

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

KYT

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is KYT. My date of birth is 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in [redacted] and, prior to attending St Vincent's, I lived in [redacted] with my mum, [redacted], my dad, [redacted] and my five siblings. I have three brothers and two sisters. [redacted] is the oldest. He is around [redacted] years older than me. [redacted] is [redacted] months older than me. [redacted] is [redacted] years younger than me. [redacted] is [redacted] years younger than me and [redacted] is [redacted] years younger than me.
3. I don't have many memories of family life before I went to St Vincent's at the age of three. I wasn't born deaf. [redacted]  
[redacted] Initially, my mum was told I was fine, but after a year to a year and a half, the diagnosis confirmed that I was deaf.
4. At the time my mum and dad were deciding which school would be best for me, my mum happened to meet a nun from St Vincent's, who told her about the school. My mum and dad took me for a visit. I don't remember it, but I know they took me. There was a primary school very close to our family home, and it would have been easy to

go there, but my parents thought St Vincent's would be the best education for me. I attended St Vincent's School between 1963 and 1972, from the age of three to twelve.

### **St Vincent's School**

5. St Vincent's School was a Roman Catholic, co-educational, residential school for the deaf, blind and deaf-blind in Glasgow. It was an old, brown sandstone building, linked to a more modern part of the school, built in the late 1960s, early 1970s. It was run by the Daughters of Charity, but we just called them 'the nuns'.
6. The school was for children from the age of three, up to sixteen or seventeen. There were also non-residential day pupils who attended. I would say there was a fifty-fifty split between residential and non-residential pupils. I couldn't say exactly how many children were in the school, but I wouldn't be surprised if it were one hundred and fifty to two hundred.

### **Routine at St Vincent's School**

#### *Initial memories*

7. One concern I have, in speaking to the Inquiry, is that I don't have many memories of on my time at St Vincent's at all. I remember a couple of specific events, but not much before or after them. I have also been told various things by other former pupils. I have a few photographs of me when I was at school. Other people may use photographs, and things like that, to help their memories come back to them. I don't find that happens for me. I just don't retain the information.
8. My earliest memory of St Vincent's is of a special celebration day for St Mary. I think it happened in May each year. We wore special outfits and someone carried a crown which was placed on the head of the St Mary statue. I have a photograph of me in my

special outfit, that's why I remember it. I was carrying the crown and wearing a silvery, blue suit.

9. I attended St Vincent's on a residential basis from Monday to Friday each week. I went home at the weekend and during the holidays. At school, there were four of us, [REDACTED]

#### *Staff*

10. The staff at St Vincent's were a mixture of nuns and teachers. I would say there were around ten staff on the residential side and maybe two thirds were residential staff and one third were nuns, I think. I couldn't tell you the names of many of the staff and the nuns changed their names from time to time. I don't know if that was a traditional thing within the order.
11. The only names I know of, from my time at the school, are Sister **KTA** and Sister **LXH**. I understand that Sister **LXH** changed her name while I was there, but I don't know what she changed it to. Sister **KTA** was **SNR** and [REDACTED] it was Sister **LXH**. I don't remember that, but I got that information from speaking to friends, after I left.
12. I couldn't tell you what Sister **KTA** and Sister **LXH** were like, but I do remember people telling me stories about them. From what I've heard, Sister **KTA** was a good nun.
13. The nuns always wore their formal habits. They had massive hats which went up at the sides. Their hats then changed to ones which were more straight across their temples and down the sides of their head. Our signs for the nuns mimicked the shape of their hats. I don't know where the nuns lived. I always assumed they lived in the school somewhere and as far as I know, it was only the nuns, not the lay people, who lived at the school.

### *Sleeping arrangements*

14. Residential pupils slept in dormitories. There were no individual bedrooms. The dormitories would have around six to eight beds in each. When you walked down the corridor, there was a half wall, with a half window on top. There were six to eight beds on one side and another six to eight beds on the other. I can't remember if I always slept in the same dormitory, or if it changed over the years.
15. There were separate residential areas for girls and boys. I think we were all in the same building, just different areas, possibly different floors.

### *Clothing/uniform*

16. I don't know if I had my own clothes, from home, at St Vincent's or if clothes were provided on site. I do have a photograph of me in a green jacket, shirt and tie, so presumably, there was a uniform.

### *Washing/bathing*

17. We showered at St Vincent's every Sunday evening. I think it was just once a week. I remember there being shower cubicles with curtains. Sometimes we had privacy, but sometimes the nuns would pull the curtains open, presumably to check we were washing properly.

