

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HCQ [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is HCQ [REDACTED]. I was born HCQ [REDACTED] but when I was adopted my adoptive parents changed my name. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born and initially lived in Perth. I have no knowledge of my birth mother but know she gave me up for adoption. I was about six months old when she placed me in Quarrier's Village but I have no memories of that period. My adoption was delayed slightly as I was suffering from Chicken Pox.
3. My adoptive parents are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I have an adopted sister [REDACTED], who now lives in Australia. As far as I am concerned they are my mother and father. My parents adopted me when I was about two years old, from Quarrier's. The adoption was arranged through Perth Social Work Department. I was about five years old when I was told I was adopted. They did not want me to find it out from anyone else.
4. Later in life my mum would ask whether I wanted to try and trace my natural mother, but my thoughts were that woman had given me up and as far as I was concerned my adopted mum was my mum. I did later visit the National Registrar and saw my birth certificate on the microfiche system and saw my mother's name, but I cannot remember it and can't recall if there was a father's name on it.

5. I don't have any bad memories of being brought up by my parents. I do remember it was good and we had no issues and was a happy childhood, until Bellfield. Most of the memories I now have, have been triggered by my recent attempts to join the Children's Hearing Service.
6. One of the few memories I have is visiting the Loch Lomond area as my father and uncle had a boat there. I also remember when my uncle, who was a blacksmith, visited, he would be wearing a boiler suit and a flat cap. When I saw him dressed in his work clothes I would run off scared. I am not sure if this is as a result of Quarrier's or not.
7. I do recall I had some unusual eating habits. When I left the dinner table I would hide food throughout the house. I also never cried as a baby. I can only assume this was a result of lack of attention during my stay at Quarrier's. The first time I cried my parents were so tearful as they knew the barriers were finally coming down.
8. We stayed in a two bedroomed flat in Glasgow before moving to a three bedroomed house in Cumbernauld. Both my parents were employed as civil servants. I also remember visiting my grandparents at [REDACTED] and playing in the park there. They always had a packet of Pandrops in their pockets.
9. I went to Abronhill Primary School which was [REDACTED] from our house. I started secondary at Cumbernauld High School, but I think I was only there from the August until [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].
10. When I was between the age of ten and eleven my parents separated and about thirteen or fourteen when they divorced. I thought it was because of me and I took it so badly. They tried to assure me that it was just their relationship breaking down. After the divorce I stayed with mum in the house and my dad moved out and paid the mortgage. During this time mum left the civil service and started work for a company as a book keeper.
11. I was not coping with the break up and my schooling was being affected. I was withdrawing into myself and feeling really angry inside. I wasn't violent or aggressive

with other people, I was just upset inside myself. I don't remember any social work intervention beforehand, but as a result of the changes in me my parents decided I would be better off in boarding school.

### **Lendrick Muir School, Kinross**

12. I am not sure I liked the terminology being used to describe the school's purpose. It was described as a school for highly intelligent and maladjusted children. I was sent there around [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] in my first year at high school, when I was about twelve and remained until the end of fourth year.
13. When I was about thirteen or fourteen and home during the holidays I was not happy and did not want to return to the boarding school. This was affecting my mood when I was home. Again there was consultation with the social work department and again with agreement of my mother it was decided I would reside at Bellfield Assessment Centre during holiday periods. I am not sure who funded my time in the school but presume it was the Council.

### **Routine at Lendrick Muir School, Kinross**

14. When I arrived at Lendrick Muir School I saw that it was an old creaky building, but I have no memory of my first day there. The school was thirty to forty miles away from our home, and I would travel there by bus. There was a long driveway from the entrance gates to the large ornate front entrance and in the grounds there were many rhododendron bushes.
15. As you entered the front door of the building there was a large staircase facing you. We were not allowed to use those stairs. There was another set of stairs leading upstairs to the dormitories at the back of the building, which we were told to use. On the ground floor to the left was the office and then the assembly room. To the right there was a games room with a snooker table in it, the dining room and kitchen. There

was a sports field and lots of land to the rear with a football pitch there. To the rear of the main building was a sports hall and the class rooms.

