

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MWJ

Support person present: No

1. My name is MWJ. My date of birth is 1947. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I was born in Liverpool. I am from a working-class background with no previous experience of working in a profession, certainly not social work.
3. I was initially involved in voluntary work and became a community service volunteer (CSV), which was a charitable organisation. I went on placements, first of all to Winson Green Prison in Birmingham, where they asked me to help set up a nursery. That didn't last long, but because of my involvement in sport, they sent me on to a Bryn Y Don approved school in South Wales where I assisted the housemaster, who was responsible for a group of forty to fifty teenage boys.
4. I was only able to do that for one year however was fortunate enough to find a job at an near by school for primary aged kids, Headlands School in Penarth. That was an enjoyable experience for me. I worked there as a houseparent and had a group of twelve kids. It was in a National Children's Home, a Methodist run organisation and I was one of the few men working there. I provided day-to-day supervision and was paid for doing things I liked to do. We did lots of outdoor things and the kids were really nice.

5. I was comfortable in Wales. It suited me and I could play rugby. I would have been in my early twenties at that time.
6. Unfortunately, the National Children's Home didn't pay well and I intended on getting married. Reluctantly, I took a job in another part of the approved school system, which was in a remand unit for kids. That was at Crick Remand Home and it was appalling. I was there for three months and thought it was totally inappropriate. I actually made a formal complaint to Gwent County Council about the quality of care and the treatment of kids in there. Nothing to do with me, but subsequently there was an inquiry and the place was closed down.
7. Luckily for me, I saw a one-year post in Liverpool Council Children's Unit covering for somebody away doing a residential childcare course. It was a deputy warden post looking after ten children all of whom had challenging behaviour. It was a good experience and I learned lots.
8. After that contract, I applied for another role as a housemaster in Mileoak boys' approved school down in Brighton. I was there for three years and it was a completely different experience for me. It was an intermediate school so the boys were teenagers. It was a large school with around one hundred and twenty boys. In there, I dealt with a lot of aggression between different cultural groups. It could be very stressful and we were, at times, faced with very difficult decisions. As I was unqualified, I had to go through a Home Office board to be accepted into the post.
9. Unfortunately, my wife and I split up around that time. I had been working with some of the social workers in the local area and they asked me if I had thought about coming in to work with them in community social work. There happened to be a one-year contract going in the area, so I ended up working at Woking Social Work Office for Surrey County Council as an unqualified social worker. As I was the only male in the office, I became the link officer to the local Mosque.
10. I met my future wife. We decided to set up home together but we wanted to make a move. I was looking to go back into working in schools. That's when we saw the advert for Harmeny School in Balerno.

Qualifications / Training

11. Whilst working at Headlands School in Penarth, I was able to complete a residential childcare course. Subsequent to my time in Harmeny, I went on to complete the Certificate Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) whilst seconded by Lothian Region.

Experiences at Harmeny School

The Institution / Culture

12. The purpose of Harmeny School was to provide a respite for both families and for children. It was to provide an experience, something they might not have had in their own home settings. When I think back, subsequent to my involvement in Harmeny, I think, how can you take eight-year-old children away from home? Children who are already exhibiting difficult behaviour and then, after Harmeny, put them back into the same home environment.
13. Most of the staff at Harmeny were English and the majority were from a middle class background, whilst the children were mostly from a working class environment. Certainly, the management team and management board were from a completely different background to these children. We then expected the children to assimilate the Harmeny experience back home. Harmeny was good from the point of view it gave children a break and we hopefully raised their expectations. We maybe gave them a look at alternative ways of dealing with stress, problems and anxiety. We were looking to provide alternatives and raise their self-esteem in some way. For some children, that worked.
14. My first impression of Harmeny was that it was a beautiful building in lovely grounds. I remember thinking SNR's house was nice. It was a Lorimer designed building, a smaller version of the Harmeny building itself. Harmeny was on the fringes of Balerno, an area I didn't know at all. I'd never actually been to Scotland, so it was all new to me. I was looking round and wondering how I could fit into the community.

15. SNR [REDACTED] KVJ [REDACTED] was a very nice agreeable host along with his wife and their daughter. KVJ [REDACTED] had some ideas I felt comfortable with. We had similar backgrounds in a way. He had been to Loughborough College, where I think, he trained as a P.E. teacher. KVJ [REDACTED]'s wife, [REDACTED], was the social worker for the school, at that time. They were very welcoming and accommodating to us and allowed us to stay in their house, which must have been an upheaval because we had a Great Dane rescue dog with us.
16. Harmeny building itself was a bit run down and probably wouldn't have met current standards due to some elements of dilapidation but generally, it wasn't too bad. It was summertime so the children weren't there and I was seeing the building empty. We were shown the accommodation, which was okay, a bit basic and a bit cramped.
17. Initially, it was all very positive and the area was nice. The school was situated on the edge of new estates, which were being built in the area.
18. I did find it a difficult introduction. There were some established practices already in place and I felt folk were very suspicious of me, the new guy coming in. There were a lot of new staff starting at the same time. That seemed to be the culture at Harmeny, a high turnover of staff. There were a lot of young staff and people coming from university looking for some work experience. In some cases, they came pre-university.
19. One of the staff, who had been there for a while, said that they weren't expected to stay for more than two or three years, which I thought was interesting. They didn't seem happy I was there. There was a guy who was already in post and who seemed to be the team leader, although I don't think in any formal way. Obviously, he wasn't happy that this new guy had come in and been appointed as team leader. He left within a month of me being there. I believe he was leaving anyway due to other issues and a disagreement with the headteacher. I think his name was Mike Reaves. He had been there for a while and had long established relationships with the local youth club and seemed to be heavily involved with the local police. He seemed to have his own little circle and he wasn't too happy about me coming in.

20. I asked SNR [REDACTED], KVJ [REDACTED], for guidance in what was expected of me and he asked me to try and bring more structure to the place. It did seem to be a very unstructured setting.
21. Harry Leask was SNR [REDACTED] and was also new in at the time. He had come with his family from Donaldson's School for the Deaf in Edinburgh. We felt it was a new management structure. In theory, I was part of the management team, but in a very junior role. I was the team leader for the care staff. We tried to make people a bit more accountable because it seemed care staff were doing pretty much their own thing.
22. There was the education side and the care side of things. We had to provide some form of structure and some form of recording. For instance, one of the first things I introduced was a daybook, so we knew what folk were doing at any one time. I think that was important, you need to know where people are and what they are doing.
23. Prior to that, there were files that staff added comment to in an informal way, reviews and things like that. A daybook was a basic thing and was something that was common in other establishments I had worked in.
24. There was a shift system in place but I felt it was very haphazard. I wanted more formality to it so people knew what their days off were. We only had a day and a half off per week and at first that could be at any time. My days off were Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday. I was trying to introduce a structure.
25. When you are working with children who are disturbed or having difficulties, you need a structure so that the children know where they are, and what they are doing, and they know there is going to be a person around at a particular time. We worked to produce, what I thought, was a more appropriate timetable and pattern where staff knew when their time-off was. Harmeny had operated a system where you didn't really operate more than eight to ten weeks in advance. Then you would get a long weekend or a week off. We were working with children in quite an intense way and some of the children's behaviours were very challenging.

