

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Robert TAYLOR

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is Robert Geoffrey Taylor. I am known as Bob. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1948. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I left school in Nottingham in 1967 and went to a college that is a part of Keele University in Staffordshire, where I studied art and drama for three years. I graduated in 1970 with a Bachelor of Education degree.
3. My first job was teaching at Kingsdale Comprehensive School at Dulwich, London, which was a secondary school. There was a shortage of teachers in London at the time and I wasn't teaching a particular subject, I was just pushed from pillar to post and I didn't like it. I was also very homesick, so after a year I went back to Nottingham and I didn't teach again for a while. Instead, I joined Nottingham Social Services and worked as an unqualified social worker in the children's department there for a year or two.
4. About that time, I met my first wife and in the early 1970s we moved down to Bournemouth. I don't recall who, but somebody suggested I use my background in art to do art therapy with children who found it difficult to settle in classrooms and I succeeded in getting a teaching job at an independent school for children with behaviour and learning difficulties. It was either called Grange Hall or Grange Wood and was at Wimborne in Dorset. I worked there for a year or two and my wife also got a job there as a care person. After leaving there, I taught at a number of schools in the south of England.

5. I had never received any special training to deal with children with learning and behavioural difficulties, I mostly learned in-service, through support and supervision. However, while I was working at Nazeing Park School in Essex, I completed a course at Hatfield College and gained an advanced diploma in the teaching of what were called at the time 'maladjusted children'. That was a year-long, part-time course, run by the Cambridge Institute of Education.
6. My wife and I moved back to Nottingham in 1976, where we started our family and I worked at another school for children with learning and behavioural difficulties called Woodlands, which was in Bilborough. I left there to come up to Scotland in 1984, because my wife wanted to be nearer her mother, who was not well.
7. I was successful in getting the role of SNR [REDACTED] at Harmeny School, Balerno, which is on the outskirts of Edinburgh. I worked there from April 198[REDACTED] until January 199[REDACTED], initially as SNR [REDACTED] and then, for my last [REDACTED] years, SNR [REDACTED] after SNR [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] went off sick.
8. After I left Harmeny, I took a year out of teaching, before I then got a job teaching art at Starley Hall School at Burntisland, Fife. I started there in April 199[REDACTED] and worked there until January 200[REDACTED]. After Starley Hall, I taught at Beath High School, Cowdenbeath until I retired.

Harmeny School, Balerno

9. Harmeny School is a residential special school in Balerno, on the west side of Edinburgh. It was grant-aided in the same way the blind school and the deaf school in Edinburgh were. I believe part of its running costs were paid by Edinburgh City Council and the rest were paid by the local authorities who sent children to the school.
10. The school had opened in the late 1950s or early 1960s, having been gifted to the Save the Children Fund by William Younger, the brewer. Initially, the intention had been that children from disadvantaged homes could use the house and grounds for holidays, before it then became a school, run by the Save the Children Fund and a governing body. Caroline Hill was the Scottish patron of the Save the Children Fund

while I was at Harmeny and the Chair of the governing body was a lady called Edith Fenton.

11. SNR [REDACTED] was a man called KVJ [REDACTED] and his wife [REDACTED] was the school social worker. KVJ [REDACTED] had been SNR [REDACTED] for a long while, [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and he took on [REDACTED] roles for everything. He was a very charismatic man.
12. I think there would have been between twelve and twenty care staff, in addition to the teaching staff, and there were between thirty and forty boys and girls at Harmeny, all of primary school age. The youngest would have been about seven and the oldest would have been eleven or twelve. I don't think any of the children were day pupils, I think they all stayed in the school.
13. The children's rooms were in three houses, which were called the Owls, the Kingfishers and the Robins and each house group was led by a senior care worker. The Owls were the youngest group and they stayed in the main house. The Kingfishers who were slightly older boys and girls stayed in a bungalow in the grounds. The oldest group was the Robins, which was all boys and they stayed in another bungalow within the grounds. I don't think there were ever more than two children to a room in each of the houses and they could personalise their rooms with posters and whatever.
14. I found the culture to be close-knit and family orientated, both socially amongst the care staff and professionally. The care staff mostly all lived in and so they developed very close relationships with the children.

My role and recruitment at Harmeny School

15. KVJ [REDACTED], SNR [REDACTED], interviewed me for my job along with a guy from the Save the Children Fund, who was also on the board of governors. I'm sure I would have provided references from my previous employment, but I don't recall.

16. As SNR [REDACTED] at Harmeny School, I was in charge of education, although I also did still teach a class of older children. These were pupils who were getting ready to move away and back into mainstream education in secondary school. My role also involved being on duty when SNR [REDACTED] was off duty, to offer management support to the groups. As such, KVJ [REDACTED] and I used to work alternative weekends, however I never spent much time in any of the houses.
17. My line manager was SNR [REDACTED], KVJ [REDACTED] until he went off sick due to illness, around 199[REDACTED], and I SNR [REDACTED]. After I became SNR [REDACTED], KVJ [REDACTED] resigned and I had nobody supervising me. I wasn't given any specific training for the role of SNR [REDACTED] and I continued to teach. I was in quite a vulnerable position and I think I would have benefitted had there been some external oversight or appraisal of my performance.
18. It was a very difficult time for me as SNR [REDACTED] because KVJ [REDACTED] was such a big, charismatic man. He [REDACTED] the school, both the staff and the children, like a father figure. He was looked up to and regarded in this manner by all. When he went off sick, it was difficult for me to 'fill his shoes', as it were, and I think several members of staff found it difficult to adjust to my becoming SNR [REDACTED].

Policy at Harmeny School

19. I think I might have been indirectly involved in policy making at Harmeny School while I was SNR [REDACTED]. We had regular staff meetings, at which suggestions and recommendations would be made. However, I don't recall any written policies on matters such as child protection or restraint. There may have been, but I don't remember seeing anything.

Structure and recruitment of staff at Harmeny School

20. Staff were split into teaching staff and care staff and there was very much a different culture between the two groups. The teachers were professionally trained to do their jobs. They were only there during the day and yet they got considerably more pay than

the care staff got. The care staff are conceivably more vulnerable and they are also working anti-social hours for a lot less pay.

21. Myself and KVV interviewed people for the teaching posts at Harmeny School. I think written references would have been obtained as a matter of course, but I don't know if they would have been followed up. The teaching staff I interviewed probably came from other schools, I'm not sure, and I don't know if any would have had prior experience of working with children who had behavioural issues.
22. KVV would also be involved in interviews for care worker posts, as would his wife and somebody from the governing body or from Save the Children Fund. I don't think I was ever involved in the recruitment of the care staff.
23. The care staff were mostly young people who had come from a similar sort of background as each other, although I'm not sure what their employment histories were. I don't think any of them were qualified social workers, but perhaps some of the females had some nursery nurse training.
24. There were three senior care staff in charge of each house. As far as I remember, RLU was in charge of the Kingfishers, Agnes Lucas was in charge of the Owls and Lindon Baker was in charge of the Robins until he left and then Angela Corner took over. Each would be in charge of three or four care workers who worked shifts and they would be on duty in the evenings. They wouldn't all be there all night, instead when they finished their shifts at 10:00 pm, or whenever, there would be one or two people looking after each house on night duty. I can't remember if the night staff had to stay awake or not.
25. As the school social worker, would visit the parents of children, liaise between the families and the school and write reports on the family dynamics. If she considered that there were issues at a child's home and she felt the staff looking after the child needed to be aware of those issues, she would make them aware.
26. No volunteers worked at Harmeny School during my time there.

Training at Harmeny School

27. A lot of young people came onto the care staff at Harmeny from other caring professions and were 'shown the ropes' by the people in charge of their group. I don't recall there being a training programme for any new staff.
28. The teaching staff were already qualified and registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). As I had come from England, I initially wasn't registered and I had to go through a process to become accepted with the GTCS in order to fulfil my role as a teacher.
29. I think the care staff had the opportunity to study for vocational qualifications, but I would not say that all of them were sufficiently qualified. There were a lot of young people amongst the care staff and I consider more could have been done to train the care staff more formally. I think some of them found it quite difficult and I think it should have been mandatory for them to attain qualifications.

Supervision/appraisal/evaluation at Harmeny School

30. I did not directly manage anyone either as SNR or SNR and I did not complete any staff appraisals or have any one-to-one management of any of the staff.

Children at Harmeny School

31. Children were placed at Harmeny if they had not been able to manage in mainstream school, mainly as a consequence of their behaviour. I think it depended where the children came from, but they would be placed at Harmeny either by social services or by their education authority, or by both, depending on the availability of funding.
32. All the children at Harmeny School had behavioural or learning difficulties, or both, and they would come to the school after they had been excluded from mainstream education. They could come from the age of about seven and they would normally stay until they were of an age to move from primary school to secondary, so they would be eleven or twelve. That would mean that if they came to Harmeny School at the age

of seven, they would be there for four or five years because they would, in the main, stay until they were secondary school age and not before.

33. I'm not sure if the children came from all over Scotland, but there were certainly boys and girls from Glasgow, Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders. If a child had been excluded from school because of their difficulties, an alternative had to be found for them and their local authority would make a recommendation that they come to Harmeny.
34. The daily routine for the children consisted of them getting up, getting washed and getting breakfast in their houses before getting ready for school. There would be a mid-morning break when they would go into the yard for a period of playtime. Then they would be back in class until lunchtime, after which they would be allowed out to play in the yard again, before going back to class in the afternoon.
35. After school they would go into their houses and attend house meetings at which they would talk about their day and any upsets they may have had. The senior care worker of each house would preside over that meeting. After that, they would have their tea, again in their own houses, and then they would be allowed to go out and play or they would be taken somewhere on a supervised activity, such as swimming.
36. Meals were prepared by the kitchen staff and children would eat their lunch in the dining room, which was downstairs in the main building. Dorothy Oliphant was the lady in charge of the kitchen staff and the food was nice. I certainly ate it. There were no rules governing the children's eating, certainly there was nobody standing over them making sure they ate.
37. There were lots of lovely places for the children to play around the grounds of Harmeny School. There were several playing fields where the boys could kick a football about, and there were woods. We had sports events and sports days and some of the children would be in the local cub scout group, the Brownies and in dance groups.
38. Classes were small at Harmeny. There were five classes altogether and just eight boys and girls in each. They were taught the primary school curriculum and each

class did various projects and topics. I taught maths, English and history and when you only have eight children you can set work according to their abilities and not expect them all to keep up with each other. I also used a lot of art and craft in my lessons to get the children involved.

