

Friday, 29 August 2025

(10.03 am)

LADY SMITH: Good morning. Welcome back to Phase 9 of our public hearings in this section in which we are looking into the provision of residential care for children with disabilities and today we're going to focus on children whose disability was in relation to their hearing, deaf children.

We know that giving evidence isn't easy and it can be distressing. We do our best to afford all witnesses an opportunity to give their evidence as comfortably as they can and that means we make appropriate adjustments wherever possible.

We have made such adjustments so as to support communication with and by deaf witnesses to help them give the best evidence that they're able to do. And you may notice the layout of the room has been adjusted a little.

The proceedings will be interpreted in British Sign Language for deaf witnesses and if any of the members of the public who are here from time to time are deaf, we will provide interpretation for them as well.

We've got two experienced British Sign Language interpreters who will interpret the evidence given by the witness and they will probably swap at some points,

1 it could be every 20 minutes or so, and you see, I think
2 I've just pointed out, that they're seated beside senior
3 counsel.

4 Witnesses who are deaf will also have the assistance
5 of a deaf intermediary, who's sitting diagonally towards
6 the counsel's bench and me, over there, and the witness
7 who is the -- I'm sorry, the man who's the intermediary,
8 who I have just pointed out, being an independent
9 specialist in deaf communication, also has his own
10 interpreter who's sitting just below me here.

11 The purpose of the intermediary is so as to help the
12 witness to understand what's happening at the hearing
13 and to help them be understood when they're giving
14 evidence and watch out for any particular difficulties
15 they may be having and draw my attention to that, if
16 need be.

17 Now, I've got one or two procedures to go through
18 next and they involve swearing in only the interpreter
19 for the intermediary because the two interpreters for
20 the witness were sworn in previously in this set of
21 hearings.

22 So if I could ask this interpreter, Donna, to stand
23 up.

24
25

1 Donna Jewell (sworn)

2 LADY SMITH: I'm now going to turn to today's evidence and
3 I'll invite Ms Innes to address me. Ms Innes.

4 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

5 This morning's witness has the pseudonym 'Cassie'.
6 'Cassie' was at St Vincent's School between the ages of
7 about 5-and-a-half and 11, so that would have about from
8 around 1970 or 1971 until about 1976 or 1977.

9 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

10 'Cassie' (affirmed)

11 LADY SMITH: 'Cassie', thank you for coming here to give
12 your evidence today. I think it's already been
13 explained to you that I'm the Chair of the Inquiry,
14 Lady Smith, and before we start your evidence, there are
15 just one or two things that I want to say.

16 I already have your written statement, that's
17 already evidence to the Inquiry, and it's been really
18 helpful to me to be able to study that in advance.
19 I'm very grateful to you for having provided it.

20 Now, we won't be going through that statement line
21 by line or word for word, so don't worry that we've got
22 to do all of that. But what we'll do is we'll try to
23 focus on particular parts of it.

24 And I think you'll have probably already worked out
25 that we've positioned interpreters for you directly

1 across for you and I hope that's a good position to help
2 you.

3 A. Yes, it is.

4 LADY SMITH: Good.

5 And let me explain, to your right is the
6 intermediary who is here to help you, just sitting at
7 the end of the desk that you're at.

8 The other interpreter in the room, you probably
9 don't have to worry about, is the one sitting below me
10 and that's the interpreter for your intermediary.

11 So far as the voices you'll hear. perhaps a little
12 of, are concerned, that's -- it's going to mainly be
13 Ms Innes, senior counsel, also directly across from you,
14 asking you questions, and me.

15 You may also become aware that to your left, there
16 are two people who are stenographers, and if they have
17 any questions at any time or problems with the system,
18 they'll tell me about that and you may see signing to do
19 with their technical problems. Don't worry about that.
20 We'll sort it out. It may be we've got no problems at
21 all today and I hope that might be so.

22 Now, very importantly, 'Cassie', if you need a break
23 at any time, please just tell me. I do understand that
24 for anybody in your position, giving evidence in
25 a public place about your own life, and particularly

1 your life as a child, isn't at all easy. It can be
2 distressing and, moreover, it can be exhausting, and
3 added to that, you have the additional stress of working
4 with interpreters who are relatively new to you.
5 I appreciate that.

6 So just let me know if you want a break.
7 I'll normally break maybe after 45 minutes or so, or
8 I'll check in with you how you're doing, but if it has
9 to be before then, that's absolutely fine. You just let
10 me know. If it works for you, it will work for me.
11 That's the plan, all right?

12 A. Okay.

13 LADY SMITH: If you're ready, I'll hand over to Ms Innes and
14 she'll take it from there. Ms Innes.

15 Questions by Ms Innes

16 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

17 'Cassie', I'm going to start with something formal
18 and I'm going to give the reference to the statement
19 that you've given to the Inquiry. The statement has the
20 reference WIT-1-000001552.

21 Now, I understand that you had, I think, three
22 sessions with the Inquiry team to give and review your
23 statement and those were conducted with the assistance
24 of a British Sign Language interpreter and at the review
25 stage, just before you signed your statement, your

1 statement was interpreted into British Sign Language and
2 you then signed it. And I think we see that at the last
3 page of your statement, on page 31, we see that you
4 signed your statement on 22 January 2025; is that
5 correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And more recently, you've gone through your whole
8 statement again with the assistance of an interpreter
9 and an intermediary; is that correct?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And I think there may be some areas in your statement
12 which you wanted to clarify and we will cover those when
13 we go through your evidence.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. And you've said in your statement at the end of it that
16 you have no objection to your witness statement being
17 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry and
18 that you believe the facts stated in this witness
19 statement are true.'