26. It was all year round although children did go away at Christmas and for a summer and Easter break. I can understand why some staff left so quickly.
27. There weren't many children when I started, around twenty-eight. It was a much smaller establishment than I had been used to. I think the maximum registration was thirty-two. They went through a phase when they were probably going to struggle financially because the roll dropped to low twenties. I think, financially, the place was under some duress at that time. Kvj [REDACTED] wanted to develop things as much as he could but he was hamstrung by working for a voluntary organisation. Local authorities also changed their policies over that time so there were constraints financially. Social workers were under pressure to keep children in their own area.
28. Most children were coming from the Edinburgh and the westside of Glasgow, surprisingly. Children were also coming from the north, Dundee, Aberdeen, Arbroath and in fact, one girl came from Skye. East Lothian seemed to have their own system. I actually kept coming across her on a regular basis after I left. Forty years later, she's competing in the Special Olympics.
29. Generally, the staff had a good relationship with the children. Everybody had their own backgrounds and experience that would affect how they responded to the children. Some people were very maternal in their aspects. There was no set ethos and people weren't told how they should operate. There was a general understanding about caring and about making sure people were safe and understood the boundaries.
30. It was a very open setting. Imagine a large mansion set in its own grounds with acres of woodlands and fields surrounding it. There were no barriers.
31. All the domestic staff were local people who would come and go. It was a well known place and had been in the area since the fifties. It had changed headteachers over the period and I think this had affected the school. I remember meeting some of the old staff, mainly domestic staff, when I started playing rugby for [REDACTED]. I played there for some years. Folk would say, "Oh, you work in the hippie commune?" I never thought of myself as a hippie although I did have long hair and a beard. That was the reputation

Harmeny had. Over the years, it possibly did attract folk who displayed those sort of values.

32. These folk were the care staff. The teaching staff were quite separate from the structure of the school and I think that was how it was perceived.
33. I started at Harmeny either in the September or August 1974 and I left, July, August or September 1978. So, I was there for four years.

My role and recruitment at Harmeny School

34. My partner and I drove up to Scotland for what was quite an involved interview process. We both spent the weekend at Harmeny. That was how they recruited for posts. The role I applied for was team leader and to be involved in the organisation of the setup. My partner was applying for the role of houseparent. We spent the weekend there, which was followed by a formal interview at the Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh.
35. On the panel was Sula Wolff, who was the consultant psychiatrist along with other psychiatrists and members of the school board management. It was quite a formal interview however, I was offered the post. So was my partner, [REDACTED]. We moved into the cottage, which was in the grounds of the school. It was cramped accommodation with a living room, kitchen, bathroom and we had our Great Dane. During our time there, [REDACTED] and I married and our daughter was born.
36. We actually shared the cottage with SNR [REDACTED], Harry Leask, his family and also the admin staff, who were all in other parts of the cottage. They eventually decided to build a new accommodation unit for SNR [REDACTED] and his family. So, Harry vacated his end of the cottage and my wife and I moved in. The admin staff moved into a new office block, which had been built adjacent to us and some of the older Harmeny children were moved into the old admin area within the cottage.
37. My wife and I stayed there for around four years. We were paid via the 'Save the Children fund', which is a voluntary organisation, so our salaries were not great.

Staff structure

38. Harmeny had a school board who would meet quarterly. They would come in and walk round the school, pat a few heads and then leave. They were very hands-off.
39. SNR [REDACTED] was KVJ [REDACTED]. I would describe him as charismatic. He wasn't a disciplinarian and I wouldn't say he was too structured in his management. He adopted the old charismatic style of social work, not working to a set structure. He was generally a nice guy and quite caring and sensitive to staff needs. He allowed staff to try different things. I felt there had been too much autonomy and not enough accountability. That particular style could work but the type of children coming in displayed some difficult behaviours and because of that, I think we needed to have more structure. We needed to keep people safe but without being too cosseted and too structured. KVJ [REDACTED] was very much of that opinion and he would allow people to take risks.
40. SNR [REDACTED]'s position was responsible for education, although KVJ [REDACTED] did do some teaching in the school.
41. I was responsible for the daycare side of things, out of school hours. I remember three teachers, four teachers at times, in the period I was there. They needed support one or twice and I was asked to go into the classroom and cover. I taught things like geography, commonsense things.
42. In terms of care staff, there were probably around ten or twelve of them. I was directly responsible for all care staff and I found it to be a very informal structure. One thing I did introduce, was a daily staff meeting. I remember people asking me why they had to tell me where they were and who they were with. They said that they had always taken their groups away without informing anyone. Some people thought staff meetings were quite invasive as all of a sudden, I wanted to know what they were doing with their small groups. I would tell them I needed to know, that we all needed to be accountable.

43. It was female dominated staff and there weren't many males although we did get more males later. That seemed more appropriate as we needed there to be a balance of male and female staff. Several of the staff, who were there before me, had their own ideas. I wasn't going in trying to impose myself on staff because I would have been on a loser if I had. It had to be organic. I had to get people to come along with me. If you start directing folk, you get opposition although sometimes you do have to say, "Sorry, you can't do that."
44. My role was to try and get the staff involved in more recording. People were contributing to the reviews but it was often hearsay. I wanted a bit more structure to what was being said.
45. KVVJ was trying to introduce psychotherapy. He really wanted to get that up and running. I think eventually, after my time there, he actually employed a psychotherapist. I remember we did have an input from the Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh, primarily from Sula Wolff and then with an educational psychologist. I can't remember her full name, it was Sheila something.
46. We actually had a playroom at Harmeny, which was set up so a therapist could watch how children responded in different settings. There was a two-way mirror from an observational room. That was an innovation I had never come across. There was a phase at that time when folk were talking about engaging in regression therapy. Folk were seriously thinking of allowing children to regress back to the womb and to be reborn. I was a hard-nosed guy from Liverpool, it didn't connect with me. Some people, to a certain extent, felt it was appropriate and that we should allow children to live life again.
47. I seem to remember four classrooms but maybe there were only three. There was a teacher called, Margaret, who was an older lady on the point of retiral. She taught in a more formal way but had a great relationship with the children. There was a lady, called Saya, who was a bit more disorganised and struggled a bit at times. She couldn't really cope with children who were misbehaving.

48. Harry Leask, who was used to being SNR, had a more structured approach. The children were grouped really in terms of age. Margaret had the middle group and Saya the younger ones. There was another lady who came in but I can't remember her name. They were trying to set up a formal system of education but had a very informal way of dealing with it.
49. We tried to use the grounds as well. I developed a pottery workshop adjacent to the classrooms. I ran a pottery class within what had been the pigeon shed. That was another aspect of their education. Although I involved myself in the education side of things, other care staff didn't necessarily want to do that although they would help out if we were out in the community. I was not involved in how the education was developed. That was something KVJ and Harry Leask were involved in.

Recruitment of staff

50. Compared to how we recruited latterly, through the local authority, recruitment was very informal at Harmeny. People were invited and, where possible, we would get them to come and spend a day or two, or even a weekend, with us. We would try and do that when the children were there so we could see how they coped and interacted with the children. We wanted to make sure they were appropriate and safe with children. We wanted to see how they related to children.
51. We would also have a formal interview, usually with KVJ, Harry Leask SNR SNR and myself. We didn't involve any of the management team at that stage.
52. People being recruited would have to provide references and I assume they were followed up. I wouldn't be involved in that, KVJ would take care of it, although, in the majority of cases, I would be shown and have oversight of the references. We would meet the person to get an idea if they would fit in. We also needed to see if they fitted in with the gaps we had in our system.
53. My feeling was that we had to bring in more males. It was very female dominated and we needed to get more of a balance. I was also hoping we could bring in some older people. The job tended to attract younger people so there was a gap. You need that

balance, particularly with children who are developing and forming relationships, which are maybe more akin to what they were used to at home.