### *Mealtimes/food*

18. We would all go to the dining room to eat. I remember the dining room being split with a wooden partition to separate the boys and girls. The deaf children mixed with the blind children during mealtimes, boys with boys and girls with girls.



19. I have a feeling we had to line up to be served and we would take our food back to our tables on a tray. Some of the blind kids were partially sighted. Others were assisted by staff. I've heard stories that some of the deaf kids would mock the blind kids. They would put their unwanted food on the blind kid's plates. I don't remember that happening, but I've been told it did.
20. I have no memory of what the food was like or of kids ever being force fed. At home, my family were decidedly working-class, so you ate what you were given. I think it was like that for most of us at St Vincent's.

#### *Leisure time*

21. I don't recall what we did during leisure time. I assume there was a TV and I know from visiting the school after I left, there was a big playground outside and two red ash football pitches.

#### *Schooling*

22. I don't remember much about the standard of education at St Vincent's. Other former pupils I've spoken to have said there were some good teachers and some bad. Some they praise, others they don't. I don't think children who went to St Vincent's achieved much in the way of exam success.

#### *Signing at St Vincent's*

23. My mother told me that I didn't sign at all before going to St Vincent's. She said I tried to speak. There was a machine that you could use to learn how to speak. There were [REDACTED] other deaf kids [REDACTED] and we all shared this machine. I also used to wear body worn hearing aids.

24. We were never really taught sign language at St Vincent's. You just kind of picked it up from other kids. I'm not sure the teachers knew, or used, much sign language and there was no specific signing teacher. A lot of the teachers, for the deaf, were not good signers and not qualified to sign. There were five schools for the deaf back then, all of which would have had their own variation of sign language. All five schools have now closed.

#### *Healthcare*

25. I'm not sure how healthcare was dealt with overall and I don't remember anything about dentistry. There was an audiologist who came to the school from time to time to check and irrigate our ears.

#### *Religious instruction*

26. My mum and dad were Catholic and I believe all the children who went to St Vincent's were Catholic. We used to go to mass at school. From what I've been told, there was an emphasis on religion, as you would expect, but it became less and less over time.

#### *Discipline*

27. I think most kids at St Vincent's were frightened of the nuns and teachers. I was a good boy. I tried to stay out of mischief and I did as I was asked, so I was never in trouble. That wasn't the case for everyone. I did witness nuns and teachers use physical punishment.

## Abuse at St Vincent's School

Mr KXZ

28. Mr KXZ was someone I had seen at St Vincent's. I don't know if he was a house father, a volunteer, or a non-religious worker. He used to come to the school in the evenings. He married a woman called who was a residential worker at St Vincent's. She worked under a lady called Margaret Walker. Margaret was a house mother.
29. When I was around eleven, we went on a trip to Rowardennan Youth Hostel. I don't know if we were away for the week or just a weekend. We slept in an open plan dormitory with bunk beds. I was in a top bunk.
30. During the night, I felt someone putting their hand under my cover and touching me, down there. It was dark, but straight away, I saw it was a man with a beard and I recognised him as Mr KXZ. I can vocalise when I want to, so I screamed loudly and pushed him away. After that, I remember tucking my sheets around me, very tightly, and I didn't sleep the rest of the night because I was too scared. The next morning, Mr KXZ came to me and I remember him telling me I must have had a bad dream. At the time, I was a bit confused at him telling me I had a bad dream, but it wasn't a dream. I don't know if anything more happened that night, before or after I woke up. It is possible I've blanked certain things from my memory.
31. Even since then, I always tuck my sheets in under my body weight, around my bottom and my legs, because of what happened. As soon as someone touches me, when I'm asleep, I'm immediately awake and instantly alert. I didn't see or hear of Mr KXZ doing anything to any other child, but I didn't discuss what happened to me with anyone.