16. In the driveway was an out building. This was where we met for army cadets and other outdoor activities. One of those activities that I enjoyed was rock climbing.
17. SNR [REDACTED] during my time there was KVV [REDACTED]. He was SNR [REDACTED] of probably forty to fifty boys and twelve to fourteen girls. The girls lived in a separate building over the Rumbling Bridge. They were only ever in the school during the day for class work. I would say the age of the children ranged between eleven and either seventeen or eighteen.
18. The staff at the school were all residential. They had a separate area for the residences. The teachers who were single stayed in a separate wing in the main building and married teachers lived in the grounds on individual houses. The staff consisted of a Housemother, matron, laundry and cleaning, kitchen staff and office staff.
19. The Housemother had the responsibility for the all the children from supper time or for small medical issues. They might also help if you maybe had a tear in your uniform. The teachers were only involved in class work or outdoor activities but nothing to do with the house duties.
20. As far as the pupils were concerned there was a pecking order and you had to find where you fitted in. The junior corridor had the twelve year olds, the intermediates had thirteen and fourteen year olds and seniors were fifteen to eighteen year olds. Seniors sometimes helped out looking out for new arrivals.
21. As you moved up in the school the sleeping arrangements got better. You were able to stay up later and in general privileges got better. There were between eight and ten in each dormitory. The beds were all single beds of the old metal variety. There was a small cupboard at the side of each bed. For the intermediates the rooms held four to six beds and seniors were to two to four per room and you had your own wardrobe.

22. Being in the school took me away from the atmosphere at home. That was a good thing for me at that time.

*Mornings and bedtime*

23. In the mornings the teachers, who also covered as housemasters, woke you around seven o'clock. They just shouted to get up or switched the lights on. We then showered and put our uniform on in time for breakfast. Breakfast finished about eight forty five in time for classes at nine o'clock. There might be a couple of hours after classes which finished about three o'clock. Sports were between three-thirty and four-thirty. If we were doing any outside activity we would be allowed to have another shower, because you would be filthy. Dinner was between five-thirty and six o'clock. After our evening meal it was prep, which we did in the class rooms.
24. The couple of hours we may have spare in the afternoon/evening we may have army cadets once or twice a week. There was the snooker table in the games room. Some may have played five a side football in the sports hall, which would be supervised by senior boys. There was also a youth club. If any of the activities involved girls then they would be allowed to come up before supper at eight-thirty. We would then have some hot chocolate before going to bed around nine for juniors and gradually later with age group, to about, ten o'clock, when it was lights out.

*Mealtimes/Food*

25. All the boys ate our meals together in the dining room. We sat in our different age groups but I cannot recall there being any supervision by staff. Breakfast usually consisted of cereals or porridge, along with tea and toast and there would be some bacon, sausage or eggs on different days. I don't remember ever being hungry after any meals. If there was something being served and you did not like it you just did without until your next meal. There was never any force feeding, or anything like that.



*Washing/bathing*

26. There were showers available and one bath, should someone have an injury and unable to use the shower, perhaps you were in crutches and not allowed to get your leg wet. The showers had partitions between them for some privacy.

*Clothing/uniform*

27. We had a uniform which was worn for school work which consisted of grey trousers and shirt, black shoes and a grass green blazer. For sports we wore shorts, t-shirt and there was a knitted grass green sweater for inclement weather. If we were on away days we would dress in our day clothes.

*Leisure time*

28. At the rear of the main building there was the sports field and plenty of land where we could go for country runs. We also took part in various sports like canoeing, skiing, sailing, rugby and hockey. I really enjoyed my rugby and am still passionate to this day. It was quite common for our school to have representation for the Scotland hockey team. I really enjoyed the canoeing, went on to coach and also competed for Scotland. I think I got more out of this school than I might have achieved at a local comprehensive school. Probably the only thing we lacked when we left was social skills.