Training

54. There was no formal training. You learned as you went and hoped there would be some spin off from other staff experiences. I did go to a few conferences, which were helpful but that wasn't readily available to everybody else. There was no induction of staff.
55. There was the childcare course I had done in Wales, which was the early stages of childcare training, which led to a residential childcare certificate. That was around but not readily available and there was no in-service training.
56. There was no requirement for a qualification. Some staff did have some basic training similar to the one I had, but very few of them. Some had no experience whatsoever. It did surprise me we were taking on people with no experience. People came in and they were friends of staff members. In some cases, that worked out okay. In other cases, it was a bit of a dilemma, certainly at the beginning and until the person gained experience. I remember one young girl, who really struggled at the beginning. I thought that maybe it had been a mistake taking her on. She wasn't much older than the children she was working with. There really was no escape, we were living there and eating there.
57. There were a lot of people applying for these roles although we would go through periods of vacancies and occasionally would struggle. Towards the end of the university term, we tended to get a lot of folk applying. The salary wasn't very good but accommodation was provided. You paid a proportion of your salary for heating, lighting and food.

Supervision / appraisal / evaluation

58. There were no appraisals or anything like that. That sort of thing didn't come about for another twenty years. There was no staff supervision. I would sit down with KVJ

KVJ and we would talk about what we were doing and how certain aspects were working, but there was no formal staff appraisal or supervision, as such. Probably, the nearest we got to that, would be having our daily team meetings. We would also have a monthly team meeting, which was a more formal setting when we got the whole staff team together.

59. The daily team meetings were for staff on shift that day. We would discuss what was happening that day, who had the minibus, where staff were taking their group, that kind of thing. We were trying to develop as many activities as we could in order to break the week up for the children.
60. Children were in school during the day, but once they were out of school, it was our job to look after them. One other aspect, which I think some folk found quite challenging, was that the staff were staying in the same building as the children. So, it was intense and there was no escape. There was no separate staff room in the main building. Folk were either working or they were in their own rooms.
61. There was no escape for the children either. They were faced with the same staff, day in day out. This was why we felt we needed to get into the community. We tried to develop links and get people involved in the community or get the community involved with us.
62. There weren't really any volunteers at the school. The nearest we got to that was when KVJ and I [REDACTED]. We were both quite keen on athletics and volunteers would assist us in that.

Policy

63. There were no formal policies in place, nothing written down. It was fifty years ago and was nothing like working in local government now.

Strategic Planning

64. I wasn't directly involved in strategic planning. Most of that would be done by KVV and the board. Harry Leask, SNR and I would be involved but at a lower level in terms of how we would apply it. There were no documents coming down to us, it would be word of mouth.
65. There was never any mention of abuse in terms of strategic planning. The assumption was these sorts of things didn't happen. That was across the board. Everybody was good or so we all thought until later times when we found out that wasn't the case. There was no planning for abuse, basically it was about treating people as you liked to be treated yourself.

Children / Routine at Harmeny School

66. The majority of children coming into Harmeny came through local authority having been excluded from schools. I would sometimes read the referrals coming in and see, for instance, we were getting an eight-year-old boy who had been excluded from school because of his behaviour in the classroom. In my experience of eight-year-olds back then, they didn't usually behave that badly.
67. I don't remember too many children coming into the school who had come through the childcare set up. There were some, but the majority were from children living at home where their families were struggling to cope and their school was most certainly struggling to cope. Many of the children coming in had been through several schools.
68. Some of the children were extreme in their behaviour. Other times, you would think, "Why on earth is this kid here?" I had a conversation with a psychiatrist some years later and he said that if some of these kids had been adults, they would have been given more of an adult diagnosis, like they were psychotic or whatever. Obviously with children, you wouldn't do that, certainly not at that time.

69. We had strong links with the Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh and assessments of the children coming in would be done. That would be through Sula Wolff. I found some of her thoughts quite difficult to understand. I don't think she was considering where these children had come from. I could look at my own background in the south end of Liverpool. It was very basic with only one person ever having gone to university from the school I was at in its 112 year history.
70. Children came from the same background and staff were maybe trying to impose their own concept of how people should behave. Assessments were undertaken with some children, having regular meetings or involvement with the early stages of psychotherapy. That was something KVJ was keen on trying to introduce.
71. Most of the psychological assessments were done prior to the children coming to Harmeny. Some were still ongoing through the Sick Kids Hospital and the education departments. There was little involvement with social work, although there were social workers coming into Harmeny as well as educational psychologists coming in from the local authority. We had people from right across Scotland and each local authority had its own way of dealing with these situations. A lot of that was financially driven. The social work and education department were disparate and there seemed to be very little discussion and no joined up thinking. Nowadays, there would be a lot of interaction but in those days, education and social work were separate.
72. The care staff at the school would have some contact with social workers but generally social workers came in to escort children home. Social workers would occasionally have an input towards children's reviews.

Mealtimes / Food

73. At lunchtime and for the evening meal, we would all eat in the dining room hall. At other times later, we would have the food brought down to the cottage. I had a floating role, so I would be between the cottage and the main dining room. There were always two staff on duty and they would often eat in the cottage with the children. I would regularly join them, as it seemed appropriate. We had one big table in the cottage which we all sat round.

74. The teachers tended to have packed lunches, although some of them came into the dining room to eat. It was noisy but there was a reasonable atmosphere. There would be the occasional argument, but you would get that in any school.
75. We had a domestic staff set up and a cook called Dot. She was known as the bursar, which I thought was strange. I can't remember Dot's surname, but she ran the kitchen along with two other staff.
76. The food was okay. It was basic wholesome food, the sort of food children generally like to eat. It was difficult getting the children to eat vegetables. Many of the children said the food was better than they got at home, so they were generally quite happy with it. If they didn't like it, they wouldn't eat or maybe they would have a jam piece. Dot was strict at times because she was working to a budget.

Sleeping Arrangements

77. When I first arrived at the school there was this very attractive Lorimer style building, however it needed money spent on it. All the children stayed in the school at that time. They slept and ate in the school and went to classrooms in portacabins situated adjacent to the main building. The portacabins were also in dire need of upgrading. They would say the kids were in family groups but they weren't family, they were groups of children. The boys and girls slept in separate bedrooms.
78. Something I hadn't come across before were the actual beds. They were interesting and again, a concept ^{KVJ} had employed. They were beds with a wardrobe attached. It was like a box with the front taken off, a bit like a cabin bed. So, the children had their own wardrobe where they could keep their own possessions. The door was not locked so things would go missing, typically with a group of children living together. I can't remember how many children were to a room but not too many because there weren't that many children.
79. The ground floor had the dining area and playroom with the bedroom accommodation above. There were some staff accommodation on the same floor as the boys but mainly that was for the boys. The girls were in an annexe area to the side of the

building. The staff accommodation was mostly on the upper floor, above the boys. Most of the staff were female.