Mr KXX

32. Mr KXX was a teacher at St Vincent's. I remember he always used to wear a jacket. One day, when I was in his class, he targeted a boy called . I was around eleven at the time, so would have been around thirteen or fourteen.
33. I witnessed Mr KXX remove a belt from his jacket. He told to place his hands on a table. Mr KXX drew the belt back, over his shoulder, and hit on the hands with it. I don't know if it was a belt for corporal punishment, or if it was a trouser belt and I can't remember how many times was hit. I also can't recall what led up to this, if had done something or not.
34. I only witnessed Mr KXX behave in that way once, but I've heard from other former pupils that it happened more than once, and not just to . Some children from St Vincent's ended up with mental health problems, later in life. As an adult, was diagnosed with and has now passed away.
35. I used to work with a company who supported deaf adults with mental health conditions. was one of the service users at the unit I worked in. I remember a period when his mental health deteriorated and he was transferred to a hospital. I visited him at the hospital. He was very ill and it was very sad. There was a newly qualified BSL (British Sign Language) interpreter there when I visited. I should point out that there are different variations of BSL for example, there were signs specific to those who went to St Vincents, there were also Roman Catholic signs and Protestant signs. The interpreter present was not familiar with the St Vincent's signing tradition.
36. During my visit, others who were present were asking questions. They kept talking to him about keep-fit. People are given sign names which usually relate to an aspect of their appearance or personality. The sign for fitness and the sign that we used at St Vincent's for Mr KXX were the same. So, they thought that was signing fitness, but he was actually signing, over and over again, about Mr KXX



I had to point it out and explain that [REDACTED] came from the St Vincent's signing tradition. Unless the interpreter was from the same signing tradition, he wouldn't have known. I found it very sad that for months [REDACTED] had been repeating 'KXX [REDACTED] bad' over and over again and it hadn't been picked up on.

*Unidentified nun*

37. I also witnessed another incident involving a nun and a pupil, [REDACTED]. I don't know the name of the nun involved.
38. I remember seeing [REDACTED] standing in from of the lockers in the school. One of the nuns asked [REDACTED] to put his hands out in front of him. She then hit him two or three times, across the hands, with a wooden coat hanger. The nun hitting him was getting angry because [REDACTED] wasn't reacting. She told him to take his trousers, not pants, down and she hit him on the thigh with her hand. [REDACTED] started crying and this seemed to satisfy the nun.
39. I would have been around eleven and a half or twelve when this happened, so [REDACTED] would have been around thirteen. [REDACTED] was an adolescent boy and he was told to take his trousers down in front of everyone, including girls. The girls and boys both had lockers in that area, just in two different sections.
40. I have no idea what [REDACTED] had done to warrant this and I can't describe the nun. I think she was part of the residential team, but I can't be sure.

*Unidentified nun/nuns*

41. On a Sunday evening, when I came back from my parents' house, everyone went for a shower. After the shower, we were all lined up, naked. The nuns would slap any boy they deemed to be dirty and demand they got back in the shower. I always remember this because, while we were lined up, the nuns would use a steel nit comb on us and drag it through our hair. Once, I remember seeing blood coming from the top of the

boy's head who was standing next to me. They were very rough. This happened every Sunday and right up until I stopped going to the school on a residential basis.

42. There were a lot of boys at St Vincent's who came from very different backgrounds, some poor. I was in a position where I could go home every weekend, but not everyone was in the same position. I always tried to be a good boy at school. I was never hit, but from what I saw and from what I've heard from others, it was not uncommon.

### **Leaving**

43. I left St Vincent's in 1972, when I was twelve years old. Shortly before I left, I stopped the residential component of it and I started to travel to the school each day. My mum and dad travelled with me until I got used to using the buses. I got two buses to school which took around an hour and a half. There was also a blind girl who lived in [REDACTED] who went to St Vincent's. Sometimes I got a lift to school with her, and her parents.
44. Soon after I started attending as a day pupil, my mum and dad received some sort of advertisement for [REDACTED] School in [REDACTED]. I'm sure my mum had a sixth sense, as mothers do, that something wasn't right at St Vincents. They took me to visit [REDACTED] and I sat an entrance exam. I was offered a residential place and I believe there was a [REDACTED] funding arrangement made.

### **Life after St Vincent's School**

[REDACTED] School, [REDACTED]

45. I went to [REDACTED] School from 1972 to 1977, from the age of twelve to seventeen. I had to sit an entrance exam to go there. The exam took place at St Vincent's and I think a few of us took the exam. I don't remember being asked if I

wanted to go to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]

46.

47.

48.

I found out sometime after I left [REDACTED] that it was Strathclyde Regional Council, as it was then, that funded my place and paid for my [REDACTED] to and from school.

#### *Life after leaving school*

49. When I left [REDACTED], I applied for a job in [REDACTED], but I got rejected because I was deaf. My father had worked in [REDACTED] and he said, "*Leave it with me and I'll sort this out*". I wondered if part of the reason [REDACTED] knocked me back was because I didn't have enough qualifications. So, I went back to St Vincent's School, at the age of eighteen, to get more O-levels. I had failed English at [REDACTED]. I went back to St Vincent's for around six months, once or twice a week, to study English and arithmetic.