39. Groups of children were occasionally taken to a house on Arran in the summer. There would be too many if they all went at the same time, so I think we took half at a time, but all would get to go. Quite a lot of staff also went and I went too.
40. I don't recall social workers from outside the school visiting children, but families visited occasionally. There was no specific day for visits, they were usually organised by [REDACTED] and families could take children out, if they wanted. Quite a few children went home at weekends and in the holidays as well. They would be taken home in the school minibus and picked up again.
41. There was nobody in particular that dealt with any health issues. A child would be looked after by the care staff of the house they were in if they were unwell. If they were deemed too unwell, parents would be notified and they would be taken home or the doctor would be called.
42. There was one incident where a girl called [REDACTED], who was eleven at the time, overdosed at Harmeny School. She had got [REDACTED] in Kingfishers House and had taken [REDACTED]. I think she had just been fooling around, but I don't know how she had managed to get into [REDACTED].
43. One of the care workers in Kingfishers, Mark Wallace, phoned me at home and I went straight over. I sat in the back seat of a car with [REDACTED] and Mark while another member of staff drove and we took her straight to the hospital. At the hospital, [REDACTED] went into [REDACTED] and her [REDACTED]. Eventually, she was okay, but it was quite scary and concerning at the time.
44. [REDACTED] contacted the parents and they came to the school and a plan was put in place to monitor [REDACTED]. The senior care worker in Kingfishers would have been responsible for implementing that, either Mark Wallace or [REDACTED] RLU.

45. Children were not given chores or manual work to do, but they were encouraged to tidy their bedrooms and make their beds, as you would do with your own youngsters. Cleaners came in to clean the school.
46. If we considered a child was ready to leave Harmeny School, to go home and go to mainstream secondary school, we would contact the school near to where they lived. We were quite successful and not many continued to remain in residential care, most did leave Harmeny and go home.

Living arrangements at Harmeny School

47. Along with my family, I lived in a bungalow within the grounds of Harmeny School, as did KVV and his family. All of the rest of the teaching staff lived outside the school.
48. Some of the care staff had their own accommodation away from the school, but most of them lived in. They stayed in their own accommodation upstairs in the main building.

Discipline and punishment at Harmeny School

49. There was no formally prescribed method of discipline and punishment at Harmeny School. Care staff in the houses had autonomy to deal with discipline in their own way and I don't know whether restricting pocket money, stopping home leave, or children not being allowed to go on a trip was used as a method of discipline. That would have been up to the people who were running the individual houses.
50. We did use time-out as a means of discipline, whereby a child would be told to spend some time in their room, rather than be allowed out to play. Additionally, the children would have meetings in their houses at the end of the school day, at which time they would talk about their day, the highs and lows and if there had been problems.

51. I think, by and large, staff would have been aware what methods of discipline were permissible. They should have been aware because we expected them to use common sense, but there was nothing in writing and no training in methods of discipline.
52. Corporal punishment was not used at Harmeny House either formally or informally. I never used corporal punishment and I never saw it being used or heard of it being used.
53. I don't know whether any record of what disciplinary measures might have been taken was kept. I think there should have been, but I can't remember.

Restraint at Harmeny School

54. There was no formal training in what was appropriate in terms of restraint and what was not. I don't think there was a formal policy on restraint and I don't think we ever had meetings or sat down and talked about it either. We probably should have.
55. My understanding of the use of restraint was that if a child was behaving in a way that might mean they would harm themselves, other people, or property, you would guide them away or you would hold that child in as appropriate a manner as was possible to prevent them doing so. That would not be roughly or dangerously. There was no accepted practice as such as to how many staff might be involved in a restraint, or the manner in which restraint would be used.
56. I should imagine staff would be expected to use their better judgement as to their use of restraint. I think some staff were more reluctant to hold children than others and wouldn't get involved, but I suppose other people didn't mind it.
57. I should imagine restraint was used quite often at Harmeny School. Not all the time, but I should think it would be used more often in the houses at night, rather than in the classrooms during the day. If there was some sort of commotion during the night, I might get a phone call to come down and speak with a child, but not very often. I would use restraint if children were fighting or were angry about something and start

kicking chairs about or throwing desks about. I would hold them until they calmed down and if there was another member of staff in the vicinity, I would call them to assist.

58. I did not make any formal changes to the practices of restraint, but I did have concerns on a few occasions. There were certain people who I felt were rougher than they perhaps should have been in their handling of situations. There was one particular person, KLL, who was a care worker who had been at Harmeny School for quite a while. I always felt that the way he spoke to children and the way that he held them was over enthusiastic. I felt he was rough with children.
59. On one occasion, for instance, I happened to be walking past a room when I could hear a child screaming and swearing and a colossal racket going on inside. I opened the door and saw a child was in one corner of the room and KLL was in another. I told KLL to leave and that I would handle it and that resolved the issue. I did not actually see him touch this child and I don't know what might have caused the child to become so upset.
60. I think I may have seen KLL restrain a child on other occasions and I should imagine I did see him use excessive restraint, but I cannot recall any specific incident. I believe other staff members had seen him do so, however, and I understand that KLL was, at least, reprimanded by SNR, PNC after I had left. PNC started at Harmeny School after I left and might actually have sacked KLL, I don't know.
61. Other than KLL, I don't think I saw any other staff member, particularly, use excessive restraint.

Problems at Harmeny School

62. When I became SNR Harmeny School, I had to fulfil both the role of SNR and SNR as there was no SNR. It would certainly have taken a load off me if there had been. A very able teacher, Alison Patterson, took over the education side of things, but that was the only assistance I had.

63. One of the difficulties I experienced when I became SNR [REDACTED] was with KVJ [REDACTED] KVJ [REDACTED]'s wife, [REDACTED] the school social worker. She found it difficult to regard me as SNR [REDACTED] of the school and she refused to communicate with me.
64. Additionally at this time, towards the end of 199[REDACTED] I became involved in a relationship with one of the senior members of the care staff, Angela Corner. We tried to conduct our relationship clandestinely, however it wasn't always possible. I had written her a somewhat intimate letter, which she unfortunately left somewhere and somebody else found it. It was given to the administrative managers and the Save the Children Fund intervened.

Concerns about Harmeny School

65. I felt the care staff could have benefitted from having a senior care worker in charge of them. Someone who was able to support and supervise them and who could offer them any advice and training they might need. That was always a bone of contention I had.
66. I also consider there should have been more than one social worker. Forty children was a lot for one social worker. As the only social worker, I think [REDACTED] had a high level of contact with a few children and a low level of contact with a lot. She concentrated on a few particular children and their families and at times I found that odd.
67. I don't know what her reasons for that were, however. They were not children that were more problematic than others, in fact they were the opposite and I, personally, had concerns about [REDACTED]'s work ethic. She seemed to work better with children whose parents she knew or got on better with and I felt at the time that a lot of the youngsters weren't getting social work intervention when they might have needed it. Instead, only a select few were and the problematic families were neglected.

68. [REDACTED] also liked a drink and she did so to excess. It had been brought to my attention and to the attention of the Save the Children Fund that she would sometimes come into the building late at night to talk with another member of the staff and she would be loud and unruly.
69. I did not, however, feel able to do anything about it because KVV [REDACTED] was her husband and he was my boss. When he went off sick and I became SNR [REDACTED], it actually became more difficult. On my last day working at Harmeny School, representatives of the Save the Children Fund had actually arranged for us to meet with [REDACTED]. Some of the care staff had been complaining about her to each other generally and we wanted to discuss her work policy and her work ethic with her.
70. I don't know if that meeting ever took place though because instead I received a phone call from Bill Grieve of the Save the Children Fund, who told me that they had a few concerns about me. It was following that, that I came to leave Harmeny School.

Reporting of complaints/concerns at Harmeny School

71. I don't think I ever had to deal with a complaint from a staff member about another staff member.

Trusted adult/confidante at Harmeny School

72. Each child had a key worker who would be one of the care staff within the child's house. If a child wished to make a complaint, they would know they could speak to their key worker or with whoever they felt confident with or closest to, or who they trusted most.
73. I think there were a couple of occasions that a child came up to me and told me they had been pushed by another child, or whatever. However, no child ever made a complaint to me about an adult, as far as I recall.
74. I don't know if there was a formal process to be followed. If a child had made such a complaint, I suppose I would have gone to the member of staff involved and made

them aware of the complaint. If, for example the child had said that a member of staff had been a bit heavy-handed with them, I would have told the member of staff to be a bit more careful in the future.

External monitoring at Harmeny School

75. I don't think there were any external inspections in all the time I was at Harmeny School. However, around 199█ or 199█, while I was SNR █, there was an investigation into the care work. I'm not sure if there was something specific that instigated the investigation, but I believe that information had become available to members of the Save the Children Fund that children were being held unnecessarily at Harmeny. I was never sure how that information came to light. It was a confusing time for me and I wondered at the time what had caused it.
76. The Fund organised for a lady called Barbara Kahan, who was quite high up in children's services nationally, to carry out a review. There was a concern in the country at the time over the issue of 'Pin down', particularly regarding the methods that were being employed for holding and restraining children. There was debate over how effective pin down was and whether it was a good or a bad thing and Barbara Kahan's team were looking into the use of pin down in all sorts of establishments throughout the country.
77. I think the Save the Children Fund felt it was necessary to have an investigation at Harmeny into how children were managed if their behaviour became challenging or threatening. Barbara Kahan's recommendation was that a chap called Sandy Jamieson should be employed independently to work at the school and carry out a review. He was both a social worker and an author and he was at the school for several months. He interviewed every person in the school, including every teacher, every care worker and the children as well. He then compiled a hefty document about the school, for the school, with his recommendations for improvements in handling children who were displaying difficult behaviour.
78. He did suggest that I should stop teaching and take on SNR █ only and, for a brief time, that is what I did. He also felt it necessary to break up some of the

working relationships between the staff in the three houses. There were three or four groups of people who he felt should be separated because they were too close and their work ethic needed to be addressed. He wrote a letter to those people he considered should be separated, which I had to sign because I was SNR [REDACTED]. Accordingly, the people who were being moved saw me as the instigator and were quite resentful.

79. One of the big changes that Sandy Jamieson made was he brought in a head of care to oversee the care staff and the treatment of the children. His name was Philip Parkin and it was after he started that training was introduced for care staff.
80. I don't know what the outcome of Sandy Jamieson's review was because I left the school at the end of 199[REDACTED] before his recommendations were introduced.
81. In retrospect, I do consider that the investigation was probably justified. At the time, things were happening in schools that weren't necessarily abusive, but children were occasionally being treated roughly. I think the investigation ruffled a few feathers and shook the place up and I think it needed to be. KVJ [REDACTED] had looked after everybody paternally for so long, but his leaving and my eventual departure was probably a good thing for Harmeny School. Things had been too complacent for too long and I felt at the time that the school needed to be brought into the twentieth century.
82. The man who [REDACTED] was called KYN [REDACTED] and he eventually made the school independent of the Save the Children Fund. He changed the name to the 'Harmeny Trust', but I don't know anything about it.

Record keeping at Harmeny School

83. Teachers were required to keep records of children's educational progress and care staff were required to keep records of each child's care on a daily basis. All the houses had record books, within which notes that had been taken at the daily house meetings were recorded. I believe there were individual records kept for each child as well, which would have been updated by the senior care worker in charge of each house.

Abuse at Harmeny School

84. I don't think there was a definition of what constituted abuse during my time at Harmeny School. It was left up to the individual to know what was acceptable and what wasn't. I do think, in hindsight, that the school might have benefitted from staff knowing what constituted abuse and having a policy on it.
85. I did not see any behaviour that I considered to be abuse taking place at Harmeny School. Some staff might have held children a bit roughly, or for too long, but I would not say there was any systematic abuse of any sort going on.