20 Is that correct?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Now, I'm going to go back to the beginning of what you
23 told us, and you told us that you were born in 1965; is
24 that correct?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And you tell us that your parents were hearing and
2 didn't know anything about being deaf?

3 A. That's right.

4 Q. And when they knew that you were deaf, they asked the GP
5 for advice. Do you know what advice --

6 A. That's right.

7 Q. Do you know what advice the doctor gave them?

8 A. Said I had to be educated in an oral way and not
9 signing.

10 Q. And you've told us in your statement that there was
11 a time where they insisted that you wore hearing aids?

12 A. Yes, they did.

13 Q. Did these help you?

14 A. No, no, not at all, no.

15 Q. And then you tell us in your statement that your mum and
16 your grandmother started looking at schools for you and
17 they went to Donaldson's in Edinburgh and St Vincent's
18 in Glasgow?

19 A. That's right, yes.

20 Q. And we know that you went to St Vincent's. Do you know
21 why they decided that you should go there?

22 A. They said that the other school was too big and
23 St Vincent's was a smaller school. I guess they --
24 I think that's what they said.

25 Q. And you went to St Vincent's when you were about

1 5-and-a-half; is that right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And you tell us that you went as a boarder?

4 A. Yes, I did, residential.

5 Q. And when you were boarding, when did you go to school at

6 the start of the week?

7 A. I started on Sunday actually. That was when the week

8 started. That's when I arrived.

9 Q. Okay, and then when did you go back home again?

10 A. On the Friday.

11 Q. Okay, and how did you get to and from the school?

12 A. It was by train.

13 Q. Did you go on your own or did somebody go with you?

14 A. I went sort of myself. There was a deaf boy who was at

15 St Vincent's as well. He was older than me, so we went

16 together. That's for a few changes that we had to do as

17 well.

18 Q. And then were you picked up when you got to Glasgow?

19 A. Sister -- the Sisters would pick us up. It was like

20 a minibus.

21 Q. And you've told us in your statement that there were

22 a lot of pupils at St Vincent's of a wide age range?

23 A. That's right, there was, yes.

24 Q. Were there any other children who were the same age as

25 you?

1 A. Yes, that was my class, yes. There were older ones too.

2 Q. How many people were in your class?

3 A. I would say six residential but some of the class were

4 actually day board -- day people, they didn't actually

5 board, they just travelled every day.

6 Q. And were there boys and girls in your class?

7 A. There were girls and boys, yes, it was mixed.

8 Q. Now, in your statement, you tell us that St Vincent's

9 was an old building. How did the building feel?

10 A. It was creepy, really creepy. It was horrible. There

11 was a lot of pictures, you know, Jesus, religious kind

12 of pictures everywhere. Very old. And the church where

13 we had Mass, it was every Sunday, that was there as

14 well.

15 Q. So that was in the building?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And how did you feel about being there?

18 A. Oh, it was always in the back of my mind that I wanted

19 to go home. I just wanted to go home. I just had to

20 put up with it though. It was like there was no

21 empowerment for us as well, for children. I helped my

22 friends -- we played, so that was good, it helped having

23 friends. You can switch off from the reason we were

24 really there.

25 Q. Now, you tell us that you shared a room with other

1 girls? How many --

2 A. Yes, the boys and girls were separate in the residences,

3 yes, but I was with the girls.

4 Q. And you've told us that there was one big dormitory for

5 the girls with about 12 to 15 beds?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And you were separated by age?

8 A. Yes, that's right, and the blind children as well, there

9 was deaf-blind children too, and we were all mixed in

10 together.

11 Q. And was it one big room or was it divided up?

12 A. Some of it was like partitioned off, but the bit where

13 I was, it was open. It was big -- high ceilings, big

14 windows as well.

15 Q. And how many girls were in the bit that you were in?

16 A. Oh, 15, maybe 15, erm, maybe more than that.

17 Q. And how did you feel about sharing the room with the

18 other girls?

19 A. Erm, always went to bed early. Erm, I couldn't sleep.

20 I tossed and turned all the time and it was very bright.

21 I always went to bed early and I tossed and turned.

22 It was boring, I was bored.

23 Q. Did you have any personal things close to you?

24 A. No, nothing.

25 Q. And you said that the boys were in another room?

1 A. Yeah, they were separated from us, but I don't know
2 where. We were never allowed to find out. I mean, you
3 know, I was curious to see where everybody was, but no,
4 we were separated. Didn't see where they were.

5 Q. Okay. Were there rules about boys and girls visiting
6 each other?

7 A. Oh, yes, yes. The Sisters said, 'No, you can't go
8 looking and nosing in each other's rooms'. It was not
9 allowed. And you'd get, you know, a spank or a spank on
10 the legs.

11 Q. Now, you tell us in your statement that the school was
12 run by nuns who you called 'Sister' and you say that you
13 can't tell us their names and you didn't know some of
14 their names; why was that?

15 A. It was all oral, you see, that's why I didn't understand
16 what they were saying. There was no signing at that
17 time. It was only Sister [REDACTED], I think, and there
18 was, like, Charlotte or Carol --

19 BSL INTERPRETER: She's not finger spelling it in English.

20 A. -- I don't remember all their names. I don't know them
21 all. To be honest, all of the nuns, I didn't know
22 really any of their names.

23 MS INNES: And you describe the Sisters as being really
24 strict and frightening. Can you tell us a bit more
25 about that?

1 A. Very strict, yes. It was -- forced us to do things. We
2 weren't allowed to sign. You have to use the oral's
3 method. You have to speak and that made me anxious.