50. After I had the qualifications, I applied to [REDACTED] again. My father was a [REDACTED] and he questioned, now that I had the right qualifications, why they kept knocking me back. He wasn't a man to be messed with. So, I did get the job in [REDACTED] and started as a late apprentice [REDACTED].
51. I worked in [REDACTED] for ten years. Then, I took voluntary redundancy and moved into the care sector. I worked for [REDACTED] who had a residential nursing home in [REDACTED] for deaf people who were sign language users. I worked there for two and a half years as a [REDACTED] and then as a [REDACTED]. I then went to work as a [REDACTED] for the [REDACTED] who were based in [REDACTED]. They supported people with additional needs and/or physical disabilities. From there, I went to work with [REDACTED]. They supported deaf adults, who used BSL, who had mental health issues. I was there for around four years. I then moved to the [REDACTED]. I set up a befriending project which supported deaf children with their mental health from the age of eleven to eighteen. I then went back to [REDACTED] as [REDACTED]. My role was to encourage deaf people to participate in more health activities to reduce the risk of stroke and heart attack. I was with them for ten years. Then, I went back to [REDACTED] as a [REDACTED] for deaf adults. I was there around four years. After that, I began working for the NHS as a [REDACTED]. I've been in in that role for around five years.
52. I met my wife, [REDACTED] while I was working in [REDACTED]. We met at a deaf club, when they had deaf clubs. My wife is also deaf. We married around 1984 and we have two sons [REDACTED].
53. I do think my experiences at St Vincent's encouraged me into my line of work in the care sector. I'm certainly more aware of the difficulties people might experience, particularly mental health issues within the deaf community. I went on to become a [REDACTED] for deaf people. Deaf people are much more at risk of suffering mental health difficulties than those in the hearing community. I believe the statistic is twenty-five percent more at risk, due to the communication barriers and so on.



## Reporting of Abuse

54. I have not reported the abuse I suffered, or witnessed, to the police. I only told my wife around six months ago and we've been together for forty-three years. We were outside walking, at the [REDACTED], and for some reason, it came up, out of the blue. I don't know what brought it to mind after all that time. That was a difficult day, talking about it to my wife. I also told my two sons around six weeks ago because I knew my date for speaking to the Inquiry was coming up.
55. My wife and sons have been a great support. It has helped share the burden in a way. I think it's maybe been in my subconscious for so long and there's been this weight on me. It felt better to get it out and talk about it with people I trust.
56. I never told my mum and dad about what happened at St Vincent's at the time, or after. Maybe I should have, but I had a happy home and family life and I do think I recognised how much my mum and dad had on their plate with six kids. That's definitely part of the reason I never spoke to them about it. My mother has now passed away and my dad is [REDACTED] so, I'm not planning on telling him, he's too old.

## Impact

57. I've kept everything that happened at St Vincent's inside for fifty-three years. I didn't want to think about it, let alone talk about it. I don't know what changed six months ago, when I told my wife. It was after that, that I decided to contact the Inquiry. Since then, I have been having flashbacks of the sexual abuse by Mr [REDACTED] KXZ [REDACTED]

### **Treatment/support**

58. I have considered speaking to a counsellor over the last six months, but for me, I have my own way of dealing with things. I have my own support network. I'm also very into [REDACTED] and I do that whenever I can. I find it helps me switch off and deal with things.

### **Records**

59. I have not requested any of my records from my time at St Vincent's. I wasn't actually aware that I could ask for those. It didn't occur to me. I'm not sure what I would gain from having them.

### **Lessons to be learned**

60. I know you can't change the past, but as one of my sons said to me about the sexual abuse, it happened once and once was too much. It shouldn't have happened at all.
61. As a [REDACTED] I try to support people who are having a negative mental health experience. I don't know if the same support is offered in residential schools. I think it is important to have peer role models that children can go to for support and advice. I think it is also important for deaf children to have easy access to interpreters as teachers, even nowadays, are not always good signers.
62. There should be deaf awareness training for all staff involved with deaf children. Bringing in more deaf adults to work with deaf children would make a difference as I think it's important for deaf children to have deaf adult role models. It would be helpful for deaf children to see deaf adults achieving and to be able to speak to them in their own first language.

**Other information**

63. My motivation for coming forward is to tie things up for myself. I wanted to open up in a professional setting in the hope that something might be done about it and it doesn't happen again. It's important for people in the deaf community to know what's going on and that there's support there, if they ask for it. I hope there are more deaf people who are prepared to come forward to talk about their experiences.
64. 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.

KYT

Signed.....

Dated.....

03/02/2025