Child protection arrangements at Harmeny School

86. I don't know if staff were given any formal guidance and instruction on how children should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour towards them.
87. Looking back, I do consider staff should have been given such guidance and that should have been the head teacher's responsibility, supported by the governors of the school. That lack of guidance was probably of its time, however, rather than a failing of the school itself.

Allegations of abuse at Harmeny School

88. As I recollect, while I was still working at Harmeny School, I was never the subject of an allegation of abuse or ill-treatment of a child or children who resided there.

Investigations into abuse at Harmeny School – personal involvement

89. I have never been involved in any investigation by or on behalf of Harmeny School into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of or into inappropriate behaviour by staff or

others towards children. I don't think I was ever aware of any such allegation being made against any member of staff.

Reports of historical abuse and civil claims at Harmeny School

90. I was never involved in the handling of reports to Harmeny School by former residents, concerning historical abuse.

Police investigations/criminal proceedings at Harmeny School

91. I am not aware of any police investigations into alleged abuse of children at Harmeny School before, during, or after my time there.

Convicted abusers at Harmeny School

92. I do not know of any person who had worked at Harmeny School being convicted of the abuse of a child there.

Other staff etc. working at Harmeny School at the same time

PFG [REDACTED] or PFG [REDACTED]

93. I do not know of any member of staff known as PFG [REDACTED] or PFG [REDACTED].

KVJ [REDACTED]

94. KVJ [REDACTED], SNR [REDACTED] when I started and for much of my time at Harmeny School, had a fatherly manner with the children. I saw him with children many times and they liked him. I saw him giving children a row, but I did not see him abuse any child either verbally or physically.

MWJ

95. I do not recall a member of staff called MWJ

MWH

96. I do not recall a member of staff called MWH

MWG

97. I do not recall a member of staff called MWG

KLL

98. KLL was a care worker in Kingfisher House and he was an older man. I don't know how old, but he was certainly older than me. I occasionally saw him with children and he did a lot of shouting. I didn't hear him swearing at children, but he was rough and ready.

99. He was an odd man and I found it very difficult to understand how he was actually working with children in that setting. He lived on his own at the school and spent a lot of time playing with radios. He had a big tool shed where he used to like making things, along with some of the children.

KQL

100. I think I remember the name KQL, but I don't remember anything about her.

KLN

101. I do not remember a member of staff called KLN

KYN

102. KYN became SNR after I left. I had actually known KYN before Harmeny School because we had both done a course together in Essex. We had been studying for an advanced diploma in working with children with learning and behavioural difficulties. He was a very clever man.
103. I never worked with KYN. I left Harmeny School at the time he started. I do not know what he was like with children.

MWF

104. I do recall a female care worker in the Owls House called ZMWF who was at Harmeny School in the late 1980s and early 1990s, for a couple of years. She was a swimming instructor from Wester Hailes pool and she was a big, tall, blond girl.
105. I recall she was quite sporty and used to kick a ball about with the children and play netball with them. I did not see her discipline children and there was nothing about her manner with children that gave me cause for concern.

MWI

106. I do not recall a member of staff called MWI.

KVM

107. I do not recall a member of staff called KVM.

David Brown

108. David Brown was a senior care worker in charge of the Robins House when I first went to Harmeny School. He had been there a while before I started and left a couple of years later. He was quite a religious person and used to quote the bible to the children.

109. I remember one night he rang me because he was on duty and he could hear screams coming from the woods in the grounds at the back of my house. I had heard them too and realised it was actually female foxes, however David thought it was children. I told him it was foxes, however the next day Kvj told me that he had to have words with him because after speaking with me, David Brown had phoned him and had gone into all the children's rooms to make sure they were okay.
110. I think he left under a cloud, although I can't remember the circumstances. I think Kvj told me that he wasn't at the school anymore and when I asked if it had been of his own volition, Kvj told me that he himself had decided, after a long chat, that it was best that he left. I asked if there was any particular reason, but all Kvj told me was that how he handled the incident with the fox screaming didn't help.
111. There was nothing that gave me cause for concern about the way David Brown interacted with children. Some of the older boys did sometimes complain about him quoting the bible at them, but nothing more than that. I did not see him discipline children and I did not see or hear of him abusing children.

Save the Children Fund Minutes of the Meeting of the Management Committee of Harmeny School held on Wednesday 11 November 199

112. I have been provided with a copy of the Save the Children Fund Minutes of the Meeting of the Management Committee of Harmeny School held on Wednesday 11 November 199
113. The document details who was present at the meeting and also that I, SNR, was also in attendance. I can vaguely remember this meeting, but I have no memory of seeing this document before.
114. The title on page two of this document reads: '*Report of an internal inquiry into serious allegations made against members of staff*'. Paragraph one on page two reads: '*We were appointed to inquire into allegations of misconduct by staff at the school made by Miss KQL in a letter of appeal against her dismissal and by David Harvie, a past staff member, in a letter he wrote at the same time. These allegations*

principally concerned alcohol consumption and hitting children but also referred to defects in training, low morale and the inability of staff to participate fully in policy decisions'.

115. I don't remember KQL let alone the circumstances of her dismissal. I do not know what the allegations of misconduct by staff that are mentioned refer to.
116. I do remember David Harvie. He was a younger man who was a care worker in Robins House when Lindon Baker was the senior care worker there. I remember he shouted a lot and the children used to tease him all the time about the way he looked. I don't think he got on very well with Lindon Baker, but I don't remember having anything to do with him. I also don't know anything about the letter he wrote that this document refers to.
117. With regard to the reference to alcohol consumption, I am not making excuses or condoning drinking on the premises, however I think that the problem was that a lot of the care staff were young and were living at Harmeny School, away from home. Balerno at that time was quite a small community and had a lot of pubs and a lot of the younger care staff would go to one of the pubs when they finished their shift and have a few drinks. They would then return to their living accommodation at Harmeny School.
118. It's probably something that shouldn't have happened, but it did. However, the children would have smelled alcohol on the breaths of these care workers and, because of the backgrounds a lot of these children had, they would probably have associated that smell with violence.
119. I was aware of this happening at the time, but I couldn't do anything about them going off the premises and drinking in their own time. I don't know how much of an issue I thought it was at the time. I wasn't aware of any staff drinking on the premises and nobody was going out and getting drunk and then falling about in front of the children. I never spoke to any of the staff about it and this meeting was probably the first time I was involved in any discussion about drinking at Harmeny School.

120. Also on page two of the document, there is reference to the hitting of children and the fifth paragraph on that page states: *'There had been clear confusion over the rules governing hitting of children as set out in the 'Overview'. This had allowed slapping a child, e.g. on the bottom, if this was thought to be the best way of dealing with a child in certain exceptional circumstances; and a number of the staff said that they had done so because they were following the example of senior staff. They felt that there should be a complete ban on hitting children'.*
121. The following paragraph states: *'Staff and the Management Committee agree on this point as Harmeny School must accept the ban on corporal punishment as laid down in Section 48A of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980'.*
122. I was not particularly aware that slapping a child on the bottom happened. It certainly wasn't a recognised method of admonishment and it would have concerned me if it had been because I have children of my own.
123. The next topic on the following paragraph is alcohol consumption and states: *'Only one incident of possible excess of alcohol was mentioned to us but many of the care staff appear at some time to have had a drink with a 'pub lunch' before coming on duty. The teachers had strongly proposed a complete ban on drinking in the school or before coming on duty and the ending of the practice of having a glass of wine at the Christmas lunch'.*
124. I don't know what the one incident of possible excess alcohol referred to is.
125. The next paragraph states: *'We recommend a complete ban on alcohol whilst on duty anywhere or before coming on duty or at any time when there is a possibility of coming into contact with a pupil, prospective pupil or parent'.*
126. I left in January 199█ and was not around to implement these bans.
127. On page three, the next subsection addresses staff organisation and management and states: *'There is a clear need for an examination of care staff organisation and management.'*

128. The following paragraph states: *'The role of the Care Co-ordinator was felt to be unsatisfactory under present circumstances. This post had been established to oversee the work of a care team and to act as communicator between the care staff and SNR [REDACTED]. The Co-ordinator works within a team with full duties as a care worker in addition to the extra duties as a Co-ordinator, and with tight shift rotas to organise. Although nominally in charge of the team, the Co-ordinator has no management responsibility placed on him/her by the Job Description, and any problem or difficulty is discussed directly with SNR [REDACTED]. The care staff have lacked this support because of SNR [REDACTED]'s illness'.*
129. Philip Parkin was the care co-ordinator this refers to and he had been brought into the school as a result of the Barbara Kahan intervention and Sandy Jamieson's review of the school. I wasn't a part of that decision or that process, but his role as I understood it was to give the care staff support and supervision. I thought his being a co-ordinator of the care staff was a management responsibility.
130. When KVJ [REDACTED] left, the link between the care staff and SNR [REDACTED] was broken. They did not come to me SNR [REDACTED] to discuss any problem or difficulty as this paragraph suggests they did with KVJ [REDACTED], because they didn't see me as his replacement. They didn't automatically turn to me for help, succour and solace as they did with KVJ [REDACTED].
131. I think some of the staff were hostile towards me. I am not the same sort of person that KVJ [REDACTED] was and I wasn't regarded in the same way. One of the staff said of me when I left that I am not SNR [REDACTED], I am a teacher and that about summed up how many people felt about my position SNR [REDACTED].
132. The following paragraph on page three states: *'Care workers do not go automatically to their Co-ordinator to discuss problems because this has not been established as the procedure, and authority has not been given to the Co-ordinator to deal with them. They tend to talk to a colleague with whom they feel comfortable, whether within or outside the team. This practice raises problems of confidentiality, cuts across team cohesion, and undermines the team Co-ordinator. The problem becomes even more*

acute if there is a personal relationship difficulty within the team. On the other hand care workers can feel that they have nobody to go to when problems arise. They need to feel confident that their problems will be discussed objectively, which may not always happen when discussed within the confines of their own team'.

133. I always felt that Philip Parkin was an okay manager of the care team, he was very clever and he was experienced. I thought that people did go to him and that he provided support and supervision for them.
134. I did not have any input in any issues the care staff might have had because the care staff did not recognise me SNR. I suppose I was busy too. I was still in charge of education and I carried on teaching when I became SNR, until it was suggested that I shouldn't because of the amount of stuff I had on my plate.
135. The next topic in the document is training, which is addressed at the bottom of page three and continues on page four. It states: *'Much was said of the lack of training, especially for new staff. It is very difficult for young people to find a training course in Scotland which is suitable for work in a setting such as Harmeny. We recognise that this is something SNR has been aware of, and he has established supervision arrangements and made it possible for any young member of staff to attend appropriate day and weekend courses or seminars, but this opportunity has not been fully taken advantage of.'*
136. As I have stated, there was an opportunity for care staff to study for vocational qualifications, however I do consider that criticism is probably justified. I don't believe I had reservations at the time, though, because I would have probably voiced them. However, there wasn't a particular formal method of training in place for them and that is not the fault of the staff, that is the fault of the regime.
137. The paragraph continues: *'We understand that improvements for training new and established staff are now being actively considered by the recently formed Steering Group, which is composed of senior members of staff from all areas within the School under the chairmanship of SNR. A formal programme for the induction of new staff, based on a structured approach to the theory and practice of*

childcare related to work at Harmeny and drawing on the full range of experience available within the School, is at present being drawn up along with arrangements for its management and delivery'.