4 Q. Was that in the residential part as well as at school or
5 just in school?

6 A. Both, yeah. Yeah, it was both of them.

7 Q. And you have told us that in the residential area, there
8 were two staff who weren't nuns, they were young women
9 and they worked in the --

10 A. Yes, that's right.

11 Q. -- and they worked in the residential area?

12 A. Yes, that's right.

13 Q. What sort of people were they?

14 A. They were good. They were lovely, lovely women. Yeah,
15 they were good. They weren't like the Sisters, no.
16 These people had like an open mind and they were very
17 kind, very good, and I favoured the two of them
18 obviously and I just would follow them all the time and
19 not go anywhere near the nuns because these two women
20 accepted me and they didn't spank me or anything like
21 that. The Sisters did, but not these two women.

22 Q. And you mentioned a Sister who was your favourite Sister
23 called Sister [REDACTED]?

24 A. Yeah, she was the only one. She was always good to me.
25 I don't necessarily think she was good to everybody, but

1 she was good to me, and the rest of the nuns I couldn't
2 say I had any dealings with at all.

3 Q. And you also mention a Sister LXH . What was she
4 like?

5 A. Oh, didn't like her. I never liked her, nah. She was
6 very strict. She was very mean. She was always hitting
7 me.

8 Q. Do you know what her job was?

9 A. I don't know, I think she was quite high up, I suppose.
10 I don't know if she's like SNR of something, SNR
11 SNR .

12 Q. And you've mentioned that there was very little sign
13 language used, it was all oral and lip reading
14 communication, but that some children were allowed to
15 use sign language; why was that?

16 A. I don't know, maybe it was their parents, their parents'
17 wishes. I don't know why. I remember my mum and dad
18 hearing the Sisters saying that 'signing makes you like
19 a monkey'. I thought, what? That doesn't sound very
20 nice. And that's what apparently was said.

21 Q. And were you able to understand what was being said or
22 what was going on?

23 BSL INTERPRETER: Do you mean as in speaking or as in
24 signing?

25 MS INNES: In speaking.

1 A. No, no, I didn't understand. I used to hide. Erm,
2 I had some friends and we would sign -- sign in secret,
3 not be in front of any of the Sisters, and I would copy
4 these friends on how to sign and then, 'She's coming',
5 and you'd put your hands behind your back, quickly.

6 Q. And how did that make you feel?

7 A. Oh, I was scared of them. Frustration as well, really
8 frustrated as well. I wanted to be comfortable with
9 signing, but just having to force me to do the oral
10 method, well, no.

11 Q. Now I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about meal
12 times. And were the boys and girls all together at meal
13 times or were you separated?

14 A. It was mixed, yes, we were mixed.

15 Q. And you tell us that at meal times you had to finish
16 what was on your plate?

17 A. Yes, absolutely, yes.

18 Q. What would happen if you didn't finish?

19 A. Oh, I had to, you had to have a clean plate, the Sisters
20 would force you to eat. I was forced to eat, to make
21 sure I had a clean plate and the food was awful, yuck.

22 Q. How would they force you to eat?

23 A. They would come up and say, 'Come on, get that eaten'.
24 And I would have to try and eat it and they were in
25 front of me. And sometimes the other person would put

1 the food onto the deaf-blind people's plates. I didn't
2 do that, but it wasn't very nice. They'd just scrape
3 their food onto those who were deaf-blind.

4 Q. You've also told us that there wasn't enough food served
5 though?

6 A. Yeah, erm, yes -- yes, I do remember that, yeah.

7 Q. You say that you was always --

8 A. I was thin.

9 Q. You say that you were always hungry?

10 A. Oh, yes, always, always hungry, yeah.

11 Q. And were you able to ask for more food?

12 A. No, no. I wanted sweets.

13 Q. Now, I'm going to ask you a question about washing and
14 you've told us about the bath and you say that you had
15 to share it with other people:

16 'We would sit there naked opposite each other and
17 a Sister was in the room too.'

18 And you would take turns bathing?

19 A. Yes, that's right.

20 Q. Were you put into the bath with other children?

21 A. Yes, yeah.

22 Q. As well as having to line up with them?

23 A. Yes, oh, yes, we had to do that, of course.

24 Q. With no clothes on?

25 A. Naked. Absolutely naked, yeah.

1 Q. How did that make you feel?

2 A. Oh, embarrassed, yeah. And shy. I was very shy.

3 Q. And was that with girls only or boys and girls?

4 A. No, no, no, it wasn't separate. It was girls only -- we

5 were separated.

6 Q. Now I'm going to ask you some questions about the school

7 and you say that the schooling was really bad. Why was

8 that?

9 A. Education was just bad. There was nothing taught.

10 I mean, through this oral method, I didn't understand

11 what they were saying, so lots of things just went right

12 over my head. I had no idea -- English, I couldn't

13 do -- deal with English, it was just really bad. It was

14 always -- like you get a report book, and it was always,

15 erm, fail, fail, fail, fail, all the way. That was me.

16 Q. Did you always stay in the same class while you were at

17 the school?

18 A. It varied. It depended on -- the ones that were signing

19 were allowed to move on but because I was in the oralist

20 bit, it was mixed and I would stay -- have to stay with

21 them.

22 Q. Were you in a class with children of the same age or

23 different ages then?

24 A. It was my age group, yeah.

25 Q. And you say that there were teachers in the school, but

1 Sisters also took classes?

2 A. There were teachers, there were teachers in the school.

3 Q. And so were there no Sisters in the school?

4 A. Erm, yeah, there was sometimes, sometimes. Like they

5 were watching for who was signing. You know, it's like

6 they were just watching us all the time, spying on us.

7 Q. And was sign language ever used by the teachers in the

8 classes that you were in?

9 A. Both really, both ways. We had to wear these

10 headphones, earphones.