80. There were fewer girls there when I arrived so it was easier to accommodate them. Around two years into my time there, the cottage area I was staying in, changed. We decided we needed to give the children a wee bit more independence to prepare them for secondary school. We wanted to encourage more adult-like behaviour, so decided to put the older children in the cottage.
81. Probably late 1976 into 1977, the Board of Management decided they would build an office building adjacent to the cottage. The cottage was divided into three sections. There was an admin side, which was basically two large rooms. Then there was the accommodation we had in the middle of the building and through a door from us was Harry Leask, SNR [REDACTED]'s accommodation. That was a two-bedroom bungalow. It was all linked. The idea was that the admin would move into this new unit, we would move into Harry Leask's cottage and Harry would move into a new building, which was adjacent to KVJ [REDACTED]'s house [REDACTED].
82. We were then able to take the older children down to live in the cottage. They had a large dayroom, which had a table, a TV and soft furnishings. There was a bedroom area to the back, which was quite a large room. That was the boys' room and I think we had six beds in there. There was a member of staff who came down from the main building and stayed in the middle section. Then, to the other side, we had two small rooms for the girls. There was a separate bathroom and shower room for the children which was a bit tight for the number of children we had in there. There was also a small kitchen area, where we could make toast and snacks.
83. We had a fairly gentle approach to getting children up in the morning. We were dealing with primary aged kids so we were reasonable with them and there was no bell.

Washing and Bathing

84. Up in the main building there were bathrooms on different floors. We were quite well equipped. Children were encouraged to clean their teeth, which was unusual for many

of them. Generally, kids were quite clean, probably cleaner than a lot of the staff. The showers were private with separate cubicles. There were also baths and some of the children preferred baths.

85. There was a bathroom on the staircase, which was ostensibly a staff bathroom. There was a large Victorian bath in there and children thought it was a privilege when they were allowed to use it.

Leisure

86. We had the very first soft play area in Scotland, as far as I know. It was a large playroom with a bay window to the north of the building. I don't know where KVV got the funding from but we had this crew come up from Oxford and they built a soft play area. It was a special area, brightly coloured PVC blocks of foam. The sort of thing you see in children's play areas today. It must have cost a lot of money. It was relatively hygienic and you could wipe it down. It was a great thing because we needed somewhere, particularly in the winter, where children could play.
87. Care staff would never take children to their own homes. All staff were living on site in what was basically a room. When I first arrived, staff did take children to their rooms. It was accepted practice. I remember the first couple of meetings we had in the evening after I arrived. Staff members would say they were going to take a group of kids to their room. I remember saying that I didn't think that was a good idea. That was really from my experience of working in approved schools where it was frowned upon for very obvious reasons. The climate had changed and people were aware of people making accusations. Staff were very guarded in the approved school system.
88. That didn't seem to be reflected up here. It was possibly because they were small children, possibly because of their background and initial upbringing. I remember one particular female member of staff who would often sit with a child on her lap. That was fine and I didn't have a problem with that. As long as it was appropriate in the way they interacted. I did have a problem with staff taking children back to their room. That wasn't a good idea and left staff vulnerable. I don't think the concept of vulnerability from a staff point of view was something they had thought of. There were times it was

appropriate, but certainly not on your own. I tried to discourage that and communicated it through staff meetings. I was asking people to use a degree of commonsense.

Trips & Sporting activities

89. There was a competition called the Thistle Awards Scheme, which was run by Scottish Athletics. It was geared for schools and was a bit like being in the Brownies or Guides. There were different levels and if you could walk, you could basically get a badge. If you could run 100 metres, you got a better badge. We thought it was a good thing, it involved the community and it gave the children some positive reinforcement.
90. We were essentially a small primary school. We did this for the first year and tried to use innovation. We had children doing things like pole vaulting. Very few primary school children pole vaulted, but they did at Harmeny. We had to use our commonsense. Probably nowadays, Health and Safety wouldn't allow that but things were different back then. After the first year, we actually won the event and were the top Scottish Primary School.
91. Our children were made up and we went up to Rannoch School to collect the award. Rannoch had won it for lots of years before. An old boy of Rannoch School, [REDACTED], who was the [REDACTED], presented the trophy to this group of kids from dodgy areas of Edinburgh and Glasgow and wherever else. Rannoch was an elite public school with pupils like, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and people like that. It was interesting and the kids got a lot of kudos, pictures in the newspapers.
92. Parents were quite happy as well. And then we won it for a second year on the run. We thought that this was maybe an opportunity to branch into the community. We applied for and tried to compete in the Scottish club systems but they wouldn't let us because our kids were so disruptive.
93. So, we [REDACTED] invited local people to get involved. We had a good response to that, a lot of local kids became involved, and their parents got involved too. We had local staff who were working in Harmeny and they had kids and grandkids. That gave

us an avenue into the outside community. The children in the school made friends with children in the community and I thought that cross-over was healthy.

94. We were fortunate that there was a community centre nearby at Dean Park School. The community worker was ^{HIX} [REDACTED], who was an exceptional man who went on to work at Craigerne School. He really wanted to try and get more integration.
95. We didn't have a large indoor facility to do things in the winter in Harmeny. The community centre had a sports hall and we had a group of kids who needed to run off steam in the middle of winter. This was a great chance for us. It was also available to local kids and local families. That gave us another foothold in the community and maybe presented a more positive image of Harmeny for the community. We were no longer the hippies on the hill.
96. That was so beneficial. We also tried to get out as much as possible and used different swimming pools. We took kids into Edinburgh and were able to use Donaldson's School, through our ^{SNR} [REDACTED], Harry Leask's contacts. We could use their pool and then weren't having to deal with the general public. Sometimes, our children would behave in an inappropriate way but we would go all over Edinburgh, to the Warrender Pool and we did a lot of things up at the Pentland Hills. We would go to places like Cove and North Berwick and try and give the children a different experience. I was amazed that some children had no concept of what the sea was. They were from the inner city and had never been outside their own neighbourhood.
97. We developed some cross-country races, to which we available other primary schools. That was successful and we would hold it two or three times per year. We would have schools from Edinburgh and the Midlothian area taking part. That would give us a chance to chat to the teachers, some of whom had worked with our children prior to them being excluded from the school.
98. We did other activities within the grounds of Harmeny. We had the kids making hot air balloons, made short films and did crafts. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there. Most of the time it was enjoyable although there were times, it wasn't.

Healthcare

99. There was a GP practice in Currie that we used. We also used a local dentist in Currie. It was convenient and we would take the children down to the surgery. I don't remember anybody at the school being trained in healthcare, although some of us had first aid training as part of previous jobs.
100. There were a couple of incidents which required us to take children to the Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh but they were few and far between. It was usually the result of a more serious accident or incident.
101. If a child had prescribed medication to take, it would be given to them by staff. The medication would be held centrally in a locked area. There weren't that many children on medication. Nowadays, you would probably find that more children would be taking some form of medication but back then that wasn't the case.
102. I'm not aware of any children taking medication to control their behaviour. Some kids were prescribed medication to do with their enuresis, which in some ways was probably a sedative as well.

Religion

103. There was a Christian element at Harmony. There were several members of staff who were members of church organisations, especially one particular church in Edinburgh. You would think they were probably following, what they would term as, Christian principles, kindness etc. Religion certainly wasn't part of the school agenda. It affected how some staff interacted because they had their own close friendships, but that didn't impact on the school or the pupils.

Chores

104. The children would have to make their own bed. That involved pulling the Downie cover up. We had fitted sheets so that was about it. If sheets needed cleaning, the children would take their sheets off and we would help if needed.

105. Two domestic staff did all the general cleaning. We also had a laundry lady. That was quite a big set up as we had a lot of bedding to change. Many of the children were enuretic. All the children had Downies, which made it easy for them to make their beds or change the covers.
106. Kids would do the Hoovering in the cottage. There was a Hoover there so if they wanted to they could. That would be of their own volition. They cleared their plates in the dining room and took them to the hatch but that was as much as we asked of them.