138. I'm sure it was at Sandy Jamieson's suggestion that the Steering Group was set up to improve training for new staff. I remember the programme being initiated, but I don't recall if it was me who set it up and I don't remember what the programme consisted of.
139. The second paragraph on page four of the document addresses policy making and states: *'The care staff felt that they did not have sufficient opportunities to participate in policy making. They said their views were often turned down out of hand. They would like to see Management Committee members more often'.*
140. As I have said, I was not involved in policy making, either as SNR or as SNR SNR and I think there was probably a culture of staff not being involved in policy making.
141. The following paragraph on page four addresses complaints and disciplinary procedures and states: *'The procedures governing the handling of staff grievances and disciplinary action should be better known and strictly adhered to. The production of an up to date staff handbook which would cover this and other rules and conditions of service would clearly be desirable'.*
142. I don't recall what the procedures governing staff grievances and disciplinary action were and so that is probably an accurate statement. I would agree that the production of a staff handbook would have been desirable.
143. The conclusion and comment on page four of the document states: *'The above report is based on the comments made to us by members of the staff. Overall, we did not find any evidence of serious misconduct or lack of care for the children on the part of staff members. Our attention was drawn to a number of problems which have emerged during the past year. These were clearly due to the uncertainty that has faced the School in the past three or four years and to the demands which the*

Management Committee had to make of SNR [REDACTED] in particular the need to vary staff numbers in line with fluctuating pupil numbers'.

144. I vaguely recall the need to vary staff numbers in line with fluctuating pupil numbers, but I don't remember there being a problem in the staff/pupil ratio.
145. The paragraph continues: *'We were warned by him at the outset of the difficulties which were likely to result from the employment of temporary staff. We should recognise this and are fully aware of the strain which this placed on him and on all members of staff.'*
146. I do recall we were losing staff and we were not able to replace them and so we needed to employ temporary staff. There were difficulties when KVJ [REDACTED] went off sick, it caused disruption and problems with cohesion.
147. I personally felt very much that I had a lack of support from the Save the Children Fund and the governing body. A very important figure in the school, KVJ [REDACTED], was no longer there and I felt as if I had landed in the deep end.
148. Additionally, as I have mentioned, there were things going on in my personal life, which affected other people's perception of me and that affected my ability to do the job. In all fairness, the governing body was supportive, but it wasn't easy. I remember Edith Fenton, the Chair, asking me once who managed me because at that time there wasn't anybody. I'm not making excuses, but I didn't have a local authority to fall back on or a director of education to approach because Harmeny was an independent school.

Letter from Bill Grieve, dated 29 January 199[REDACTED]

149. I have been provided with a copy of a letter from Bill Grieve, addressed to me and on which somebody has handwritten the date '29/1/9[REDACTED]'. Bill Grieve was the human resources manager for the Save the Children Fund.

150. The heading of the letter reads: *'Suspension from duty'*. The first paragraph states: *'Following our meeting today, this letter confirms that you are suspended from your post of SNR [REDACTED] from receipt of this letter'*.
151. The following paragraph continues: *'As I have indicated to you, a number of serious issues have come to light which constitute serious allegations of misconduct by you. It is the judgement of Save the Children Fund that a full investigation must be carried out both in your interests, and in the interests of the other staff and children at Harmony. A note of the general areas of concern are attached'*.
152. I have not been provided with the note referred to that details the general areas of concern, however the allegations were mainly to do with my relationship with the care worker. Several members of staff had made comment that my relationship with Angela had affected the morale of the school, including the fact that she was a senior care worker and I was a teacher and the SNR [REDACTED] of the school. It caused a lot of disgruntlement and resentment. Perhaps they felt undermined and threatened.
153. Additionally, I lived on the premises with my wife and two children and as far as the Save the Children Fund were concerned, that created a bad impression.
154. The letter continues to state on the third paragraph that: *'As indicated to you, your suspension does not imply a judgement, nor is the suspension in itself a form of disciplinary action. It will, however, enable a proper and objective investigation to be conducted'*.
155. The next paragraph continues: *'I would confirm that whilst you are on suspension you retain all your contractual rights and will be on full pay'*.
156. There was a full investigation and, while it was ongoing, my family were allowed to remain in our house within the grounds of the school. As I was suspended, it was felt it would be imprudent to permit me to remain, but my family were allowed. It was a very disruptive time.

Save the Children Fund letter to Kerr Cowan from Alison Davies, Divisional Director, dated 29 April 199█

157. I have been provided with a copy of a Save the Children Fund letter to Kerr Cowan from Alison Davies, Divisional Director, dated 29 April 199█.
158. Kerr Cowan was the school treasurer for the Save the Children Fund and a member of the board of governors.
159. The subject of the letter is: *'Dismissal of Bob Taylor'*.
160. The first paragraph reads: *'I write to inform you that Bob Taylor, formerly SNR and more recently (prior to KYN s SNR Harmeny, has been suspended without pay with effect from 22nd April, pending an Appeal.'*
161. It continues: *'He may decide to appeal within the 10 days allowed for this. The appeal would be heard by the director general or his appointee'*.
162. The next paragraph reads: *'If the appeal is unsuccessful, Bob Taylor will be summarily dismissed. It would then be possible that he would seek for his case to be heard by an industrial tribunal'*.
163. The final paragraph reads: *'I thought you should be aware of the up-to-date situation although the matter is not quite finally concluded'*.
164. The investigation was conducted over three months between January and April 199█. I was not spoken to in the course of the investigation, but at the end of it, I was invited to a meeting at the Save the Children Fund headquarters at Western Corner in Edinburgh. I had a union representative with me, but I wasn't allowed to present a case or say anything.
165. I was in a room with four or five representatives of the fund while, at intervals, various members of staff from Harmeny School came in and gave their judgement of me. It was following that meeting that I received that letter. The members of staff who spoke

at that meeting were all care staff and included [REDACTED], RLU [REDACTED], and several others whose names I can't remember. Alison Paterson was the only member of staff to speak on my behalf, but she was on the teaching side. It was an unpleasant experience.

166. Ultimately, Angela Corner resigned, my situation was made untenable and I was effectively dismissed.

167. I did not appeal my dismissal. I didn't have the energy.

Save the Children Fund letter to Alan Lindsey from Alison Davies, Divisional Director, dated 30 April 199█

168. I have been provided with a copy of Save the Children Fund letter to Alan Lindsey from Alison Davies, Divisional Director, dated 30 April 199█.

169. The first paragraph reads: *'I write in reply to your letter to Mrs Fenton regarding the recent disciplinary case at Harmeny'*.

170. It continues at paragraph three: *'The staff member in question is Mr Robert Taylor, formerly SNR [REDACTED] at Harmeny. Following a series of allegations regarding his conduct SCF conducted a comprehensive investigation and a hearing which I chaired. Having considered all the evidence I have now concluded that Mr Taylor is responsible for gross misconduct firstly on the grounds of breach of confidentiality regarding children at Harmeny, and secondly on grounds of mistreatment of children – physical chastisement and verbal abuse – over a period of time. I also found that he was responsible for serious misconduct in relation to the consequences for staff, and potentially for children, of a personal relationship which he conducted with a member of the care staff.'*

171. I don't understand what the reference to a breach of confidentiality regarding children at Harmeny is. With regard to the reference to physical chastisement and verbal abuse of children, I think I did on occasion raise my voice and shout at a few children a few times. I do not recall physical chastisement of children being a part of the investigation

and I do not recall anyone mentioning physical chastisement when they spoke at the hearing.

172. The letter continues at paragraph five: 'As SNR and most recently SNR Mr Taylor was well aware both of the legal position concerning the physical chastisement of children and of Harmeny's written policy and guidelines on care and control of children. Regrettably he was found to be functioning on a number of occasions outwith the regulations and in an unprofessional manner which created a most serious breach of trust with SCF as his employer'.
173. I was aware of the legal position concerning physical chastisement, however I have no idea what the physical chastisement referred to was or what the ramifications of it were.
174. I have no further comment to make regarding this letter.

Leaving Harmeny School, Balerno

175. I left Harmeny School in January 1991. Before I did so, they had to advertise for a SNR but I was told not to apply. I'm not sure I would have if I could have, anyway.
176. I went to stay in Edinburgh with the woman I'd been having a relationship with, because my family broke up and I worked in a pub for about eighteen months. However, I obviously wasn't earning very much money to support my ex-wife and two children and I realised I needed to get back into a job to help do so.
177. I used to regularly look at the Scottish section of the 'The Times' educational supplement, looking for another teaching post and I saw KYU was advertising for teachers at Starley Hall. I had known KYU SNR of Starley Hall before I started working there, through my job at Harmeny School. I had met him at conferences of an organisation called 'The Association of Workers with Maladjusted Children' (AWMC).

178. I successfully applied for the post and worked at Starley Hall from April 199█ to January 200█.

Starley Hall School, Burntisland

179. Starley Hall School is located between Aberdour and Burntisland in Fife. The school is an independent, residential special school, which takes in children from all over Scotland who are of secondary school age. What all those children have in common is that they have all been removed from mainstream schools, either because of their behaviour or because of non-attendance at school.
180. A long driveway off the main road, halfway between Burntisland and Aberdour, leads through the school grounds. At the end of that driveway was an old, neo-classical building, sort of like a gothic manor house. At the start of the driveway was a cottage and in the middle of the driveway, between that cottage and the main house, was a single storey school block. In my time at Starley Hall, the old school block was knocked down and a new one was built.
181. The school block comprised of five or six classrooms and an administrative centre in the middle, which was where SNR █
KYU █ worked. The administrative staff, two secretaries, also worked there.
182. The residential side was split up into houses, which comprised the cottage at the start of the driveway and the main building. I don't think those houses had names. The older children, those who were between thirteen and sixteen, stayed in the main house with care staff and the younger children who were all about twelve, stayed in the cottage. The main house comprised of three floors with several bedrooms on each. Some children shared a room, some had their own room.
183. There weren't many children, although the number used to fluctuate. The school's existence depended on the amount of children there because they were all paid for by the local authorities from where they had come. There were usually between thirty and forty boys and girls at any one time, although there were always more boys than girls.

184. Ordinarily, Starley Hall was quite friendly and not as formal as you would expect in a mainstream school. Relationships between children and the staff were mostly good and amenable, however I found Starley Hall to be quite a difficult place to work. All the children had come from quite difficult backgrounds and what most of them had in common was that they were quite aggressive.
185. Many of the care staff lived at Starley Hall with the children, albeit not all the time, and had developed a closeness with them. As a consequence, they knew many of the children quite intimately. However, many of the children displayed fractious, challenging behaviour and I did quite often see that aggression mirrored by the staff, mostly by the care staff.