*Trips and holidays*

29. Once a week we would go to Cardenden for canoeing at the local swimming pool. At the weekend we would go to Stanley, again for canoeing. PDV [REDACTED] was the Geography teacher and he was also our instructor for the canoeing.
30. In summer, if we were competing in a big canoeing competition, we would attend there and camp nearby. We also did camping if we were away on skiing trips. This made us stronger, but it was interesting to try and pitch tents in snow.

### *School*

31. The school had the normal curriculum and the teachers were good. I knew what subjects I was needing to get results in so I could go to college. I did quite well and although I knew I only needed four o-grades, the school made me sit seven or eight. I passed well on the college subjects and not so well on the others.

### *Healthcare*

32. Matron was the person responsible for medical care in the school. She had her own room for treating ailments or injuries. There was a housemother for each junior, intermediate and senior levels.
33. I did have one serious injury when I was at the school. I slipped on the stairs and tore my ankle ligaments. An ambulance was called and I was taken to hospital.
34. When we all returned to the school on each Sunday night the matron would use a nit comb on all our heads to check for lice.
35. Any dental treatment was dealt with when you were home, but there was an availability for emergency appointments if it was needed.

### *Religious instruction*

36. Each Sunday we all had to attend at the local church, whether we wanted to or not. Each child had to walk to the church in our uniforms. The Catholic children attended Catholic church and Protestants attended the Church of Scotland.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

37. We were sent home for the Christmas holidays. In the build up to Christmas the school did make efforts and there were decorations put up. I can't remember what happened during any of my birthdays.

### *Visits/Inspections*

38. When I was allowed to return home at the weekends I would take the bus back and forth to the school. If it was a holiday time my dad sometimes picked me up in the car. I would spend the week at his house in Falkirk. That did not work out for long as his new partner was not happy and told my father to choose between seeing his new kids or to see me. He chose his own kids. He later met another woman, [REDACTED], and they are together still. Because of the atmosphere at both mum and dads I preferred to stay in the school and do whatever activities were available.
39. Mum and dad did send parcels of comics and food. I would sometimes go down to the local town to use the phone to call my mum. I felt it was okay but the staff were concerned as it was pitch black walking there. It was so dark I often hoped for a car to pass so I could see where I was walking.
40. I don't remember any inspections being carried out. No one ever came into the classrooms to sit with us to check what was happening.

### *Family contact*

41. The only real time for visits was on Parent's Day, just before the summer break. It was never a regular thing because there was nowhere for them to sit with us. On Parent's Day some of the senior boys would also show new entrants around the school to show them what was available.

### *Running away*

42. My first year at the school I was being bullied and one boy would take my pocket money. This was the main reason for me running away. I would just turn up at mum's door. Mum would telephone the school and a friend of hers would drive me back.
43. I tried telling staff about the bullying but no one would listen to me. I ended up squaring up to the boy to put a stop to it. It took a couple of teachers to pull me off him. I couldn't



take any more of his bullying. The teachers then paid a little more attention to his bullying. Despite this and my mum and dad going to the school to complain about the bullying they said it was just boys being boys. It was only when the boy was moved on to intermediate level, earlier than he should have, the bullying stopped, because the groups rarely mixed.

44. Any other times I was running away I always chose to leave around the lunch hour. It gave me an hour before anyone realised I was not in the school. Hopefully in that time I was able to hitch hike to Cumbernauld. I ran away on two or three different occasions.

#### *Discipline*

45. One form of punishment, especially if I ran away was I had to move the pile of logs from one end of the building to the other end and then back again.
46. Some other duties handed out as punishments were to sweep the long driveway, which was around 500-600 yards in length. We would also be tasked with mopping floors, gym hall. Sometimes we were part of working parties and would cut the grass or move the piles of leaves in the Autumn.
47. Any punishments were only administered from staff, although they may have senior boys supervise some of the activities.