Visitors

107. If children were going home for the weekend, usually the social work would make the arrangements. Either a social worker would collect the children or a local authority taxi would pick them up. David Wright was the social worker for Harmeny. He followed on from [REDACTED]. He didn't live at the school but I think he escorted a few children to their home. Particularly the lassie from Skye who was from such an isolated area.
108. In a normal week we could have visitors, but it was quite a rare event. We did have a sports day, which was always a big day. We had the inhouse 'egg and spoon race' and things like space hopper races. Parents would come to that and there would be quite a good turnout. For some families, it was too far to travel. We had children from all over Scotland.

Review of Care / placement

109. The reviews would be done annually and they would look at how the children were progressing. Harmeny was a primary school. We knew children were going to be leaving after what would be equivalent to primary 7. Our children were from eight-years to twelve-years old and before they started secondary school.
110. To be in Harmeny for two or three years, in such an unstructured setting and to then progress into secondary, I think, was a hell of a demand. That was the gap in the system, the transition into secondary. Children were allowed a lot of freedom at Harmeny, not the sort of freedom you would get in normal life. For our children to go

into secondary with the structures and expectations placed on their secondary education, was a huge transition for them.

111. In theory, Harmeny was to prepare children for secondary but in real terms, I don't think we had enough structure. Certainly, from an educational setting. We could deal with the emotional side because that was the area we were working in. We were trying to give children other ways and strategies of how to deal with things. You can't talk strategy to a primary age child. You have to think of different language. We had our own ideas of freedom and self-expression, but to then go into the structure of the secondary school, the transition was too great. We needed to be a bit more flexible and maybe allow children to stay on a bit longer. But then how would they make that transition into S2 or S3?
112. The education system in Scotland changed with the introduction of a new curriculum and that didn't fit in with Harmeny. I don't think Harmeny really had the ability to teach that curriculum. If you spoke to KVJ, Harry Leask or one of the teachers they would maybe have a different view because they were looking at it from a teaching point of view.
113. Social workers would visit the children infrequently. There was no regular pattern. The social workers would be given the opportunity to eat with the children in the dining room. Having done that once, they would often decline a second time and go out somewhere to eat. They had access to a room they could use if they wanted to interview a child alone. Sometimes they elected to walk in the grounds and chat. There was no restriction on that. It was a very free and easy environment.
114. Sometimes, we would receive a formal request for a review of a child's situation. That quite often would involve a visit from a psychologist. I think KVJ was trying to institute an annual review. In some cases, it had to be more frequent because we were working to a programme. In that case, there would be a formal review every three months but that was very occasional. Latterly, it tended to be on an annual basis.

115. Our aim was to try and get the children back into the mainstream as soon as possible. Actually, some children didn't want to go. For some kids, Harmeny was a luxury although most kids did want to go home.
116. There were some attempts to introduce a gentler introduction to schools. We tried to get schools to accept a number of pre-visit but those were few and far between. I don't remember that ever being successful. There was often a reluctance to take children who had previously been excluded from the education system into special education and back into mainstream schooling. There seemed to be a bit of a disparity in terms of how they were doing that. I wouldn't say it was a stigma but there was this caution and the thought that they were inheriting somebody else's problem.
117. Harmeny didn't have a link to any other school. Maybe Donaldson's but that was only because we used their swimming pool. We had a link in a way with Dean Park Primary mainly because it was on the same campus as the local community centre. There was no link to the school the children had originally been transferred from.

Living Arrangements

118. All staff had access to the children's residential areas overnight.

Discipline and Punishment

119. There was no corporal punishment at the school. We were trying to get children to look at what they were doing and to understand why it wasn't acceptable. The difficulty was we were talking to an angry ten-year-old who was probably behaving like a toddler in a tantrum. That was the level of development they were at. We were trying to find words to correct that behaviour, which was very difficult.
120. We would stop children going to a particular outing as a sanction for their behaviour. The challenges were we would have to then find an alternative. If we took something away we had to think about what we were going to put in its place. We still had to deal

with that child, we couldn't just leave them in limbo. We tried to get children to think about the response to their actions, basic physics. We tried to get them to realise that if they misbehaved there would be a response, if they did that, they wouldn't be allowed to do this, like taking part in a particular activity.

121. We weren't handing out sweets and they weren't getting pocket money so we couldn't fine them. We didn't stop them from going home at the weekend, that didn't happen. When I was at the approved schools, that was a common sanction.
122. There were no senior children at Harmeny but there was the law of the jungle. If a child was deemed to have stopped something from happening because of their behaviour, retribution would be meted out. That happens in any group of children, group pressure. Sometimes we would have to cancel an activity. I remember one time we were planning to go to the Odeon Cinema in Edinburgh. There had been some bad behaviour involving some boys. We decided not to go. The kids involved in the bad behaviour were certainly told in no uncertain terms by the other children.
123. That's not something we would encourage and we did try to stop it. We knew it was going to happen.
124. We were trying to have a policy where most staff were adopting a consistent approach. We were always open to differences in interpretation because everybody was different. Some staff responses would be tighter or stricter than others. Some staff would allow most things to happen, where others would not be prepared to take that behaviour. Generally, we tried to keep it structured so we were all singing from the same hymn sheet. Consistency is the key when dealing with any type of person. You have to be consistent, at least people know what to expect.
125. There was never medication used to calm the children down. Certainly not that I was aware of.

Restraint

126. They had a system when I first arrived. When children had a temper tantrum, which were fairly frequent at times, they had this system they called, 'holding,' which I had never come across before. Children were held and it became a type of restraint and certainly figured in some of the Lothian Region establishments.
127. My concern from a health and safety point of view and I saw it happen, was that the staff member would sit holding a child in front of them, then the child would headbutt the staff member with the back of their head. That could be very sore and leave the staff member with a very sore nose. I would ask the staff to think about how appropriate it was and whether they were placing themselves in a vulnerable situation.
128. We would try and contain the child and talk them down where we could. There was a lot of shouting and there were times where staff would lose their temper although they did realise there was a limit to what was acceptable. We are talking about folk who have no formal training so we had to work with them and tell them that shouting was not appropriate. If a child was giving a staff member a lot of abuse, maybe thumping and punching them, the louder the staff member shouted the louder the child would shout. I tried to get a bit of commonsense into how we dealt with things.
129. We would have children fighting and we would have to separate them. We would have to hold them to physically stop them attacking another child. Generally, if a child was having a temper tantrum, we would try to get them to calm down and go to somewhere quiet. We had to find out why the temper tantrum happened and how we could avoid it happening again, that was the best way of dealing with these things. A lot of it was arguments between the children, which led to destructive behaviour.
130. We wouldn't discipline a child for a temper tantrum. The tantrum was the result of an action so you would try and find out what the action was. Why did it happen and how can we avoid it happening again? Of course, the best way of dealing with these things, was to avoid them happening in the first place. But it doesn't always work like that

when you are dealing with children. We didn't have the facility to take a child and leave them on their own. There were quiet rooms but I can't remember that happening.