11 Q. If I can go on in your statement, it's at paragraph 43,

12 you say that you remember having lessons where you had

13 to follow a book and it was like an assessment. It

14 would be one-to-one with Sister LXH or another

15 Sister. Do you know why --

16 A. Could you say that again, sorry? I didn't get that.

17 Q. So you tell us that you would have lessons where you had

18 to follow a book and it was like an assessment?

19 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

20 Q. It would be one-to-one with Sister LXH or another

21 Sister?

22 A. Erm, I kind of remember it, yes, I do.

23 Q. So, you've told us in your statement, I'll read it out:

24 'I just remember feeling so nervous having to do

25 this because I wasn't allowed to sign and had to use my

1 voice. I can't remember exactly what I had to say and
2 whether I had a good voice or not, but she would just
3 sit and listen to me and say, "Very good, you can go".'
4 A. That's right, yes.
5 Q. 'I wouldn't say that we had to do that every day ...'
6 A. I was sweating.
7 Q. 'I wouldn't say that we had to do that every day but we
8 had that special book and they just wanted us to perfect
9 our voices.'
10 A. That's what it was, all pats on the back, that's what
11 they wanted, but my voice was bad.
12 Q. You say:
13 'I felt it was something I had to pass and I was
14 always glad when it was over.'
15 A. Yes, yeah. I was very relieved and to get out of there
16 as well.
17 Q. You say:
18 'I was worried that if I got something wrong, I'd be
19 punished.'
20 A. Yes.
21 Q. Why did you think that?
22 A. Well, they were mean, they were mean people. They were
23 not nice.
24 Q. What did you think the punishment would be?
25 A. Get smacked, hands, smacked hands as well.

1 Q. Now, you mentioned in your evidence a moment ago about
2 headphones.
3 A. Yeah.
4 Q. And you've told us about that in your statement too. Do
5 you know why it was that you had to use these
6 headphones?
7 A. They wanted to improve my speech. I mean, just so that
8 I could maybe hear it.
9 Q. Were you able to hear anything through the headphones?
10 A. I can't really remember, but, no, not really. I could
11 kind of hear the sound going up and down, but what
12 actual words were said, I don't know. I couldn't tell
13 you what the words were.
14 LADY SMITH: 'Cassie', a couple of moments ago you said you
15 were worried that if you got something wrong, you'd be
16 punished. Do you remember that?
17 A. Yes.
18 LADY SMITH: And you told me it was because they were mean.
19 A. Yes.
20 LADY SMITH: When you said 'they were mean', who were the
21 'they' you were talking about?
22 A. It was the Sisters, both the Sisters, erm, like they
23 would meet together and talk together, but it was really
24 both of them.
25 LADY SMITH: Thank you. That explains it.

1 MS INNES: Do you know who these Sisters were?

2 A. Sister LXH and the other one was -- oh,

3 I've forgotten her name. It began with a . It wasn't

4 , it was somebody -- no. I can't recall -- it was

5 a . It's in my report thing that I have. It says the

6 name in there. , began with a .

7 Q. Now, going back to your statement, you were talking

8 about having the headphones on and then you tell us that

9 the teacher would put a feather in front of your mouth?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What were they doing with this feather?

12 A. It meant that -- well, it was like B or P or M or -- the

13 blowing that comes from your lips would hit the feather

14 and would help you to understand and speak. And they

15 would put their hands against your cheek and go, 'Mm,

16 mm'. Sometimes there would be like a board in front and

17 they'd say, 'What did I say? What did I say? Come on,

18 you've got to say it'. I never answered 'cause I didn't

19 understand. I didn't know.

20 LADY SMITH: 'Cassie', this Sister whose name you think

21 began with the letter , was it Sister PQF ?

22 A. PQF , PQF . PQF .

23 LADY SMITH: Ah, PQF , you think. Okay. Thank you.

24 MS INNES: Now, 'Cassie', you were saying about sometimes

25 when the teacher would be working with this feather or

1 they would use a board, and I think you also tell us
2 that sometimes the teachers would cover their mouths
3 with their hands?

4 A. That's right. They would cover their mouths definitely,
5 yes. They'd want to know what they were saying. They
6 wanted me to answer what they were saying. I couldn't.
7 I just had to -- I was really nervous. I was so
8 frightened. I really was -- and frustrated as well.

9 LADY SMITH: So when that happened, you couldn't do any lip
10 reading; have I got that right?

11 A. That's right, yes.

12 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

13 MS INNES: Now, going on in your statement a little -- and
14 this is something I think that you wanted to clarify --
15 so at paragraph 53, you talk there about being --

16 BSL INTERPRETER: Can you hang on a second, she's actually
17 going to have a look, to find the paragraph. Okay, she
18 has it in front of her now, thank you.

19 A. I'm behind, just watching all the time.

20 MS INNES: You say there:

21 'I also remember being given a spoon full of
22 a horrible tasting paste.'

23 A. Yes, that's right, I do remember that, yeah, being fed
24 it with a spoon.

25 Q. And I think you maybe want to clarify that this was

1 something like barley malt syrup?

2 A. Yes, that's right, yeah.

3 Q. And do you know why you were given this?

4 A. No, but they never explained what things were for. It

5 was just like forcing all of us to just do what we had

6 to do. All the girls were the same. We were forced to

7 have this spoonful of stuff.

8 Q. Now, you've already mentioned in your evidence about

9 going to Mass and in your statement,, you tell us about

10 a time that you fell asleep at Mass and then you were

11 taken out to see the priest?

12 A. Yes, that's right. I was in the room with the priest,

13 like confession, 'Have you got anything to confess?',

14 and I thought, 'What have I done?'. I was only little.

15 I was frightened. I didn't know what to say or what to

16 do. It was just ...

