, had seen me. David decided I would be a good boxer and that's how I got started. I also started to do running as well. [REDACTED] was a good runner and started doing it when I saw how well he was doing. [REDACTED] said if I done well I would get to go with the school to other places and take part in competitions. The school actually won a big competition and we went up to Rannoch to collect our awards.
70. Harry Leask and his wife Muriel taught me how to play chess. Muriel had been a world champion. Harry and Muriel would take some kids to their house in Balerno. This was just to give the kids something to do. It was nice to go there and get away from the home for a while.

Trips and holidays

71. The only trip I remember going on was for the summer solstice. We were taken to the top of the black hill in the Pentlands. We watched the sun coming up.
72. When Ireland were playing Scotland in Edinburgh we were taken to Dublin for the weekend. This was because the Irish plane was empty when it went back.
73. I don't remember any other trips or holidays with the home. This was apart from when I was doing my running.

School

74. The education at Harmeny seemed to be chaotic. It was all over the place. I didn't learn anything at school. The classrooms had about forty children in them. The teachers came to the school. They weren't part of the staff and didn't stay at the school. The teachers were okay. I didn't have any problems with them.
75. I would say that throughout my time in care the education was not good.

Healthcare

76. The healthcare was okay at the home. I had chickenpox once and was put into isolation.
77. We were also given regular dental check-ups. I can't remember if the dentist came to the home or went outside to see them.

Work

78. You didn't have to do any work in the home. All you were asked to do was make your bed and keep the space around it tidy.

Birthdays and Christmas

79. At Christmas we were taken to the pantomime as a group. I remember that Les Dawson and Rikki Fulton were in the pantomime. They knew we were from the home and they would give us presents after the show.
80. I don't remember anything else about what happened at Christmas.
81. Your birthday wasn't celebrated at Harmeny. I think that was because there were too many kids there to do this for everyone.

Visits

82. The Queen and Princess Anne visited the school in 1977. This was because it was the year of Save the Children. We had been told by the staff not to say anything to them. The Queen asked me what I liked about the home. I told her that I liked the privileges. I think I just said this for something to say.
83. Larry, my social worker, would still visit me regularly to see how I was getting on. I would say that Larry was a positive influence on me.

Family contact

84. I had been at Harmeny about a year when my mother visited me. I told her to "fuck off" as I didn't want to see her. She had bought me a new pair of shoes. I just threw them back at her. I was angry at her about what had gone on over the years. This was the only time she visited me at the home. I never saw her again for the whole time I was there. I didn't have any contact with any of my other siblings when I was in the home.

Personal possessions

85. I never had any personal possessions in Harmeny.

Running away

86. I never ran away at Harmeny. I never had any thoughts about this. I think it was probably because I had more space there Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Discipline

87. If you had been caught fighting you were taken to what was called a 'calm down room'. The room had soft cushions in it. One time I cut my hand after punching the wire window on the door of the room. I was taken to the hospital for it to be stitched. I still have the scar.
88. If you were in the quiet room it would be until you had calmed down. When I was in there I never calmed down. I would be throwing things about. I hated being locked in a room.

Bed Wetting

89. I was still wetting the bed. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later] The staff weren't aggressive towards me. They would ask if I needed the toilet before going to bed. If I did wet the bed the staff would take the sheets away. They wouldn't make a big thing of it. I was still on the medication and it was helping me. no one ever made fun of me if it happened.

Other information

90. When I was bout twelve years old I tried to kill myself. [redacted] had some [redacted]. They were supposed to be [redacted]. Four of us decided to [redacted]. I don't remember the other two kids names. We thought if we did this it would mean we would no longer be at the school. [KVM], who was a member of staff, saw us [redacted]. We were taken to Edinburgh Infirmary. Our stomachs were pumped to make us sick. After this we went back to Harmeny.

Abuse at Harmeny School

91. There was a lot of abuse at Harmeny. I saw a lot of things happening to other kids.

[MWF]

92. [MWF] was one of the staff. I don't know her surname. I remember her being quite big built. If [MWF] caught you fighting she would grab you by the hair and sit on you. She would also dig her nails into your legs then tell you to calm down.

[MWG] [MWH] and [MWI]

93. Some of us would be asked to go to either [MWG] or [MWH]'s rooms. At first I thought that this was great listening to the music. [MWI] would ask us to dance with [MWH] and [MWG]. We were then asked to have a slow dance.