131. Sometimes, once the child had calmed down, we would let them use the soft play area as a timeout. They could go in there and run around and do whatever they liked. A member of staff would go in with them or perhaps stand adjacent to the door.
132. Children wanted to be back in the mainstream and didn't want to be isolated. There was no point keeping a child in a room for an hour unless they were still kicking off and you had to try and speak to them about it.
133. Sometimes, a child would place themselves in danger and you had to take them out of that dangerous situation. Sometimes it would happen outside and you would have to bring them inside because they were placing themselves or others at risk. I think that was the basis of a lot of our interaction. It was making children as safe as you could.
134. There was no formal training in restraint. You just learned from a more experienced member of staff. There was no policy or anything written on discipline or on restraint.
135. I can't think of a time where restraint was used that I would consider it to be excessive or violent towards children. I can think of times where staff overstepped the mark in terms of telling children off. I would have to speak to the member of staff and say what they were doing was not the best way to deal with that situation. It's like trying to teach people about personal space. My experience has always been, the closer you are the more intimidating it can be. You have to think about how you present yourself. That applies not only when working with children but also when working with people with a disability, as I did in subsequent employment.
136. If you are going to tell somebody off you don't want to be standing on their toes because you are going to aggravate the situation.
137. Disciplining a child should have been recorded in the daybook. It had to be a serious enough incident. If we recorded every incident in a day in Harmeny it would be a

massive daybook. There had to be a degree of commonsense. If it was a serious enough incident it would be recorded and go into the child's file as well. We would make a note and it would be typed up by the admin staff.

138. We had two admin workers, one who was responsible for the management team, Maris, and Margaret who was basically [redacted] s secretary. She would do a lot of the formal recording. The files were maintained in a separate office block.

Concerns about the institution

139. I'm not aware of any concern from anyone within Harmeny or persons outwith Harmeny with regards to how the children were being treated.

Reporting of complaints / concerns

140. If a child complained we would try to find out how valid it was. I can think back to my time working in the approved schools where the common cry was, "You're my witness," but I don't remember that at Harmeny. If a child had a complaint, they would normally go to somebody they felt comfortable with. Most children had good relationships with somebody.
141. I don't remember any child ever making a formal complaint of abuse.

Trusted adult / confidante

142. If a child wanted to speak to someone about something, they could always go to somebody and it wasn't necessarily their key worker, it could be the gardener or one of the cleaners. If a cleaner came in and said someone was a bit upset because of how somebody had spoken to them, we would deal with it. If you were in a position of authority, you were probably less accessible to the children than if you were not. That's why I don't think you should ever discount your domestic staff in these settings. These

are the people that were more like the children's mothers. These people were off site, they weren't living with the children and were a different face.

143. Children would sometimes talk to the parents of other village children when they came up to the athletics club based in the school. We had a running track in front of the cottage and parents would come up and chat to the children and to the staff so it was a very open environment.

Allegations of Abuse

144. I didn't see any abuse during my time at Harmeny. I would question the holding of children but I wouldn't consider it to be abuse. I think people were placing themselves in a vulnerable situation. Staff nowadays are more conscious of their interactions with children, for instance, a male with a female. They would be far more concerned. Perhaps in those days, they weren't and their behaviours were slightly different.
145. I remember a member of staff whose personal hygiene left a bit to be desired. He was the subject of a lot of baiting and abuse by the children. He would lose his temper and shout at the kids. The kids could be very cruel. His name was John Dare. He was well meaning but could have done better with his personal hygiene.
146. I think it would have come to light if a child was being ill-treated or abused at the time. It was such a small community. We were dealing with these children day-in, day-out. If somebody came in and there was something different about them, in terms of a physical injury or emotion, we would notice. I think most of us had enough nous to know that not everybody is perfect and people will lose their tempers so we needed to be aware of behaviours. I'm including children in that.
147. There was an element of tale telling, she's doing this and he's doing that but that was normal behaviour for children.

Child protection arrangements

148. There was never any guidance given on how to care for children or protect them from abuse at Harmeny. Not formally. We didn't have any supervision sessions so one of my roles when chatting to staff, was to talk about more acceptable ways of dealing with situations. But it was informal. It wasn't a normal social work setting where you sit down and discuss caseloads.
149. There was no formal guidance in relation to preventing abuse. KVVJ didn't sit us all down and say we couldn't do this or that. It wasn't that sort of setting. The whole of the interactions between the staff teams was very informal. Probably the greatest degree of formality was within the education setting. They were quite separate.

External monitoring

150. I can't remember an official inspection at Harmeny. Working in local authority, you have the Care Commission and announced and unannounced visits but there was nothing like that at Harmeny at that time. I'm sure school inspectors were operating back then but I don't remember ever seeing one at Harmeny.

Record-keeping

151. Each child had their own file, which was kept secure within the central office. These could be accessed by senior staff and probably under supervision of admin, by other staff. Not all of the staff had access to children's backgrounds because it wasn't thought to be appropriate. Sometimes, you had to be cautious about how much information you gave out because of preconceived ideas of behaviours. It's very easy then to point blame of things that happened in the past.
152. I had introduced daybooks but there really wasn't anything else I can think of.

Allegations of abuse

153. I was never the subject of an allegation of abuse or ill-treatment of a child residing at Harmeny.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

154. I was never involved in any investigation on behalf of Harmeny into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of children by staff or others.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

155. I was never involved in the handling of reports to Harmeny or civil complaints made against Harmeny by former residents, concerning historical abuse.

Police investigations / criminal proceedings

156. I'm not aware of any police investigations into alleged abuse at Harmeny

Convicted abusers

157. I'm not aware of any person who worked at Harmeny being convicted of the abuse of a child at Harmeny.

Other Staff working at Harmeny

KVJ

158. KVJ was there when I started and he was there when I left. He was SNR throughout that time. I knew KVJ reasonably well and socially we played squash together. KVJ's relationship with the children was generally very good. He was quite

a paternal figure and I would describe him as avuncular. He was ten or fifteen-years older than me.

159. In terms of disciplining children, I did see [KVJ] shout and bawl at children but can't think of him doing anything else. I never saw nor heard of him abusing children.

Robert Taylor

160. I don't remember anyone at Harmeny called Robert Taylor.

[PFG]

161. I don't remember anyone at Harmeny by that name.

[MWF]

162. I don't remember any [MWF] being at Harmeny. We had a male called [MWI] but no [MWF]

[MWG]

163. I don't remember an [MWG] from my time at Harmeny.

[MWH]

164. I do know [MWH]. She wasn't there when I started but probably came in two years into my time there. She actually started when my wife went on maternity leave. She lived in the main building but also worked in the cottage. [MWH] was education based and was a friend of [] who came to work in Harmeny.

165. [MWH] was a house parent so I was her team leader. She was in her early twenties when she started and was quite outgoing. She had done teacher training in Dunfermline before she came to Harmeny. She was training to be a P.E. teacher at

Dunfermline College. I got to know MWH quite well as I did with all members of staff. We were all living together at Harmeny.

166. MWH's relationship with the children was generally good. She was firm and no soft touch. That was probably because she came from an educational background rather than a social work setting. She was popular with the children. I never saw MWH disciplining the children. I never saw nor heard of her abusing the children.

MWI

167. I remember MWI. He was an Edinburgh based guy who came in a few years after I started. He would have been in his mid-twenties. He had some experience, I think he had worked in some of the Edinburgh children's units.
168. MWI was a care worker and I was his team leader. He was one of the better folk I saw in terms of his ability to relate to the children. He was very caring and was popular with them. He could play football and would go out and kick a ball about with them. He was quietly spoken and had a dry sense of humour.
169. I never saw MWI disciplining children. I never saw nor heard of him abusing children.