17 Q. Now, again, going on in your statement, you tell us

18 about bed wetting and what would happen if somebody wet

19 the bed?

20 A. Yeah, I mean, I would get punishment, yes, I did get

21 punished. I got a lot of smacks for it.

22 Q. Okay, and who would smack you?

23 A. The Sisters.

24 Q. And whereabouts on your body would they smack you?

25 A. On my bottom, my bum.

1 Q. Would that be over your clothes or under your clothes?
2 A. Pyjamas. We'd have pyjamas.
3 Q. Okay, so over your pyjamas?
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. And how did that make you feel?
6 A. Oh, well, I didn't like it and at home, my parents --
7 and it never happened at home. It was fine.
8 LADY SMITH: Are you telling me you didn't wet the bed at
9 home?
10 A. Not that I can recall, no.
11 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Thanks, 'Cassie'.
12 MS INNES: Now, you've mentioned --
13 A. It's because at home it was not far to go to the toilet,
14 but at the school, at St Vincent's, the toilet was
15 a long way away and I was frightened when it was dark.
16 I used to try and hold it in, but, you know, I didn't
17 want to go on my own down to find the toilet 'cause it
18 was so dark.
19 Q. Was the toilet on the same floor as your dormitory or
20 not?
21 A. It was downstairs. You had to go along so far and then
22 downstairs. It was far. It was quite far. And it was
23 marble flooring, which was absolutely freezing. Your
24 feet were touching this marble and you were trying to
25 hold on to the toilet as well.

1 Q. And were there any lights on, on the way to the toilet?

2 A. No, no lights, no, nothing. You had to feel against the

3 walls, so that you know where you were going. That's

4 all you could do, just touch your way along the wall.

5 Urgh.

6 Q. Were there any staff on duty at night?

7 A. No, I don't think -- there was nobody there, no.

8 Oh, in the daytime, yes, but after bedtime, no,

9 nobody was there. It was quiet. Yeah.

10 Q. Now, you've mentioned about punishment in your evidence

11 already and you've told us in your statement that

12 discipline was generally physical punishment from the

13 Sisters?

14 A. Oh, no, there was hitting all the time, all the time.

15 Q. And did that happen to you?

16 A. Yes, yes, it did.

17 Q. For what sort of things?

18 A. Because I was signing with my other friends and they

19 caught me and that was it. I should have been -- I was

20 told off, I should have been using my voice and speaking

21 to people, not signing.

22 Q. And did you see this happening to other children?

23 A. Oh, yes. I'd say half and half, yes.

24 MS INNES: I'm not sure whether you wish to take a break at

25 this point?

1 LADY SMITH: Is that where you could pause, Ms Innes?

2 MS INNES: I could pause here.

3 LADY SMITH: 'Cassie', I said I would check in with you

4 after about three-quarters of an hour, to see if you

5 would like to have a break? What do you want to do?

6 Would you like to have a break now? That would be fine

7 if that would help you?

8 A. I would like to have a break, please, if that's all

9 right.

10 LADY SMITH: Let's do that then.

11 A. It's such a lot we've got to so far, but I'd like to

12 have a break.

13 LADY SMITH: No problem, let's do that.

14 A. Thank you.

15 (10.49 am)

16 (A short break)

17 (11.02 am)

18 LADY SMITH: Welcome back, 'Cassie'.

19 Are you ready to go on?

20 A. Yes, thank you, I'm ready.

21 LADY SMITH: Thank you. I'll hand back to Ms Innes to

22 continue her questions. Ms Innes.

23 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

24 'Cassie', I want to start by looking at paragraph 70

25 of your statement, where -- it's on page 14 -- you tell

1 us that pretty much straight after you started at
2 St Vincent's, you started getting forced to take tablets
3 by the Sisters. Can you tell us a bit more about that?
4 A. The Sisters would come to me and there was no
5 explanation as to what the tablets were and I was forced
6 to take these -- this tablet. I did say that I didn't
7 want to take it. I would say: no, no, no. But I was
8 forced to take it. They were very adamant I was to take
9 this tablet.
10 I would take the tablet and then that would be it.
11 I would -- they would wait and then I would start to
12 feel dizzy and then I would pass out. And every time
13 I took a tablet this would be what happened. I did not
14 like it. I would become very pale, very white in the
15 face.
16 Q. Did you have to take the tablet every day or only
17 sometimes?
18 A. Almost every day. Not on a Friday, never on a Friday.
19 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, but not on
20 a Friday.
21 Q. And you tell us in your statement that after you would
22 pass out, you would wake up in bed?
23 A. That's right, yeah.
24 Q. And would the other girls in your dorm be there when you
25 woke up?

1 A. No, I would be there myself, just myself.

2 Q. Was there any member of staff in the room with you?

3 A. No, no.

4 Q. And was it dark or light in the room?

5 A. It was light.

6 Q. And you tell us at paragraph 72 that you got out of bed
7 and tried the door but it was locked?

8 A. That's correct, yeah.

9 Q. And did that happen every time that you woke up like
10 this or only sometimes?

11 A. It was locked most of the time, most of the time it was
12 locked and I would sometimes waken and need the toilet
13 and I would try and scream. Obviously I don't have
14 a great voice but I would try and scream, scream for the
15 Sisters and I would wait for a very long time and
16 finally somebody would come and they would open the door
17 and I would be able to get out to get to the toilet.
18 I was very confused. I was very scared. Very lonely.
19 I didn't like it.

20 Q. And if you didn't need the toilet and were in the room,
21 how long would it be before somebody would come and open
22 the door?

23 A. A long time. A long time. It felt like more than half
24 an hour. It's a very big building so maybe they just
25 can't hear me. I was screaming to try and get

1 attention. Maybe they couldn't hear me. I don't know.