#### *Bed Wetting*

48. I did not suffer from bed wetting but some others did. Some of them were issued with special mattresses. They just took their sheets to the laundry and picked up a fresh set. There were no issues from the staff or anyone else.
49. As I aged through the school I was staying more weekend and holidays with my dad. Things at that time were not right with my mum as she had some health issues. Dad decided I would be better off with him. It was also easier being in Falkirk with dad and not getting involved with some of the locals in Cumbernauld.

50. Things went bad during the summer holidays. The social work department became involved and as it was not working out with dad and mum was not able to look after me, they decided I would be placed on a part time basis at Bellfield Remand Centre. The first time I went there the social worker picked me up from mums house and took me to Bellfield.
51. I did have to go a panel at some time. The decisions were being made between the panel, my parents and the social work. I did not have any say in what was happening. When it came to routine journeys to Bellfield the social worker picked me up from the school and transported me to Bellfield.

#### **Bellfield Remand Centre, Dumbarton**

52. When I arrived at Bellfield it was accessed from a short driveway leading to a detached building. I was very frightened when I went to Bellfield as it was a strange atmosphere. No one had given me a proper explanation as to why the social work department were placing me there.
53. I am not aware of who was in charge of the Centre or the names of any of the staff. Some of the staff wore normal day clothes and some wore a suit and tie. You addressed the staff as Mr and their surname. There were no female staff. I think they spoke to us using our forenames.
54. The dormitories were upstairs and they were all of mixed age groups. Anyone new would just take over wherever the spare bed was situated. I think there were about twenty boys in total there from about eleven up to nearly eighteen.
55. I am not sure how we were woken in the morning but it was then get washed before heading for breakfast. Bed at night was around ten or eleven o'clock. I can't remember if the showers were open or in cubicles.

56. It was classed as an assessment centre but it seemed more strict. I was locked in for much of my time there. I learned that I had to grow up very quickly there as I was mixing with many of the residents who were part of the justice system and there was nowhere for them to be. There was no fighting, it was just the atmosphere.
57. We wore tracksuits that they supplied. We never wore our own clothes. It was obvious when we were out of the place, perhaps when we went for a walk to the River Leven, that we were from Bellfield, as we were all wearing the same tracksuit tops and bottoms.
58. As I was only there at weekends and holidays I cannot say what the general day to day routine would have been. Some of the staff would take some of the residents out for walks.
59. In the evening there was one television and everyone watched it together, supervised by the staff. It was like an old movie where all the inmates were sat in rows of chairs watching the TV. The staff had a large tin of cigarettes which they would distribute as we watched the television. The staff would light your cigarette and you would go back to your seat to smoke it. I probably smoked more at Bellfield as there was nothing else to do. I don't even remember there being books available. This like everything else you did was all regimented by the staff. This was the total opposite of Lendrick Muir.
60. I think I was still home at Christmas but all the other holiday periods were spent at Bellfield. It stopped near the end of my last terms at Lendrick Muir.
61. Sometimes mum would visit me at Bellfield along with her friend and sometimes with my sister. I think her friend was there for transport and moral support. Her visit was always by appointment. There was a room for visits and sometimes we would be allowed to go out for a coffee. Because I was only there on a residential order and not on a secure order I was allowed for that coffee. The visits were not regular perhaps once or twice during the summer.