David Brown

170. David was quite religious and was involved in a Baptist Church in Edinburgh. He was tall, dark haired with a beard and was probably in his middle to late twenties. David arrived just before me and was friendly with the guy that left when I took over his role. He was fairly quiet and wasn't someone with whom I would normally mix. He seemed to relate to some children more than others. He didn't get on so well with the more aggressive children. I think he found them quite threatening.
171. I didn't see David disciplining children, no more than telling children not to do something in a loud voice. I never saw nor heard of him abusing children.

KVM

172. I don't recall anyone called KVM.

KLL

173. I don't recall that name from Harmeny.

KVH

174. I knew KVH, she married MWI. KVH was one of the few people I had contact with after I left Harmeny. I was working as a senior manager in Lothian Region and KVH was working in a children's home in Edinburgh. KVH had been assaulted by a member of staff. She contacted me to ask for my advice. I pointed her in the direction of Lothian Region H.R.

175. KVH started around the same time as me and she was a house parent and I was her team leader. She was very good and popular with the children. KVH was younger, probably in her early twenties. She wasn't particularly sporty or anything, she was just able to gel with folk. She was musical and liked to sing and dance.

176. I never saw her disciplining children although I did hear her shouting at children. I never saw nor heard of her abusing children.

Other staff

177. I remember some other people working at Harmeny. I remember David Wright who was a social worker. He played a major role in the children's lives. He was their home contact. Harry Leask, who was SNR, lived on the site with his wife and two children. Harry's wife wasn't actively involved with the children but she was about the campus.

178. My wife was employed as a care worker. She went on maternity leave to have our daughter during the time we were there.

179. We've spoken of John Dare. He was quite an explosive character and I would have thought the children would have remembered John.

Applicant Allegations

MVX

180. Having heard the name, I remember there was a child called MVX but I don't remember him. It's very obvious from reading his statement that he was from East Lothian and we didn't have many children from East Lothian but I have no memory of him.
181. Within MVX's first statement to the Inquiry, at page 17, paragraph 94, he says, *"MWJ was in charge of the cottage in the grounds. He was the worst staff member. MWJ 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."*
182. I have no recollection of what he has described. I am certainly six foot tall, big and probably have a loud deep voice but I have no recollection of these incidents. If you put it in context of a 17 stone man beating a small child, I think there would be physical evidence that would be obvious to anybody else. I did build a large climbing frame with ropes within the trees but I don't remember throwing anybody against a tree.
183. The passage of time has not affected my recollections and I don't remember any of that behaviour. We are talking about fifty years ago. I can't explain why somebody would make that statement. I can think of reasons not connected with this Inquiry and am aware of other people involved in similar Inquiries where people have made statements about staff. I would think the actions described would be considered abusive behaviour.
184. On page 17, paragraph 95, MVX goes on to say the following in his initial statement, *"One night, after I moved into the cottage, I got up to go to the toilet. I saw*

MWJ kissing and cuddling with MWH in the lounge. I knew that MWJ 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 never did anything. She just watched what was happening."

185. I deny that this incident took place. Again, I would reiterate, if I beat somebody up, there would be physical evidence which I'm sure somebody else, child or another member of staff, would have noticed that it had taken place. I don't think that the passage of time has affected my recollection of what is being alleged. I can't explain why this is being said. I accept what is being alleged would be considered abusive if it had happened.

186. Within MVX's supplementary statement to the Inquiry, over page 5 and 6, paragraph 18, he says, *"One day I went to see the horse but he wasn't there so I went back to the cottage. I didn't think there was anybody there but MWH was in. I was a bit nervous because she was there on her own. She said I was back early and I told her that chess finished earlier than usual. I went into my room because whatever little possessions you had you always checked to make sure they were still there, a comic or whatever. She asked me if I wanted a drink and I said I did. I didn't think anything of it. I came out of my room and she wasn't in the reception area, where they were supposed to be. She was at the door of the staff room and she said I could go up there. I thought it was odd because we were told not to go up there. She said it was ok, nobody would know, but I was still a bit wary because I'd previously had a beating from MWJ. So, I was thinking, he might come back to the cottage at any time."*

187. I have no recollection of that at all. I am surprised because I don't remember MWH having a room in the cottage. I thought it was Margaret Bryan who had the room in the cottage, which was the room [REDACTED] and I formerly lived in. I was at the other end of the corridor, which was a short distance away from where he is alleging that took place. I can't explain why that is being said and why he implicates that member of staff. I would say the behaviour described would be inappropriate and the reference to being beaten would be abusive.

188. The last paragraph is on page 8, paragraph 26. **MX** says, *"Having a fight with another boy wasn't a two minute thing at Harmeny, because everybody wanted to see who the big 'I am' was. We would batter each other to bits and pick up anything to hit each other with. I was always fighting with different lads. I once had a fight and we picked up sticks and continually hit each other on the legs and the arms. It was with **PHB** The two of us decided to go to the wall where there was an arch, behind the kitchen. We thought no-one could see us. We wanted to see who was the hardest. We went at it for ages. The next thing, **MWJ** a member of staff, appeared at the archway. We stopped and looked at him and he grabbed us and pushed us against the wall. He was cursing and swearing at us, spitting as he was talking. The look he gave us was of pure evil, it was terrifying. He said, 'If I see you fighting again I will kill both of you.' The fight stopped and we were terrified. We were covered in blood but he didn't let us get cleaned up or anything."*
189. I have no recollection of that incident. I would assume if they were covered in blood somebody else would have seen them. The passage of time has not affected my recollection of what is being said. I cannot explain why he is saying these things and would accept what is being alleged would be abusive.

Other Comments on **MX's statements**

190. I don't recall there being twelve beds in a room. These beds were quite large and people did have a cupboard for their personal possessions, which were normally pretty meagre items.
191. With reference to paragraph 60, there was no wall around the grounds, it was open fields and woodland. It wasn't a secure unit, although kids were discouraged from going down to the village on their own but we are talking about primary aged children. It would have been inappropriate for them to go down on their own. As they got a bit older and were trusted, kids could walk down to the local shop where they could buy sweets.

192. In paragraph 62, which is about him not being aware who ran the school. Kvj [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] and Harry Leask was SNR [REDACTED].
193. Reference to paragraph 63, all care staff stayed on campus. There was nobody living outside the campus.
194. Reference to paragraph 69, I have no recollection of anybody boxing in the school or staff having any interest in boxing. Having said that, I do remember hearing that PHB [REDACTED] PHB [REDACTED] was interested in boxing and was in the [REDACTED] Boxing Club. That was hearsay I heard later on.
195. With reference to paragraph 70, Harry Leask and his family, didn't live in Balerno, they lived on the grounds initially in the cottage and latterly in a new bungalow on the grounds.
196. With reference to paragraph 72, I have no recollection of any school trip to Ireland. I would remember that.
197. With reference to paragraph 73, there were lots of activities outwith the school. There were residential trips. They went to Iona. I never went but my wife did. The army provided us with a two-week camp at St Margarets or St Mary's Loch in the Borders. Groups went there and we transferred different groups over. We also had residential weekends at Dalguise Centre near to Pitlochry. It was run by Lothian Region at that time before it was taken over by a private company. I regularly took groups of children to cross-country competitions around Scotland.
198. We did lots of day trips out to places like East Lothian and Berwick. We particularly liked the beaches where kids could run around and were safe.
199. With reference to paragraph 74, the school had four classrooms. Harry Leask, Margaret Saya and another teacher, I think it says somewhere that there were 100 kids in the school, but the school roll was for 28 which increased to 32 and at times dropped to 24.