2 Q. What time of day did you get the tablet?

3 A. It was after lunch, yeah, after lunch, I remember. It

4 wasn't dinner time so it was between lunch and dinner,

5 sometimes you'd get it before lunch but it was round

6 about that lunchtime period. And it was only ever me,

7 none of the other girls had this. It was only ever me.

8 I don't know why.

9 Q. And after you woke up again, did you go -- and somebody

10 got you from the room, did you go back to the classroom

11 or did you go somewhere else?

12 A. We'd go down to the dining room. It was dinner time by

13 that point so you'd have to get changed into clothes,

14 'cause I was -- when I woke up I was in pyjamas, but

15 I don't remember that. I don't remember being changed

16 into pyjamas, so I was obviously in a very deep sleep.

17 Q. Okay. And you tell us that sometimes you would miss out

18 on things because you were in bed. What sort of things

19 did you miss out on?

20 A. Like most of the time, I'd miss playing with friends.

21 I'd be up in that room. It was a waste of the day.

22 I'd be up in that room. I'd rather be outside and

23 playing with my friends, being in the fresh air, but

24 I was stuck in that room.

25 Q. Did your friends wonder where you were?

1 A. Yes, they did, uh-huh. They said that the Sisters told
2 the children that I was sick, sick, and that's a lie, I
3 wasn't.

4 Q. When you went home at the weekends, did you still have
5 to take the tablets when you were with your parents?

6 A. No, no. I told my mum and dad that they were giving me
7 the tablets, but my mum and dad thought I was making it
8 up. Erm, communication wasn't great at that time with
9 my parents. They didn't sign and so, you know, I tried
10 to tell them, but they thought I was just making it up.

11 Q. And at paragraph 79 of your statement, you say that when
12 you went home at the weekends, you had a lot of problems
13 sleeping without the tablets?

14 A. That's right. I was sweating as well. It was funny
15 dreams, bad dreams, sweating, yeah. And it was very
16 difficult to sleep at home.

17 Q. And did you get the tablets over the whole time that you
18 were there or did that stop?

19 A. Yes, all the time. It was all the time, right through.

20 Q. And have you ever found out why they were giving you
21 these tablets?

22 A. No. I still don't know. My parents have no idea. They
23 were never told about me getting these tablets. Nothing
24 was ever told to them. So I still have no idea.

25 Q. And --

1 A. And I'm a healthy -- I was a healthy girl. I was
2 a healthy, young girl. I don't know why they were
3 giving me this.

4 Q. And you've told us in your statement that one day
5 a friend of yours asked where you were and then went to
6 look in the dormitory?

7 BSL INTERPRETER: Sorry, I'm just getting KWWY's sign
8 then, apologies.

9 A. That's right, yes, uh-huh, that's right. And there were
10 three of them actually and the three of them didn't want
11 the Sisters to know. They wanted to know where I was
12 and they realised that the door was locked, so they
13 brought a chair and stood up to look through the window.
14 They were young at the time. So there was a high window
15 so they used a chair to get up to see, but unfortunately
16 there was a wall there -- where my bed was so they
17 couldn't see me 'cause I was round the corner, behind
18 the wall.

19 They didn't realise the Sisters were coming 'cause
20 obviously they were looking through the window and the
21 Sisters were coming up the back of them and as deaf
22 people, they wouldn't have heard that. So they were
23 caught. So they were grabbed by their backs and pulled
24 off the chair. One girl fell back and was really
25 injured on the back of her head. I don't know who the

1 Sister was. I don't know what the name of the Sister
2 was that did that though. Very upset. Got reprimanded,
3 smacked, three girls then left and they had explained
4 that -- what had happened to them to me, so -- and that
5 was only recently I found that out, they had never said
6 that before. It was quite shocking to hear that that
7 had happened to them.

8 Q. Now, in your statement, at page 19, you tell us a bit
9 more about Sister LXH. So paragraph 89.

10 A. Sorry, I'm just going to turn to the right page. Yeah,
11 I've got it. Thank you.

12 (Pause)

13 Yes, thank you.

14 Q. And you tell us there, as you've been saying, that you
15 would try to sign to each other but keep it hidden?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. When was it that you were able to learn sign language?

18 A. I was late when I started to learn. I was about 15.

19 Q. And then you tell us that if you were trying to use sign
20 language with your other deaf friends and not use
21 speech, Sister LXH would come and punish you?

22 A. That's right.

23 Q. And you say:

24 'If she caught us signing I would get my hands
25 slapped.'

1 A. That's right.

2 Q. 'That happened quite a lot, because we were just trying
3 to communicate with each other.'

4 A. Yes, that's right.

5 Q. And you say that you were also made to put your hands
6 behind your backs?

7 A. Oh, yes, uh-huh, yeah, mm-hmm. I was really jealous of
8 the other kids that were allowed to sign and I did think
9 to myself: well, why not me? But, yeah.

10 Q. Did the Sisters use sign to communicate with the
11 children who were allowed to use sign?

12 A. Yes, they would sign with the children that were allowed
13 to sign, yes, but not for me. They wouldn't sign with
14 me.

15 LADY SMITH: But did the Sisters sign to those children?

16 A. Yeah, they would sign to some of the children, not the
17 children that were oral. I guess it was their parents'
18 wishes that they would be allowed to sign and so, yes,
19 that would happen.

20 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

21 MS INNES: And you also tell us in your statement that
22 gestures were punished too?

23 A. Yeah, that's right, yeah.

24 Q. And what would happen if you used gestures?

25 A. I mean, they would just punish me. They wanted me

1 obviously to improve my lip-reading and my speech, so
2 I would just get punished for making any gestures.