### **Abuse at Bellfield Remand Centre**

62. All the abuse that took place was only ever one guy and it took place in one place, the kitchen.
63. The guy, I can't remember his name, said he was going to take me under his wing. He asked me to help him make supper, toast or chips, for the residents. The other staff were in the living room with the remainder of the residents. I was young and vulnerable at that time. The guy was in his fifties, thin build. He looked quite gaunt and facial stubble. He always wore a collar and tie.
64. As we prepared the food for supper it started with him hugging me, then it progressed to him trying to kiss me and licking my face. He was pressing himself into me and put his hands on my privates, over my clothes.
65. It became a regular thing for him to ask one of us to go in the kitchen with him. It was not always me. He would mix it up so it was not always the same person helping, which helped him hide what he was doing to me. If I was in Bellfield five days, I would be taken into the kitchen on three of those days. I think he picked on me as I was an easy target. Some of the others in the centre were people he could not get away with this abuse as they were more street wise.
66. At the time it was happening I just thought that was what went on in these places. I did not feel there was anyone I could speak to. I did not think the other staff would have believed me. It may have happened to other boys but I did not hear anyone else discussing this kind of thing. I just kept my head down to try and get through it.
67. There was no other physical abuse from the other staff. There was some shouting by them if you did something wrong in their eyes. Every day I spent in there was a traumatic experience.
68. When I was home I never discussed it with mum as she was already feeling guilty with me being there.

69. If it was the summer holidays I would spend the last week of that period with dad, that meant when the week was over, he would take me back to the school. I never told my dad, but towards the end of my time at school, my dad was realising that something was not right with me at Bellfield. Although I was not telling him what was happening he stopped me going there and I stayed the rest of any breaks from school with him. When dad told me I was not going back there I felt such total relief.
70. When I was leaving Lendrick Muir I was going to move back to live with dad. Mum was not able to care for me as she was suffering from some mental health issues.

### **Leaving Lendrick Muir School**

71. I left Lendrick Muir in 1981. I could have stayed on longer at the school but I had passed my exams and had a place at Cumbernauld College. At that time I was studying for my HNC in Computer Data Processing. I did have other thoughts about being an electronics engineer or even enlisting in the forces. I was not able to do either of those roles as I was colour blind. I completed my course but never used it in my adult working life.

### **Life after being in care**

72. There were times as an adult that the relationship with dad was not great but now we are best of friends. He has been ill quite recently so there have been more visits to check on him.
73. I loved my mum dearly, but there were times we fell out, but not for long. I helped her out with finances or would do some work around the house, if she needed it. My sister, [REDACTED], moved to Australia. There was one time when she was home for a holiday with mum and they had a fallout as there were only photographs of her and none of me. [REDACTED] argued with mum to make sure she put some of me on show. One day I

got a phone call from my cousin saying that mum had been found lying on the floor all day, after a fall. She passed away soon after in hospital. We were not on bad terms when she died.

74. I have a close relationship with [REDACTED] and we email quite regularly and occasionally we speak on the phone. But in our earlier times we would have normal brother/sister arguments and fights, but nothing bad. I remember one time she wanted a lock put on her room to stop me annoying her. Dad put a lock on and one day I superglued it so she could not get out. That was the typical relationship we had, just like normal brother and sisters had.
75. While I was in college at Cumbernauld it was not practical to go back and forward between there and dad's house in Falkirk and therefore I got my own flat. It wasn't the best area but it was my council flat. When I started working in the hotels I had my own room and gave the flat up.
76. When I left Lendrick Muir I got involved in coaching outdoor activities. Dad had bought me a canoe. I also spent time at the National Scout Activity Centre, at Lochgoilhead. I would spend weekends and any of my holidays there. This was on a voluntary basis and soon realised I needed to get a paying job.
77. My first paid job was working in [REDACTED] Hotel, Aviemore and I spent the summer season there. When I worked in Aviemore I also worked as a ski instructor at weekends and helped out at the end of my hotel shifts. I went on to work in the hotel industry for over twenty years. I have worked for Stakis, Hilton and the MacDonald Hotels. I became very senior when I worked in [REDACTED].
78. I got fed up with the hotel industry and started working for myself in facilities management. I get to choose who I work for and when I work. It involves property maintenance and perhaps kitchen upgrades. I also did some volunteering at the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Since then I have become more involved in volunteering. It is just to give something back.