My role and recruitment at Starley Hall School

186. I started at Starley Hall School in April 199█ and worked there until January 200█. When I first started, I taught a class of seven or eight youngsters general subjects in the old school block. The children in my class would go to other teachers for certain subjects, such as home economics, physical education and woodwork and I taught subjects such as maths, English and history. When we moved into the new school, perhaps two or three years after I started, I became the art teacher. I remained the art teacher until I left, teaching secondary school aged children.
187. As a teacher, my hours were from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, however part of my employment was that I had to do extraneous duties for several hours, one night every week. That would involve my having a break for an hour when I finished school at 3:30 pm and then working in one of the houses until 9:00 pm. I would have tea with the children and then take them out on an activity, perhaps driving the school bus to somewhere like the swimming baths. I never stayed overnight and I would only do that one evening a week and sometimes on a Saturday morning.
188. Not all the education staff had to do extraneous duties. I think Margaret Mieszala, who was another teacher of general studies and later SNR █ in charge of education, did. I'm not sure which and how many of the other teaching staff did, though.

189. After seeing the advert for the job in the newspaper, I applied and met with KYU and we talked about the job and how and why I had left Harmeny School. I was invited for an interview with Mr KYU, Margaret Mieszala and Sandra Lowe, who was a teacher in the school.
190. I think I would have had to submit references from somewhere and I would have imagined that would have included from Harmeny School, but I can't remember. I think I may have asked David Shires, who had been a headmaster in a place I worked previously in Essex. One person I do recall using for a reference was a lady called Monica Lanyado, who was a child psychotherapist that used to come to Harmeny School and talk to me about children she thought needed to have individual therapy sessions. I think they would have been written references and I don't know if any of the people who provided them would have been spoken to. I also don't know if KYU KYU would have spoken with anyone from Harmeny.
191. My direct line manager would have been Margaret Mieszala and I did feel as if I was supported. I had support and supervision sessions with her once a week, when she would go through my lesson plans and look at what I intended teaching children the following week. We would also talk about any particular behavioural problems that any of the pupils in my class might be having.

Structure and recruitment of staff at Starley Hall School

192. When I started at Starley Hall, KYU was SNR and Margaret Mieszala was SNR in charge of education. She left about seven or eight years later and PNC took over her role. PNC had also previously worked at Harmeny School but had started there after I left. The culture changed a little when PNC PNC took over. I think the teaching staff felt more supported by PNC because he was more knowledgeable.
193. Margaret Mieszala had been at Starley Hall for many years, perhaps from the beginning and she left after falling out with KYU. Starley Hall didn't have a pension scheme but KYU employed Charlie Archibald as the P.E. teacher, who

had come from mainstream education and who already had a pension. KYU agreed to continue to pay Charlie's pension and Margaret Mieszala was very upset when she found out and asked KYU to pay her pension and he refused. As a result she left.

194. There were probably six full time teachers in addition to a P.E. teacher and a woodwork teacher. Amongst the teaching staff, I recall KPG, who taught computer science and then became SNR and is now SNR. taught home economics and her husband PPR taught music. Richard Coates was another teacher, but I can't remember what he taught. George Mackie taught woodwork and Charlie Archibald was the P.E. teacher.
195. Nigel Lloyd was the deputy in charge of the care staff and there were maybe twenty care staff in total. They worked shifts so that there were at least half-a-dozen care staff on duty at any one time. A lot of the care staff had been at Starley Hall for a very long time and some of them are still there today. The care staff I remember are POC, POC, Angus Munn, who was called Gus, Dave Christie, Jeff Armstrong and a chap whose surname was Darling, but whose first name I can't remember.
196. There was also a senior nurse practitioner who worked at the school, Liz Duff, who was a qualified psychiatric nurse and worked with some of the children on a regular basis.
197. I was not involved in the recruitment of staff.
198. I think volunteers did work at Starley Hall on rare occasions, but I don't know what the process for assessing and vetting them was.

Training at Starley Hall School

199. The children went home every fortnight at Starley Hall, which left the staff with a free afternoon on a Friday and we would have 'In-service' training then. In particular, two people were responsible for what was called 'C.A.L.M.' training, which I believe stood for Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage it. It concerned the use of restraint and

safe holding. We were regularly required to have training sessions on how to hold young people in a volatile situation.

Supervision/appraisal/evaluation at Starley Hall School

200. I was not involved in the supervision, appraisal or evaluation of any member of staff at Starley Hall.

Policy at Starley Hall School

201. I did not have any direct involvement in, or responsibility for, policy in relation to the care, including residential care, of children at Starley Hall. I don't recall seeing any policies over the course of my employment.
202. If I needed any guidance for anything, I suppose I would go to my line manager Margaret Mieszala and after she left PNC [REDACTED], or KYU [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED]. I would quite often go to them for guidance on various matters. PNC [REDACTED] particularly was very good and I would often go to him for help and advice.

Strategic planning at Starley Hall School

203. I did not have any involvement in, or responsibility for, strategic planning in relation to Starley Hall and I cannot comment on the school's strategic approach.

Children at Starley Hall School

204. Children were placed at Starley Hall by their local authorities and they stayed until they were school leaving age, unless their parents or their local authority opted to remove them before. That might happen if a child wasn't happy at Starley Hall or if funding from the local authority was stopped.
205. Children of various ages and abilities would come to Starley Hall and I don't know what, if any, assessments might have been carried out before a child was placed there.

Some children, I felt, should never have been there and were, in my opinion, ill-placed. Some needed the sort of care and attention that Starley Hall could not always provide.

206. One boy in my class, [REDACTED], was a huge boy, who was very autistic and needed specialist one-to-one care and attention all the time. I had to sit him on his own, away from the other children because if anybody went near him he would just lash out at them. He wasn't getting the care and attention he needed and it worried me.
207. There were regular social work assessment meetings for this boy, which I was asked to attend occasionally because I was his teacher, along with his G.P. and other people. At one meeting, [REDACTED] suddenly reached out, grabbed his social worker's hair and smashed her head down on the table. There were no repercussions for that, except that at any future meetings involving [REDACTED], one member of staff would sit on one side of him and I would sit on the other and we both held an arm each.
208. I remember being very upset at the time, not just for the poor lady whose head was banged off the table, but from the fact that [REDACTED] really shouldn't have been at Starley Hall. I was also concerned for the safety of the other children. We didn't have the wherewithal to care for him properly, but there was no discussion with me personally about it afterwards and he wasn't the only one. There were three or four others and I felt very frustrated. I did not, however, feel able to express those concerns.
209. Eventually, however, Liz Duff, the nurse practitioner employed at the school, accepted that Starley Hall could not contain [REDACTED]'s behaviour and his needs and he was moved. He initially went to another school near Blair Drummond, which was for older children with learning and behavioural difficulties, but he wasn't there for long. I believe that it was considered he was a threat to the other children and he was moved somewhere else.
210. Most of the children, however, tended to stay until they were school leaving age and quite a few were there for four or five years. One of the problems, I believe, with a school that is totally independent and run as a business is that the motivation for keeping a child at the school is financial. If, for instance, a child has been sent from

Inverness and their local authority is paying £150,000 every year to keep that child at Starley Hall, then there may well be a motivation to keep that child there as long as possible.

211. I don't think it was anybody's role to make an assessment as to whether a child would stay or not. I think each child that came to the school would have had a social worker and if that child's family expressed a desire for the child to go back home, then I suppose the social worker would prepare an assessment and work as a negotiator. I suppose the ultimate decision would be made by SNR KYU.
212. Liz Duff worked with some of the children on a regular basis. She didn't work with them all, just those who displayed a need for her intervention and she would be involved in the assessment process. On occasion, before some children came to the school, she would have a meeting with the care staff and the teaching staff. She would tell us a bit about the child and advise us if, for instance, a child might have been diagnosed as morbidly depressed or was known to be particularly violent. Obviously, she couldn't give out too much information for reasons of confidentiality.
213. I had to write an end of term report for each child on their educational development, which would be for the information of the parents, social workers and for whoever was paying for the child to be at Starley Hall. I think I also had to provide reports on the personal development and progress of some children for assessment purposes. That would not have been as a matter of course, just if I was asked to do so, but I don't remember how often. The teachers were not particularly involved in that aspect of the children's care.
214. In the morning, the children would be in class and in the afternoon there were different activities they could choose to go to. Teachers, therefore, would teach generic subjects in the morning and then specific subjects in the afternoon. I took an art and craft class in the afternoon and children could come to that if they so wished. Others might choose to play football or rounders and they would go to the P.E. teacher. A lot liked to go to KPG's classroom to play on the computers.

215. The care staff wouldn't necessarily be involved in the activities in the afternoon, but they were always around in case the children kicked off.
216. I think everybody was trying to do the best they could to teach the children under difficult circumstances. A lot of the teachers would comment that a lot of time was spent 'firefighting'. Children might, for example, be arguing or fighting with each other during a break and they would bring that back into the classroom with them. We teachers would then have to spend a considerable amount of time trying to settle them down or peeling them off each other before we could actually start teaching them.
217. Additionally, by and large the decision as to which child would go into what class was a bit ad hoc. If, for example, a new child was starting at the school and I had five children in my class, whereas KPG had seven children, then that new child would come to me. Consequently, at times I would have a child who was fifteen in my class and another who was twelve and quite often you would have a group of children in the classroom who were all working at different levels. That was difficult to teach. You would have to set each child individual work and go round them, helping each on their own.
218. There were two groups of children at Starley Hall. There were the residents and there were also day students, most of whom came from Edinburgh and the Lothians and were brought in by taxi. There were probably ten or twelve day students in addition to the forty resident children and they didn't integrate well. I don't think they were treated any differently by the staff, but I think the day students had a feeling of not belonging. It was the residents' home as well as their school and I think they shunned the day students.
219. When the new school was built, there was a larger room and we were able to have a morning assembly with both the residents and the day students, but before that they were separate. When the day students arrived in the morning, they would gather in one of the rooms, which was called 'The Base', supervised by a member of staff called Maria Rogie, who was one of my classroom assistants, and another lady called Sue Burke. The residents, meanwhile, would have had their breakfast in the dining room and they would gather in another room.

220. The morning assembly in the new school would be taken by SNR [REDACTED], Margaret Mieszala, or PNC [REDACTED]. It might also be taken by KPG [REDACTED] or George Mackie, who were principal teachers. I think the purpose of the morning assembly was to bring all the children together and to let everyone know what was happening each day. There was no religious content, it was more a moral content, mainly. A lot of it was to do with encouraging everyone to be nice and helpful to each other.
221. After the morning assembly, all the children would go to their classes and halfway through the morning there would be a break when the children would go out to kick a ball around, or they could run around in the playground or in the woods that were within the grounds. They would also have a snack before then coming back to class until lunchtime.
222. Lunch was for an hour and the residential children would eat their meals in the dining room in the main building. The day students met together in The Base and ate packed lunches. I don't think there was enough space in the dining room for everybody.
223. The care staff who were on duty would eat with the residents in the dining room and everyone would eat the same food, which was prepared by the kitchen staff. I could have eaten the food that was provided if I'd wanted because it was good, but the teaching staff did not, generally, eat with the children. We tended to eat in the staffroom or in our classrooms.
224. I don't recall if there were ever any issues with the children about what they were given to eat. I know they were always asked what size of meal they wanted, which was small, medium or large. I don't remember any instance of a child getting into trouble for not finishing food or not being allowed to finish their food.
225. After the school day had finished, the residents would go to whichever house they lived in and change out of their day clothes. Then they would get together as a group and talk about what they wanted to do at night, or where they wanted to go. I think

there were activities available every evening for the children. There might be football or swimming and that sort of thing.