3 Q. Did you speak to your parents about being smacked?

4 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I did say to them, yeah. But I think
5 that was quite normal back then for teachers. I think
6 it was quite -- you know, the old-fashioned way was to
7 do that back then.

8 Q. What was your parents' reaction to you saying that you
9 were being smacked?

10 A. Not -- not really any reaction. Again, it was very hard
11 to communicate with my parents then, so a lot of the
12 time you would -- I would try to explain to them but
13 they'd be like, 'Och, never mind', and I would say,
14 'Och, never mind', because it was just -- it was
15 difficult to communicate with them.

16 Q. And you told us that you left St Vincent's when you were
17 about 11. Why was it that you left?

18 A. My parents then either didn't want me to stay in
19 residential anymore, I think, because of the tablets.
20 I didn't want to be in residential. I wanted to start
21 being a day schooling young person. So I begged my
22 parents to let me leave. So they found a school near
23 [REDACTED] for me to go to.

24 Q. And when you say you think because of the tablets, is
25 that why you wanted to leave?

1 A. That's right, yeah. I wanted to leave because of the
2 tablets.

3 Q. Now going on in your statement to page 24, and you talk
4 about --

5 A. Okay, thank you, I've got that.

6 Q. -- at paragraph 110 --

7 BSL INTERPRETER: Hold on just a second.

8 A. Okay, yeah.

9 MS INNES: You say there:

10 'I often think about my time at St Vincent's, it's
11 always there.'

12 What do you think about?

13 A. I think it's trauma, remembering back to the past,
14 getting those flashbacks of things and wondering why,
15 you know, always wondering why did I get those tablets?
16 Why did I get those pills? I want to know what the
17 pills are. I've asked around others to say, 'Do you
18 know what those pills were?', and nobody knows.

19 Q. And you've also told us that your education was damaged
20 by your time at St Vincent's. What effect has that had
21 on your life?

22 A. I mean, like my education was really damaged due to the
23 fact that I was taught orally. I should have been
24 taught both orally and through sign language and I think
25 then that would have given me better access for English.

1 I mean, it was too late for me.

2 Q. At page 27 of your statement, paragraph 122 --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- you talk about a friend who wrote you letters after

5 you left St Vincent's. Did you ever get these letters?

6 A. Never. Erm, I met my friend, [REDACTED]. She told me, 'Oh,

7 I always wrote to you. I always posted the letters'.

8 I said, 'Really? To my address?', and she said, 'Yep'.

9 So I asked my mum. I thought maybe she'd put them away

10 somewhere and my mum said, 'No, I never got anything for

11 you'. So I think the Sisters must have lied. They must

12 have not posted those letters and maybe just binned

13 them.

14 Q. And then in the next paragraph you tell us about going

15 to a reunion at St Vincent's?

16 A. Reunion, yeah.

17 Q. And how did you feel about going to the reunion and

18 seeing people again?

19 A. Very nervous, very anxious. You know, what if the

20 Sisters are there, what will I see when I'm there?

21 Maybe they won't be. Maybe they will be. When

22 I arrived, [REDACTED], Sister --

23 I think it was Sister zKTA [REDACTED], I can't be confident about

24 that, but I think it was Sister zKTA [REDACTED] that was there

25 and I hadn't seen her for such a long time, over maybe

1 about 30 years. So I said, 'Oh, hello'. And I said,
2 'Oh, do you remember me?', and the Sister looked a bit
3 off-guard about that and I said, 'It's KWWY'. And
4 the Sister seemed very awkward. She didn't really say
5 anything and I thought, 'Oh, right, okay, cool'.
6 I would have loved to have been able to ask questions of
7 her about the tablets, but it wasn't the right time for
8 that to happen. There were friends there -- it was, you
9 know, a reunion. Everybody was wanting to kinda meet
10 and get pictures taken. So it wasn't the right time to
11 be able to ask those questions of her, but, you know,
12 it's still in my head. I want to ask that question.
13 I want to know what that was they were giving me.
14 Q. And you say that it made you angry to see the Sister at
15 the reunion?
16 A. Yep. Didn't have a habit on. Looked different, like
17 a normal person. That was quite shocking to see as
18 well. Maybe she'd retired by that point. I don't
19 really know.
20 Q. Why did you feel angry to see her there?
21 A. Because I feel that they should be telling the truth,
22 you know. You know, there should have been the truth
23 told to the police but that never happened. You know,
24 they were obviously trying to save their job.
25 Q. Now, going on to page 29 of your statement, at

1 paragraph 135 --

2 A. Yep. Okay. Thank you.

3 Q. You say that you wanted to come to the Inquiry as you

4 think it's important to get your story down?

5 A. That's right.

6 Q. And then you go on to say:

7 'I think that my experience at St Vincent's could

8 have been better if ...'

9 A. If you can just hold on for a second, I would just like

10 to read that. Thank you.

11 Okay. Yes, thank you.

12 MS INNES: So you say there:

13 'I think that my experience at St Vincent's could

14 have been better if they had got rid of the Sisters and

15 had either deaf teachers or hearing teachers who were

16 children of deaf adults that understood and spoke in

17 sign language.'

18 A. Yes, I wish -- I wish that had happened.

19 Q. And why do you think that would have made your

20 experience better?

21 A. Well, because they would be using sign language. They'd

22 be using British Sign Language and no more residential

23 to have -- it's not safe. It's not safe to have

24 residential schools.

25 LADY SMITH: 'Cassie', am I to understand from your

1 suggestion that the teachers should have been deaf or if
2 they were hearing teachers, they should have been
3 children of deaf adults to be that it should have been
4 people who used sign language in their own normal daily
5 life?

6 A. Yeah, and I don't mind if they're hearing or deaf. The
7 most important thing is that they can sign fluently.
8 That they can sign fluently, that's the important part.