They would hug and kiss us. If we got excited in a sexual way they would stop dancing and start laughing at us. This happened over quite a long period of time. They thought it was okay to do this to us. The other children who were asked to go to the rooms were PHB [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

MWJ [REDACTED]

94. MWJ [REDACTED] was in charge of the cottage in the grounds. He was the worst staff member. MWJ [REDACTED] was about six foot tall and had a beard. Everyone was terrified of him. He was a bully. He was horrible and would beat you up or hit you for nothing. All the children were frightened of him. I once saw him throw a kid against a tree.
95. One night, after I had moved into the cottage, I got up to go to the toilet. I saw MWJ [REDACTED] kissing and cuddling with MWH [REDACTED] in the lounge. I knew that MWJ [REDACTED] was married. When he saw me he grabbed me by the back of the neck and really beat me up. When I was being hit he told me that if I told anyone I was dead. I was so frightened that I wet myself. MWH [REDACTED] never did anything. She just watched what was happening.

Family Group Home, 67 Colgate Avenue, Tranent (3rd occasion)

96. After leaving Harmeny I went back to the Family Group Home. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Life after being in care

108. When I was leaving the family home I decided to apply for the army. A couple of my mates had suggested this. The first time I applied and sat the army test I failed it. I went to night school to study maths and English. I was still at the home in Tranent.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

109. I applied again for the army and was successful and joined on [REDACTED] 1981. I found the first six months in the army hard. In the beginning it was difficult to settle in. There was a lot of bullying. I was eventually posted to the Royal Scots.

110. The worst thing that my mother did was on the day of my passing out parade with the army in Aberdeen. I was to be given two awards and my mother had said she

would be there. The sergeant major told me that my mother had phoned that morning and said she wouldn't be able to make it.

111. In the army I learnt more English and maths. This was part of the junior service programme. I passed these and realised how poor my education had been when I was in care.
112. I married when I was in the army and we had a daughter. The marriage didn't last and we divorced. I think that I was married too young.
113. I was in the army for twelve years including my time in the territorial's.
114. When I left the army I moved to Warrington and tried to make a go of it with my marriage but it didn't work out. I had another daughter who now stays with me.
115. I never had many relationships after my divorce. I think that the last one was about three years ago. I am concentrating on my daughter as she is at the age now where she will be sitting her exams.
116. I went from job to job after leaving the army. I worked in a steel factory for a while in Warrington. I had to leave about ten years ago when I found out I had arthritis.
117. I have had a lot of challenges in my life due to my time in care. I have been diagnosed as having depression. I also suffer from PTSD. The Royal British Legion has helped me with this.
118. I had still been in touch with my mother during my time in the army. She had a new partner who I referred to as my step dad. He was a nice guy. I would go and stay with his dad, who I called my grandad. I got on really well with him.
119. The only one of my siblings that I have seen since being in care is [REDACTED]. I have seen her a couple of times. I discovered that I had a niece who worked with [REDACTED]. I

also know that I have aunties and cousins from my mother and fathers sides. I don't really keep in touch with any of them.

120. It was in 2007 I found out about the Royal British Legion. I spoke with them and they helped me with the debt I had. Four years ago I became a volunteer helping out with things like the poppy appeals.
121. About a year ago I was thinking of taking my own life. It was because of the legion and my daughter that I didn't.

Impact

122. The time I had in care has had a massive impact on me. I feel that I have lost all of my childhood. I lost all my family connections. I don't trust anyone and I have difficulty with relationships. Sometimes I feel that I am scared of relationships in case they come in and try to take over.
123. There was no real guidance provided when I was in care. I think it was expected that you would just go straight into the forces when you left.

Reporting of Abuse

124. In 2001 I reported the abuse I had suffered to the police. I had went to my doctor and told him about the abuse I suffered in care. The doctor provided me with contact details for a dedicated police operation in Liverpool. When I spoke with them they helped me get in touch with the police [REDACTED] in Scotland.
125. The Liverpool police noted a statement from me and sent it to the police in Scotland. They got back in touch with me after this and informed me that there wasn't enough evidence to take the case any further. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Records

126. I know that my social worker, Larry, wrote a report about our time in care. I saw this report around 1977 or 1978. It related to all of us. I've never tried to recover the rest of my records.

Lessons to be Learned

127. I hope that the Inquiry gets the information that they require. I also hope that the people who are named face prosecution for what they have done. It's not about money or compensation. It's about justice.

Other information

128. I have previously had a couple of sessions with a counsellor. The counsellor said that I needed to deal with my childhood experiences first before she could help me with the present. After this I decided to contact the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.
129. I have not had any other treatment or support since my time in care.
130. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..

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Dated..

28/2/19