79. I got married in 2008 but that relationship did not work out and after about six years we divorced. For a little while my life fell apart, for different reasons to do with that relationship. I met [REDACTED] and we have been together and have a daughter. I do worry about her, not because of my time in care, but because I am aware there are strange people out there. Sometimes when she is out with the dog I might follow a few minutes later, just to make sure she is alright. I am very protective of her.
80. [REDACTED] has worked for the Children's Hearing Services for two years. Last year I tried to become a member. I am aware from the training that I was receiving that the way I was dealt with at my panels is not the way things are dealt with today.

### **Impact**

81. Up until last year I did not have any impact in my adult life as a result of my time at Bellfield. Lendrick Muir I enjoyed and it was so good for me in so many ways. I think my time in care probably did me more good than bad.
82. During my training for the Children's Hearing Services all the bad memories from Bellfield came flooding back. I had not thought about them throughout my adult life. We had completed four or five full day sessions and we were starting on the module dealing with secure accommodation. We were having discussions about places in the local area when the memories came back without warning.
83. I spoke with the trainer letting her know I was having some issues with some of the memories suddenly coming back. She must have spoken to the head of the department, because at the end of that day she sent me an email asking how I was. I told her I was still having some issues dealing with the memories. I presume she must have had to report it back but after that I did not receive any follow up or any calls.
84. I did expect that they would have had things in place for panel members who may have had difficulties with some hearings they were dealing with. If that help was in

place I find it difficult to understand why there is nothing for people being trained by them.

85. I had to take some time out of the course. The Covid pandemic arrived and I was removed from the course. I wanted to continue with my training but they said I would have to start from the beginning. I was not happy with this and found it demoralising having to restart. I think it is remiss of them not to even follow up to check on how things are with me, as it was with them when the problem arose.
86. After the memories came back I did some research and found that my experiences were repeated to others at Bellfield. As part of the research I found out the Inquiry was investigating Bellfield. That was the reason I came forward.
87. I have not looked for any counselling before this. I have been in contact with Future Pathways looking to see if they can offer assistance. I am in a waiting system for that to be progressed.
88. I visited the school about five years after I left. Some of the staff that taught me were still there. I stayed in a local bed and breakfast and had dinner out with some of them. I never went back to Bellfield as it was no longer in operation, but at that time the memories had not returned. I have done the Kilt Walk on many occasions and walked passed Bellfield without giving it any thought. I have since been back to Lendrick Muir and it is no longer a school, it is now a religious retreat.
89. There are days just now that I waken up angry with what happened. As a result of Covid this experience of providing my statement has taken longer than it should have and at the end of the process I am hoping to put it all to bed.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

90. I have not reported any of the abuse to any authority or the police. I did not say anything before because of a fear that it may have been covered up and would not be believed.

### **Records**

91. I did return to Quarrier's to see what information they had on me. They were able to give me a few documents showing the brief period I was there and showed me the building I would have stayed in. As it is only recently that I have the memories of Bellfield I have not considered applying for any other records.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

92. I think that even as a trainee and as a volunteer for the Children's Hearing Services the staff should be better looked after. Any assistance should not just be for full time staff, but I am not even sure whether they provide enough back up for the full time staff. There was a professor we had to speak with during the training and we were talking about us being volunteers. He wanted us to change our thinking to not being volunteers like someone helping at a marathon, but that we were unpaid professional laymen. Maybe if this was taken more on board by the CHS they might be able to look after staff better, and the staff would not be worn out when making decisions on the future of children at Hearings.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

93. I hope by giving evidence to the Inquiry it gives strength to others and gives hope that they will not be alone.

94. I hope other people giving evidence to the Inquiry get some sort of closure. I don't think there is any chance of the people involved with me to be taken to task, because it was so long ago. Strathclyde Regional Council must have been aware of something happening in these places and they need to be held to account and apologise for their inaction. There should be nowhere for them to hide. There are too many damaged adults because the wrong people were employed in those places and there was a lack of any checks made on them, before and during their employment.
95. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..........

Dated..... 24 March 2021 .....