200. With reference to paragraph 79, I don't recollect a pantomime trip. There is no evidence that Les Dawson ever appeared in a Scottish pantomime in Edinburgh or anywhere in Scotland. Ricky Fulton certainly did but not at the time. He had a four-year gap and wasn't around the Edinburgh pantomime, he was in Glasgow.
201. With reference to paragraph 81, birthdays were celebrated and Dot, the cook, would often bake a cake.
202. With reference to paragraph 82, the Queen never visited Harmeny. Princess Anne did visit during the period I was there.
203. With reference to paragraph 87, I have no recollection of a quiet room in which two of the children were locked in. I know nothing about that.
204. In paragraph 90, the incident with the [REDACTED]. My recollection of this is that it was instigated by another child who is the one person who I still come across, in fact, as recently as four weeks ago. A lady called [REDACTED]. My memory is that [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I remember the ambulance going into the Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh with these children. The incident did happen but I think it was instigated by [REDACTED].
205. With reference to paragraph 93, the general policy was for staff not to invite children to their personal rooms. I'm not aware of any of the incidents he mentions there.
206. Within his supplementary statement, the cottage was quite different. It was basically a rectangular shell building, which was split into three sections. One section was the staff bungalow as I have described, the middle section was the section I stayed in with my wife until 1976. The other section was the admin block consisting of two large rooms before it was turned into a residence. There was also a central corridor which is all quite different to what he is describing.
207. With reference to paragraph 9, I don't recall this arrangement of visiting Harry Leask to play chess although I know Harry and his wife were keen chess players.

208. With reference to paragraph 11, Enuresis was common but I'm not aware of any persistent taunting behaviour. Many of the children had that same issue and inevitably there would be children saying things. These were children and they could be quite cruel to each other. I cannot remember any member of staff doing it though. If I had heard of that I would have taken it seriously. The soiled bedding was taken from the bedrooms by the laundry staff. It wasn't the kids job although sometimes they were so embarrassed they would take their pyjamas off and a member of staff would take them down to the laundry room for them.
209. With reference to paragraph 15, staff at the cottage was my wife, [REDACTED] and Margaret Bryan, who lived in the area of the cottage we vacated. My wife took maternity leave in 1977.
210. I do not recollect his description of the cottage in paragraph 16.
211. In paragraph 17, the horse belonged to the bursar. He was a big horse and I don't remember any of the children riding him. The horse was moved to a field to the back of Harry Leask's house. There was a white Welsh Mountain Pony, which was for [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s daughter and some of the children did ride that. That was stabled by [REDACTED]'s house.
212. With reference to paragraph 21, I have no knowledge of children being invited up to staff rooms.
213. With reference to paragraph 24 and 25, I have no knowledge of any grooming or of a paedophile ring operating in Harmeny.
214. With reference to paragraph 27, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] says he didn't realise where I lived or what my role was. The kids would often take my daughter out in the pram. I also had two Great Danes. I am surprised he didn't know where I lived.

Leaving Harmeny School

215. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Harmeny. However, at a external social work conference one day, I had a conversation with a senior member of staff at Lothian Regional Council and she told me there were posts coming up that I might like to apply for. A job did come up and it was to head a children's reception unit in West Lothian, which, at the time, was Lothian Region. I decided to take that post, which had a good salary in a management position. I was thirty-two at the time. They also offered me a two-year secondment to do a Certificate Qualification in Social Work (CQSW).
216. They were in the process of moving away from residential childcare into a more community-based facilities. I feel this was more appropriate as some of these larger units, which had children from as young as nine-month-old babies up to eighteen-year-old teenagers.
217. I finished my CQSW course, came back to the unit and closed it down. I had enjoyed the social work course and had the opportunity to carryout field placements in Denny and one in Lynebank Hospital where I worked with the social work team and adults with profound learning disabilities. I was then seconded into headquarters where I managed a range of children's centres for Lothian Regional Council.
218. I was then offered the chance to develop a new day service in West Lothian for people with learning disability. I spent the next twenty-one years working in that field. I took on various management roles and was seconded out on several occasions to develop other areas. I was involved in a lot of community work.
219. Much of my background was in social work employment and I realised that institutions were maybe not the best way to deal with people, particularly working with people with a disability. Picking them up, sticking them on a bus and taking them to a day centre together with another hundred folk, really is not a good experience at all. We worked hard to develop other services in the community. My theme, and it was emblazoned on the notice boards was, 'local services for local people.'

220. We moved people into their own community. We found a combination between community facilities and private businesses. We found other spaces where people could move in and developed other relevant day services in their local area. I was fortunate that I had senior managers in the council who shared that same ideals. We developed quite a strong community link and, at one stage, had seven different units operating within the council.
221. We still had day services and a base for people with exceptional needs. We worked closely with the hospitals and developed the physical services we needed to support that.
222. That was different but enjoyable. I had a strong team of staff with me.
223. I always had a strong interest in sport and used it as a vehicle to try and enable people to raise their self-esteem. We developed the special Olympic movement. I was the instigator of getting that developed into the Lothian area, in Scotland and on a national level.
224. Then the Paralympics came along. We had people who were going from the day service into that fold. Some of them progressed further. We were fortunate that we had some good athletes who we developed and they went on to do well at the Paralympics and completed on a national and international level. These were people with fairly profound levels of disability. Weightlifting was a big interest. We had athletes lifting for Scotland on an international level. This was good for families with children who were being dismissed as not contributing, to them achieving something special. That carried on until I retired. It was a community-based system and a lot of families were involved. I could see that was a positive way to provide care for folk.

Helping the Inquiry

225. I remember a comment from a parent of a child in Harmeny. She said it was alright for me with my middle-class English attitude. These were Scottish working-class kids. I

believed she was right because we were using language/culture that the children were picking up on and were going back home and saying things to their families.

226. We got to know families quite well. Some families we didn't get to know. They didn't want to know and felt embarrassed that somebody else was looking after their children. It was about trying to get a message across. That it was okay and we understood and were not going to judge them.
227. I cannot offer any explanation for these allegations. I do not recognise the person making the allegations. He doesn't stand out to me.
228. Sometimes, people will see or hear or read about behaviours. Certainly, the description of the more lurid behaviour with groups in rooms, seems to me to be more fictional. I cannot think how that sort of thing would happen without other people knowing. Certainly, I've no knowledge. The only people I've met since leaving Harmeny nearly fifty years ago are staff members Margaret Bryan and KVH. I've met [REDACTED] who is currently in a psychiatric unit in Inverness. I vaguely remember PHB. Twenty years ago, I met PHB by chance when on a staff leaving do in a pub in Broxburn. He recognised me and actually bought me a drink.

Lessons to be learned

229. I think you have to carefully look at the makeup of the staff teams to make sure you have the right balance of people. I think the initial vetting and selection of staff requires to be more detailed and prescriptive as it is in some local authorities. More than people filling a form and going through an interview. We can all go through interviews and be very convincing. I think we had a good process in Harmeny where we asked people to come and spend time with us so we could see how they interacted with the children. The problem is it can be expensive and doesn't always meet with the approval of authorities who think it's too intrusive. If you are putting people in a position of care, you need to know they are the right people.

230. I think it is wrong that we put people who are severely disturbed in residential settings. It's an unnatural thing to do and I know that colleagues and friends in other countries think that our public school system is appalling. Particularly some of the Scandinavian friends I have and they think the same applies to how we dealt with children in settings such as Harmeny. It's a great place now but could it have been done in another way back then?

Other information

231. 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.

MWJ

Signed.....

Dated..... 28/7/25