226. In the cottage there were single and double rooms and in the main building the children slept in dorms with perhaps two or three to a room. I don't know what the arrangements with washing and bathing were.
227. On the occasional Saturday that I worked, I would go in for about 10:00 am and I would take a group out in the minibus. Again I might take them to the swimming pool at Burntisland or to the shops. It was pretty ad hoc. Whoever was working would tell the children what activities were being offered and they could choose what they wanted to go to.
228. All the children would return to the school for a week in the summer holidays when there were organised activities either on site or away somewhere else. One time, along with another teacher, I took the children fishing every day down to the harbour in Burntisland. I was never away overnight with the children and I can't remember if there were overnight trips anywhere.
229. If I was taking children out of the school for an activity, I had free rein to do what I wanted. More often than not I would take them swimming, but I once took three children to my house after we'd been out for the afternoon. We went round to my house and had a glass of juice and then we had a drive around before I took them back to the school.
230. As a qualified nurse, Liz Duff would deal with any health issues a child might have. Additionally, Dr Halliday from the local health centre, used to visit the school regularly, I think on a weekly basis. He would be given a list of the children that needed to see him.
231. I think children were responsible for keeping their own rooms tidy and their beds made, but they were not required to do any other chores. There was a team of cleaners who would come into the classrooms and who would clean the main house.

232. Children's families could visit if they wanted. I think they were encouraged to come at the weekend and they could take children outside the school if they wanted. I think the senior person on duty would have to know that was happening and would have to confirm it was okay for whoever was visiting to do so. They would probably have to know where the child was going and what time they were coming back.
233. I don't know how often the children would see their social workers or how regularly they would be assessed.
234. I don't know what the process for discharge of a child was. It often seemed as if a child was there one minute and away the next, although I do recall that on some occasions an announcement would be made at the morning assembly at the end of term saying certain children were going to be leaving. There would be a round of applause and that would be it. On some other occasions a child just didn't appear for class and I later found out they had left.

Living arrangements at Starley Hall School

235. No staff lived permanently on the premises. The only staff who stayed overnight were those who were on duty. KYU [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] lived with his family in Aberdour. I had moved to Kirkcaldy by then.

Discipline and punishment at Starley Hall School

236. I don't think there were any standard methods of punishment, either written or verbal, I think you were just expected to use your common sense. You certainly couldn't administer corporal punishment, because it was no longer allowed.
237. Generally speaking, if there was a need to discipline or punish a child, they would be deprived of an activity, or not allowed to go out at night, that sort of thing. That would be the decision of the care worker in charge of the group the child was in. If a child had been particularly unruly or disruptive in my class, I might tell them that they had to stay with me in the classroom instead of going out at breaktime. If the child agreed to it, I would then spend the break in the classroom with the child. They might not

agree to it, however, and might kick off and there would be nothing I could do. It was difficult.

238. Sometimes, some of the residents would go home for weekends and, if they had been particularly violent or badly behaved, they might be grounded for that weekend and not allowed to go home. Or they might not be allowed to go home until the Saturday, instead of Friday night. That, itself, could also bring problems, so you had to be very careful using that sort of punishment.
239. We had one or two children who were a part of the travelling community from Skye and they would go home at weekends. They were very physical and aggressive and if they were told they were not getting home, it could create even greater problems for the people left behind at the school.
240. Sometimes it was very difficult. If you have three or four boys fighting with each other in your classroom, throwing furniture around, you have to be very careful about how you separate them. You have to watch you don't get injured yourself or inadvertently cause one of the children to hurt themselves.
241. I was quite often involved in separating children who were fighting or trying to resolve a fracas. If it happened in the school block, the care staff would be in the staffroom, which was near to the classrooms. If they heard a ruckus ongoing, they would come in and help to settle the children down.
242. One time, we had a paging system for any emergency. Each teacher was given a control that was like a pen and if you pressed the button on top there would be a buzz on a control panel on the wall of the staffroom. An automated message would then alert the care staff that assistance was needed in a particular classroom. That all fell by the wayside after about five weeks, because the children found out where to find the pagers and they would be walking around the school, pressing them. There were staff running all over the place.
243. I don't know whether children were segregated from other children for periods of time as a punishment. There was no such punishment as lines or detention.

244. There probably was a punishment book kept of children who were disciplined or punished, but I don't remember for certain.

Restraint at Starley Hall School

245. When I started at Starley Hall, there was no formal discussion or training on restraint, or what the school's policy on the use of restraint was. I don't remember there being a written policy either. At that time, it was more ad hoc and would involve a couple of members of staff trying to stop children fighting or smashing up furniture by holding them.
246. C.A.L.M. training didn't come in until maybe a couple of years after I started. I recall Mr KYU informing us one Friday afternoon that it was going to be introduced to the school. In fact, it was already being used at a school called Hillside in Aberdour and somebody from there came to give us a demonstration on how to hold and restrain children.
247. The two people on the staff who were responsible for giving the C.A.L.M. training were Angus Munn and Clare Thompson, who was a classroom assistant at the time. They had been sent away to do a course and were given special training from people outwith Starley Hall. They then trained the rest of the staff how to safely hold and carry out the various manoeuvres. After we received the initial training, we then received further refresher training quite frequently, certainly monthly anyway.
248. I don't know if Starley Hall developed a written policy on restraint after C.A.L.M. training came in. I don't remember seeing any.
249. I personally tried to avoid using any of the C.A.L.M. techniques because everybody was bigger than me anyway. I wasn't very often in a situation where somebody had to be held, although I do remember one occasion. KPG, the computer teacher, who is now SNR, had hold of somebody and shouted for my assistance. I always felt you should never try and do that sort of thing on your own. I thought it better to

have two people, if it was absolutely necessary, because it would be easier to hold the child without them being harmed.

250. KPG [REDACTED] was trying to restrain a big boy called [REDACTED] who had lost his temper and was rolling about. He was finding it very difficult because the boy was kicking and screaming and waving his arms about. I held the boy's legs while KPG held his top half and we held him on the carpeted floor, talking to him all the time until he had calmed down and was still. Once he was still, we moved away and the boy was fine.
251. Training when I started would have been very helpful because, no matter how experienced you are, you are always thrown in at the deep end whenever something kicks off. There was a lot of violence and fighting amongst the young people. It is very difficult to teach a group of children who are unsettled and some more direction would have been beneficial.
252. I think some staff might have used restraint more often than others, but I don't know if the manner that they did was excessive. Some staff were, however, known for using it more than others.
253. I felt, for instance, that KYU [REDACTED], SNR [REDACTED], was sometimes more aggressive than he needed to be, both in the manner in which he restrained children and in the frequency of his doing so. On at least two or three occasions, I saw him outside the school building, on the driveway or in the playground, grabbing hold of youngsters by the scruff of the neck and physically restraining them. He would grab their arms and twist them up their back.
254. The other chap who I thought was over the top in his handling of children was a guy called PBT [REDACTED]. He was a senior teacher, I think, and used to be on duty at nights as well. He was a very big man and on several occasions during the evenings, I saw him sit on children by way of restraining them, which was not nice to see. He would sit on them for a few minutes until he felt they were sufficiently suppressed that he could get off.

Concerns about Starley Hall School

255. I don't know if Starley Hall was ever the subject of concern within the institution itself or to any external body or agency, or any other person, because of the way in which children were treated.
256. However, KYU SNR was a very aggressive man and I was bullied and shouted at in front of the children and other staff on a few occasions by him. One time, I had let my class out to break about two minutes early, although I didn't know it was early. KYU had seen all the children running down towards the playground before there were any staff there. He marched down the corridor and burst through the door and started shouting at me, telling me to get them all back. It was quite humiliating and undermining and yet I didn't feel as if I could speak to Margaret Mieszala, my line manager, about him.
257. Unfortunately, the two SNR of Starley Hall, KPG and had only experienced KYU's management style and they mirrored that in the way that they spoke to me and how they treated me. None of them had ever been in mainstream education and their management styles would never have been considered acceptable outside Starley Hall.
258. By way of an example, I came into school one Monday morning after having had flu all weekend and I was quite poorly. KYU saw me and told me to go home and I was off for a couple of days. However, afterwards he docked my pay and I remember being really upset and angry. I queried it with him and he told me I hadn't been paid because I hadn't been at work. I told him that wasn't reasonable behaviour and that, as a professional, salaried employee, I was entitled to it. He told me that under normal circumstances I would be, but that it was discretionary and there was no further discussion. That was the sort of person SNR KYU was.
259. I think there were a board of governors for the school and I believe they suggested to KYU that it would be wise if he didn't come into the school premises for a while. I believe it was considered it would be best for the morale of the school and for KYU KYU himself, even though he was SNR.

260. It was very hush-hush when KYU went off. The circumstances weren't general knowledge, but KPG told me that KYU had been advised to stay off the premises. I believe something had happened to one of the pupils, who had told his parents and his parents had made an official complaint. I don't know who the complaint was made to, or what had happened, other than it was some sort of assault on this lad by KYU. I can't remember the name of the child or the circumstances.
261. I can't remember how long he was away for, but it was quite a while and it did make a difference to the atmosphere of the school. I think it was at that time that PNC SNR as SNR the school and things were a lot different. The old school block had been knocked down by that time and the administrative centre where KYU KYU used to be based was changed. I became the art teacher at that time too and things were much better.

Reporting of complaints/concerns at Starley Hall School

262. There were no guidance teachers in the school, however all the children had keyworkers among the care staff and they could speak to them if they wished to make a complaint or report a concern.
263. I can't remember if any child ever raised a concern with me, although I do think that a lot of the children felt that I was somebody they could talk to. I got on with most of them, but I don't remember anyone ever complaining to me about another member of staff.
264. If a child had complained to me about a member of staff, I might have gone to that member of staff and made them aware of the complaint. I would have asked the member of staff if it was something we needed to talk about or do something about. I don't consider my doing so might have caused any issues for the child.
265. I don't think there was a formal reporting process should any such complaint be received.

266. Although I considered the behaviour I had witnessed KYU and PBT display was abusive, I did not feel able to say anything. There was nobody to speak to. KYU was SNR.

Abuse

267. I don't remember whether Starley Hall had a definition of abuse that it applied in relation to the treatment of children.
268. My understanding while I was at Starley Hall of what constituted abuse would be the over-zealous use of physical punishment, slapping or punching.
269. Other than how I observed KYU and PBT behave, I did not see any behaviour that I considered to be excessive punishment or abuse of any kind taking place at Starley Hall.

External monitoring at Starley Hall School

270. There were two or three inspections while I was at Starley Hall, which for a small school seemed quite a lot. We were informed in advance of each inspection, which gave us an opportunity to make sure all our notes and lesson plans were up to date. Most of the inspections were examining how the school was run and the quality of care and were carried out by the Inspectorate of Education and the Care Commission.
271. The inspections were quite thorough and in fact following one, [REDACTED] was nominated for and received the Scottish Teacher Award by the Chief Inspector at the time, a man called Alistair Marquis.
272. A lot of the children would be interviewed during the course of each inspection. I think there had to be a member of staff present to support the children, but I would think the children would have been able to speak freely. A child would not be made to go and speak to a member of the inspection team, I think they would be asked if they wanted

to. I suppose I don't know whether a child would have felt able to voice any concern they might have had.

273. I don't know whether any recommendations were made following any of the inspections, although I think there must have been because I suppose they wouldn't have had so many inspections if there hadn't been.

Record keeping at Starley Hall School

274. Other than educational records, I was not required to keep any records. I don't recall having to keep a record of any time I might have disciplined a child. If I kept a child back at breaktime, I might have said to whoever was on duty, but I didn't think to record or write it down anywhere.

Allegations of abuse at Starley Hall School

275. While I was still in employment at Starley Hall, I was never the subject of an allegation of abuse or ill-treatment of a child or children who resided there.

Investigations into abuse at Starley Hall School – personal involvement

276. I was never involved in any investigation on behalf of Starley Hall into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of, or into, inappropriate behaviour by staff or others, towards children.

Reports of historical abuse and civil claims at Starley Hall School

277. I was never involved in the handling of reports to Starley Hall by former residents, concerning historical abuse.

Police investigations/criminal proceedings at Starley Hall School

278. While I was still in employment at Starley Hall, I was not aware of any police investigation into alleged abuse at Starley Hall.

Convicted abusers at Starley Hall School

279. I do not know if any person who worked at Starley Hall was convicted of the abuse of a child or children there.

Other staff etc. working at Starley Hall School at the same time

KPG

280. KPG is half my age and started a couple of years after me as the maths and computer teacher at Starley Hall and was later promoted to principal teacher SNR SNR. He was still there when I left in 200 and SNR of the school. He was a very straight, staid character, although I didn't see him with the children much because he would be teaching in one area of the school while I was in another. I never worked on the care side with him.
281. I don't recall ever seeing him discipline any child and I never saw or heard of him abusing any child. There was nothing about KPG either at the time or since that gave me cause for concern.

Robert DeKoning/De Koning

282. I remember Robert DeKoning, he was a care worker and Dutch, I think. He started about five years after me, possibly in the year 200 and he was still there when I left. He was a very physical, tough guy. I think he was an ex-boxer and he seemed to enjoy sports.
283. I saw him once having to hold a child. We were on a bus trip to the theatre in Glasgow when a bunch of youngsters started fighting on the bus. He removed one of the boys and sat beside him, away from the others, with his arms around him to restrain him. I felt it was a proportionate way of dealing with the situation, because it calmed the boy down and what he did was not excessive in anyway.

284. I didn't have much to do with Robert otherwise and did not see him discipline a child at any other time. I did not see or hear of him abusing any child. There was nothing about Robert DeKoning that gave me cause for concern.

KUZ

285. I remember KUZ. He started at Starley Hall as the school gardener around 2000, before he then became a care worker. He was possibly a little younger than me and he was still there when I left in 2001.

286. I only ever saw KUZ interact with the children in a nice way. I never saw him discipline or restrain a child. He was a gentle soul, who would do gardening as an activity with the children after he became a care worker. I don't recall any instance of KUZ being over-zealous with any youngster and I never saw or heard of him being abusive to any child. I did not have any concerns about KUZ.

PBT

287. PBT, as I have mentioned, was a senior teacher and was a little younger than me. He was at the school when I arrived and remained there for a few years. I don't know why he left.

288. I would describe him as an angry man with the children, whose method of restraining children did give me cause for concern, as I have stated.

KYU

289. KYU, SNR, was a few years younger than me, I think. As I have said, he had an aggressive, bullying management style and his behaviour with staff and children did give me cause for concern.

Nigel Lloyd

290. Nigel Lloyd wasn't at Starley Hall for very long after I started, perhaps a few years. He was about five years younger than me and he had been at the school with KYU [REDACTED] from the beginning. I think they had both worked at the same school elsewhere before moving to Starley Hall, but I don't recall where. Nigel was KYU SNR [REDACTED] in charge of the care side, not the teaching side.
291. He was quite a brusque, aggressive character, but I don't recall anything in particular regarding how he was with the children. I don't know whether shouting at any child could be considered proportionate and he did use to shout a lot at the children. I don't recall seeing or hearing of any abusive behaviour. I don't recall any behaviour that gave me cause for concern either now or at the time.

Robert Jennings (or Bertie)

292. I don't remember the name Robert Jennings or Bertie.

Angus Munn

293. Angus Munn worked at Starley Hall all the time I was there. He was a senior care worker.
294. I liked Angus, he was a generous hearted, funny man, who was good with the children and the children liked him. He could also be physical, but because he was the main C.A.L.M. instructor, he could quite often be put in a position where he would have to hold a child, if that child was behaving in such a manner that they needed to be physically restrained. I think that was both because he took that upon himself and because other staff expected him to assist. I think other staff saw him as a person they could turn to if they needed physical intervention and, for that reason, he probably carried out more restraints than anyone else. I think he always went out of his way to use the methods he was teaching.

295. I saw Angus Munn restraining children on several occasions, but I can't remember who, or what the circumstances were. I do not consider, however, that he was ever excessive in his use of restraint. I did not see or hear of Angus Munn abusing any child and nothing about his behaviour gave me cause for concern, either then or now.

PPU

296. PPU was young when he worked at Starley Hall, perhaps in his early twenties. He was a care worker in the lodge at Starley Hall where the younger children were, but he wasn't there very long. He came after I had started and left before I did. He was maybe there for five or six years and I think he went onto another care position somewhere else.

297. He was an affable person and very sporty. He was a rugby player I think and used to kick a ball around with the children. He was easy going and fun and I think the children quite liked him.

298. I did not see PPU discipline or restrain a child and I did not see or hear of him abusing a child. Nothing about PPU's behaviour gave me cause for concern then or now.

PNC

299. I knew PNC from Harmeny School and he was a good guy to work with. He came to Starley Hall around 200 SNR in charge of education and SNR when KYU was off.

300. I heard him shouting at children a lot, but I don't think I ever saw him discipline or restrain a child. He was a nice bloke to work for, although he could get quite frustrated at times. I did not see or hear of PNC abusing a child and nothing about his behaviour gave me cause for concern then or now.

PPW

301. I don't recall a member of staff called PPW

PPZ

302. PPZ was an English teacher. She was a quiet, tiny person, who was quite a few years younger than me. She started at the school a few years after me, perhaps about the year 200 and she was still there when I left.

303. She was very professional with the children and I never saw her discipline or restrain any child. I never saw or heard of her behaving in an abusive manner toward any child and nothing about her behaviour gave me cause for concern then or now.

PPX

304. I don't recall a member of staff called PPX

Leaving Starley Hall School, Burntisland

305. I left Starley Hall in 200, primarily because I wasn't getting a pension and I wanted to go into mainstream education for the remaining ten years or so of my career. I also wanted to get out of the atmosphere of a residential special school. I hadn't found it a very pleasant experience in all the years I was there, for all the reasons I have already explained. It had had an effect on my mental health and I knew I needed to find something else.
306. A girl who I had worked with at Starley Hall, who had left to teach at Beath High School in Cowdenbeath got in touch with me to say that there was a vacancy there. She was leaving the school for another role elsewhere and told me that her job at Beath would be vacant. She thought it would be ideal for me with my background in teaching children with learning and behavioural difficulties.

307. I think I applied in December 200█. I was interviewed and offered the post and I was absolutely delighted. I was given a reference by PNC █, but I don't know what he said.
308. I started at Beath High School in January 200█ and remained there until I retired.

Part D response received from Starley Hall School

309. I am aware that Starley Hall School have provided the Inquiry with details of a number of reports of complaints that have been recovered from school records. The complaints had been made by children who had been at the school and name me. I have been provided with copies of those reports. I had not seen any of these reports until I was provided with them by the Inquiry.

█

310. I note that one report states that █: *'made a complaint against Mr Robert Taylor that he had been bruised by him during an incident. The date of the incident is not provided in the records available. The Fife Child Protection Unit investigated in September 199█ and interviewed the teacher and witnesses to the incident. █ was also interviewed'*.
311. The report continues: *'Police and social work conducted a joint investigation. The outcome indicated that there was not enough corroborative evidence to caution and charge Mr Taylor as his account of the incident coincided with the reports given by the other adult witnesses. The social worker informed █ of the outcome and a report was sent to the Procurator Fiscal as a matter of course'*.
312. I remember the name █, but I can't picture him. I have no recollection whatsoever of this complaint, the investigation, or of being interviewed. I don't recall ever being questioned by the police while I worked at Starley Hall, either in relation to any allegation made against myself, or against any other member of staff.

██████████

313. I note that another report states that ██████████: *'made a complaint on the 5th of March 200█ against Robert Taylor that he was hit by a chair in an altercation in the classroom. The records available indicate that the complaint was recorded and investigated internally but no action was taken as the statements indicated that the altercation over the chair had been an attempt to defuse the situation'.*

314. I remember the name ██████████, but I can't picture him. This does sound highly likely, but I do not remember this particular incident. As I have said, I was required to separate children from each other, or from picking up bits of furniture, on quite a few occasions. If children were fighting on the floor and they were under a desk, I might have to move a chair or a desk to get to them in order to separate them, and quite a few altercations involved chairs and desks. However, I certainly never purposely hit any child with a chair or anything else.

315. I also do not remember an internal investigation into any incident being carried out and I do not remember being spoken to about any incident whatsoever.

██████████

316. Another report states that ██████████: *'made a complaint against Robert Taylor on 5/9/0█ stating that he was a 'paedophile' and he 'touches lads bottoms'. Shared with child protection officer and staff member spoke with ██████████ who stated that he was angry at the time and that what he said had 'no substance'. No further action is indicated from the records available'.*

317. I remember ██████████. He was alright, he was a tough lad from Glasgow. I liked him. He was quite funny and I got on well with him. I wasn't his fulltime teacher because he was one of the older boys, but he used to come to me in the afternoons sometimes if he wanted to do some art and craft.

318. I had no prior knowledge of this. Nobody ever spoke to me about it.

319. [REDACTED] is subject of another report, which states he: *'made a complaint in regards to Robert Taylor that he has trapped his fingers in the door and pushed his forehead onto his. A complaint form was completed and investigated by the school. The other staff who had witnessed the incident did not support the allegation and [REDACTED] later said that he had made it up'.*

320. Again, I don't remember any such investigation or being spoken to about any such complaint. I don't know what the 'complaint form' referred to was. I had no idea there was such a form.

[REDACTED]

321. A further report states that [REDACTED]: *'made a complaint on 30.08.0[REDACTED] that he had been assaulted by Robert Taylor. Investigated by the school and statements taken from staff involved. NFA is recorded however [REDACTED] was informed of his right to take the complaint further if he wished to do so. The police were not involved and the records do not indicate'.* The report stops at that and does not contain any further information.

322. I remember the name [REDACTED], but nothing more. I do not remember any such incident or investigation and I do not remember providing a statement.

Indictment

323. I have been provided with a copy of an indictment against me issued by Kirkcaldy Sheriff and Jury Court, which has been date stamped 12 Jun 201[REDACTED]. There are five charges libelled in the indictment.

324. The first charge reads: *'On various occasions between [REDACTED] 199[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] 200[REDACTED] at Starley Hall School, Aberdour Road, Burntisland, Fife you ROBERT GEOFFREY TAYLOR did use lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards [REDACTED] [REDACTED] born [REDACTED] 1985, a girl then of or over the age of 12 years and under the age of 16 years, c/o the Police Service of Scotland, and did attempt to kiss her, place your hands inside her clothing and touch her breasts, touch her breasts over her clothing,*

place your hand inside her clothing and touch and rub her vagina and insert your fingers into her vagina, expose your penis to her, seize her hand and compel her to touch and masturbate your penis; CONTRARY to the Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995, Section 6'.

325. The second charge reads: *'On various occasions between [REDACTED] 200[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] 200[REDACTED], both dates inclusive, within a motor vehicle then travelling on various roads in Fife, [REDACTED] Kirkcaldy, Fife and elsewhere you ROBERT GEOFFREY TAYLOR did use lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards [REDACTED] born [REDACTED] 1988, c/o the Police Service of Scotland, and did place your hand on his leg and touch and rub his leg, make sexual comments to him, expose your erect penis, masturbate in his presence, push him on the body, hold him down, attempt to remove his lower clothing, rub your naked erect penis against his body, ejaculate on his body and clothing and threaten him'.*
326. The third charge reads: *'On various occasions between [REDACTED] 199[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] 200[REDACTED], both dates inclusive at Starley Hall School, Aberdour Road, Burntisland, Fife you ROBERT GEOFFREY TAYLOR did use lewd, indecent and libidinous practices and behaviour towards [REDACTED] born [REDACTED] 1987, c/o the Police Service of Scotland, and did strike his genitals with your hand and make sexual comments to him.'*
327. The fourth charge reads: *'On various occasions between [REDACTED] 200[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] 200[REDACTED], both dates inclusive at Starley Hall School, Aberdour Road, Burntisland, Fife you ROBERT GEOFFREY TAYLOR did indecently assault [REDACTED] born [REDACTED] 1987, c/o the Police Service of Scotland, and did strike his genitals and make sexual comments to him'.*
328. The fifth charge reads: *'On various occasions between [REDACTED] 199[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] 200[REDACTED], both dates inclusive at Starley Hall School, Aberdour Road, Burntisland, Fife you ROBERT GEOFFREY TAYLOR did assault [REDACTED] born [REDACTED] 1987, c/o the Police Service of Scotland and did kick him on the body and spit on him to his injury'.*

329. My first knowledge of this was in April 2018, on a Monday, I think, when I received a phone call from Mhairi Liddle, a detective constable from Kirkcaldy Police Station. She told me that some serious allegations had been made against me and that she had to talk to me about them. She said that the allegations related to offences that had happened at Starley Hall several years before and we arranged to meet at Dalkeith Police Station the following Thursday.
330. It came as a shock. It was entirely out of the blue and I told her that I couldn't understand what it was that she was telling me. She told me she couldn't talk to me about it over the phone and then she actually said: *"to avoid arrest at home, I want to meet you at a police station"*.
331. Accordingly, as arranged, I went to Dalkeith Police Station at 9:15 a.m. the following Thursday and met with Mhairi Liddle and her colleague Russell MacDonald.
332. I was arrested and cautioned and I wasn't charged straight away, but I was advised to get a solicitor. I didn't know how to because I'd never been in a position like that before. The police recommended Paterson Bell in Kirkcaldy and a solicitor from there, David Farquhar, came, although he didn't arrive until about 2:00 pm. Meantime, I had to sit and wait in a cell in the police station.
333. David Farquhar then sat with me as Mhairi Liddle read out the five charges that are listed on the indictment, although I think they were actually more detailed.
334. As Mhairi Liddle read the charges out, she actually became quite aggressive and at one time David Farquhar had to ask her not to be. She leaned over the table and started shouting in my face and I got very upset. My solicitor told her he thought she was going a bit over the top. I was dumbfounded. Totally taken aback. I think I was having a panic attack and I became quite ill.
335. She eventually charged me and I was taken through to the custody sergeant. I had to sign an undertaking that I would not discuss the case with anybody or try and contact the complainants. Only after I did so was I released until I was summoned to court for a pre-hearing.

336. It was an extremely upsetting and unnerving time and, of course, I had to explain to my wife where I'd been all day. I had to tell her why I had been in the police station all day and we shared our upset together.
337. After that, I had to appear at court and enter a plea. I had my solicitor by then, David Bell, of Paterson Bell in Kirkcaldy, who was a marvellous man. He supported me all the way through. Thereafter, I had to appear at Dunfermline Court and Kirkcaldy Court five or six times for various diets, while it was decided where and when the trial should take place.
338. Eventually, it was decided that the trial would be in front of Sheriff Williamson and a jury at Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court on 1 July 2019.
339. Nineteen months had passed by that time and I didn't actually turn up on the first day of the court case. I became quite ill and I went through a period of what I can only term as mental instability and I got very frightened. Without contacting my solicitor or the court, I disappeared and I drove up to St Andrew's and just wandered about. I couldn't think what to do or where to go.
340. Obviously by this time the police were looking for me and, later on in the afternoon, I went to St Andrew's Police Station. As it happened, the station was unmanned, so I picked up the phone outside and explained who I was and that I should have appeared at court that morning. I was told to wait there and two police officers, lovely guys, came to St Andrew's police station and sat and talked to me for about an hour.
341. I got really upset and, on the instructions of the duty sergeant, the two officers took me for an assessment at Whyteman's Brae Psychiatric Hospital in Kirkcaldy. I sat and talked to a psychiatrist there for about an hour and I think she deemed me mentally well enough to proceed so the two officers took me to Kirkcaldy Police Station. Once there, I was arrested and put in a cell overnight.

342. I was driven to the court in the police wagon the following day and I had to face the judge and the jury. I felt a bit wretched because I was grubby and hadn't had a chance to wash or change my clothes.
343. At court, the three charges relating to the allegations made by [REDACTED] were thrown out by the judge. I knew who [REDACTED] was, but I never had anything to do with him and I knew nothing about him. The trial went ahead for the other two charges relating to the allegations made by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
344. [REDACTED] was a day pupil at Starley Hall. She was a slight, vulnerable girl, who didn't relate to any of the other children in the day unit. She used to complain about the other children all the time and would say that they all bullied her. Occasionally, she would come to my classroom at lunchtime to sit and draw to get away from the other children. Sometimes, she was the only child in my room, although not always. Sometimes there were other children there because they too didn't like being outside with the others.
345. [REDACTED] had also been a day pupil in my class at Starley Hall. He was an extremely challenging boy, who was quite violent. He was a bit of a loner and didn't have any relationships with any of the other children.
346. I can't remember the order of the witnesses who gave evidence, but [REDACTED] was interviewed first by the procurator fiscal and then by my solicitor, David Bell. He said that I had taken him to my house in my car one lunchtime and that I had spent some time alone in my house with him. He said that while there, I had sexually assaulted him, before I then took him back to school.
347. There was a massive discrepancy in his evidence because I had never taken [REDACTED] to my house and he had never actually been there.
348. My solicitor established that [REDACTED] did not in fact know where my house was, but that the police had taken him there. He had driven round with the police and they had pointed out my house to him. However, the police had pointed out the wrong house. They had taken him into the wrong street and that had been written on a

statement, but the statement was later changed. When David Bell queried all this with [REDACTED] in the court, [REDACTED] started shouting and swearing at him and the judge adjourned the trial.

349. [REDACTED] was then interviewed in the witness box about the allegations she had made that I had inappropriately touched her while she was alone with me in my classroom. At the time she alleged this had happened, there would have been other teachers in their own classrooms, or in the staffroom, which was right next to my room.
350. After that, the police who had been involved in the investigation were interviewed and that was quite enlightening because they had done a lot of things wrong. I'm not criticising the police and I don't recall exactly, but they hadn't done some things in the right way and my solicitor picked up on it. Two of the police officers got rather upset and nervous as they gave evidence in court.
351. I hadn't been invited to make a statement myself, but I chose to do so on the last day of the trial. David Bell had taken me to one side and said that the members of the jury were wanting to know things about me and told me that if I wanted to tell them I could. I asked him to tell Sheriff Williamson that I would be only too pleased to give my side of things and I took the witness stand and told the jury about my career and life.
352. I was cross examined by the procurator fiscal, but the trial didn't last much longer and then Sheriff Williamson sent the jury away.
353. I sat in the cafeteria with my wife and I'd only been there for five minutes before David Bell told me the jury were back. I went back into the court and learned that the jury had found me not guilty of both the charges.

Helping the Inquiry

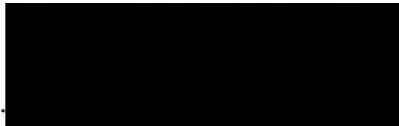
354. Other than what I have already mentioned, I do not remember any instance of any staff abusing children. I am not saying that what people have alleged did not happen, I just did not witness anything.

355. If children were abused and that abuse has gone undetected, I think that perhaps the vehicle for complaint was not there, or perhaps the youngsters don't realise that there is a vehicle for making a complaint that they can use. I wonder who you could turn to if you are being abused by a member of staff? Who do you tell?
356. It also mustn't be forgotten that a lot of these young people had come from abusive backgrounds. They might go home and tell their mother or their father that a teacher had done something to them and they might well get a response that they must have asked for it.
357. I also think people who work in residential special schools need to consider how long they work there. I know people who have been there for thirty years and I believe there is a danger of becoming institutionalised. It affects you.
358. There should be more safeguards in place to protect children and staff. I don't think any member of staff should be left on their own with any child. I think there should be more written policies on safeguards and recording of incidents in schools, so that a member of staff can walk into a staffroom, pick one up and read it.
359. Every member of staff should have a supportive line manager. One of the things I discovered at Beath High School after leaving Starley Hall was how much support there is in mainstream schools. I had three line managers at Beath High School, everybody had. There were policy books lying on the table in the staffroom and there was support and supervision once a week from your line manager.
360. While I was at Beath High School, I looked after the Behaviour Unit, where there were children who, under other circumstances, may have ended up somewhere like Starley Hall. However, local authorities now are not so keen on spending such massive amounts of money as they were when I was at Starley Hall. Starley Hall is a business and I believe motives get lost when money is a concern. Perhaps such schools should be state run.

Other information

361. I have found the whole process of my involvement firstly with the police and then more recently with the memories stirred up following my involvement with the Inquiry to be very stressful. However, I appreciate the importance of the work of the Inquiry and I admire how it is being conducted.
362. 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.....

A black rectangular box redacting the signature.

Dated.....

16/07/25