9 LADY SMITH: So fluent signing and understanding how
10 effective, helpful and perhaps powerful it can be?

11 A. That's right, yeah. Understanding us as young people,
12 not having any barriers in the way for communication.

13 MS INNES: Do you think that the Sisters had any
14 understanding of what it was like to be deaf?

15 A. No, no. I don't think -- nah -- I would never imagine
16 that. They were very hearing.

17 Q. And you just mentioned a moment ago in your evidence
18 that you hope that there's no more residential schools;
19 is that for deaf children?

20 A. For deaf children, I think, yeah.

21 Q. And you also say that you hope that there's no more
22 Sisters involved in this. Why do you say that?

23 A. Because they're so mean. They don't believe in using
24 sign language. They forced me to take medication.
25 I think they were bad. The Sisters were bad. I wish

1 that we were able to tell the police and one day that it
2 could have been dealt with, but that never happened.
3 I think the Sisters were trying to hide it, trying to
4 hide what happened.

5 Q. And you also tell us that you've encouraged some of your
6 friends to get involved with the Inquiry. And you have
7 offered to help as you say:
8 'Our voices need to be heard.'
9 But you say:
10 'I think that they are frightened to stand up and
11 speak out.'

12 Why do you think that is?

13 A. I think -- I think there's an issue around -- they're
14 worried that the police will be involved. They're not
15 confident with their written English, just the whole
16 process of going through this is quite frightening for
17 them. I have told them that, you know, you get full
18 support, interpreters involved, you know, it's -- but
19 I can't force them, it's -- that's obviously their
20 choice. I feel very, very sorry for them.

21 MS INNES: Okay. 'Cassie', I have come to the end of my
22 questions for you.

23 A. Oh, wow, okay, thank you.

24 LADY SMITH: 'Cassie', I don't have any other questions for
25 you either. But I do want to thank you again for coming

1 here this morning and being so helpful and open in the
2 evidence that you've provided to us yourself. It's made
3 such a difference having you here. Thank you.

4 You're free to go. Safe journey home.

5 A. Thank you, thank you very much.

6 (The witness withdrew)

7 LADY SMITH: Now, I think I'm right in saying that our next
8 witness is scheduled for 2 o'clock; is that correct,
9 Ms Innes?

10 MS INNES: That's correct, my Lady.

11 LADY SMITH: So I'll rise now and sit again at 2.00. But
12 before I do that, we've used some names this morning of
13 people whose identities are protected by my General
14 Restriction Order and that was Sister zKTA , Sister
15 PQF or PQF and Sister LXH and at one point, the
16 witness used her own first name, KWY , and that's
17 also protected by my General Restriction Order.

18 None of these people are to be identified as
19 referred to in our evidence outside this room.

20 I'll rise now and sit again at 2 o'clock. Thank
21 you.

22 (11.32 am)

23 (The luncheon adjournment)

24 (2.02 pm)

25 LADY SMITH: Good afternoon.

1 Now, we are going to have another witness in person
2 this afternoon and this is another witness who is deaf
3 and so the same system of using interpreters and,
4 indeed, the same interpreters as we used this morning
5 will apply.

6 There's another aspect of this witness's evidence to
7 take account of and that is that he, it's a man, will be
8 giving evidence from behind screens. A screen will be
9 pulled across for him to enter the room, with
10 a supporter, and they'll make themselves comfortable
11 and, after that, a screen screening him from the public
12 will remain in place, but the big screen right across
13 the room will be opened. So don't panic, when we open
14 the big screen, that's not going to reveal the person
15 who's going to give evidence from behind the screens.

16 Otherwise, same applies as did this morning and we
17 seek to make the same adjustments to help the witness
18 give his evidence as comfortably as he can, so as to
19 give the best evidence that he can.

20 So, Ms Innes, would you like to introduce the
21 witness?

22 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

23 This witness has the pseudonym 'Adam'.

24 'Adam' attended St Vincent's School as a day pupil
25 between about 1974 and 1988. Your Ladyship will recall

1 that the Daughters of Charity provided residential care
2 at St Vincent's over that period up until 1986.

3 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

4 We are just checking the position with the camera.
5 It may already have been dealt with, I'm not sure.

6 (Pause)

7 'Adam' (affirmed)

8 LADY SMITH: 'Adam', that big curtain has been pulled back
9 so that I can see everybody else in the room and they
10 can see me. They can see the interpreter, they can see
11 the lawyers but they can't see you. Do be assured of
12 that. And the curved curtain that's in front of the
13 desk will remain there so long as you're in the room.

14 Thank you for coming here today, 'Adam'. It's
15 really helpful to have you in person. I do already have
16 your written statement, which you've plainly taken a lot
17 of trouble to provide for us and it's been really
18 helpful to be able to read that and think about it in
19 advance and that means we won't need to go through every
20 word of it in detail, but there are some specific
21 aspects that we'd like to concentrate on.

22 A. Okay.

23 LADY SMITH: Now, so far as the set-up of the room is
24 concerned, let me just confirm with you, as you can see,
25 we've got two British Sign Language interpreters

1 available for you and they'll take turns as required.

2 And they're sitting next to Ms Innes, the senior
3 counsel, who's going to be asking you questions in
4 a minute or two.

5 We've also to your right, got an intermediary, who
6 you've met and he will remain available throughout the
7 time that you're giving evidence and his interpreter is
8 the woman who's just sitting below me, here.

9 A. Okay.

10 LADY SMITH: You know who's right behind you, that's the
11 witness support officer who came in with you just now,
12 but your own supporter is also in the room to your left
13 and she can remain there throughout the time you're
14 giving evidence, so is also here to give you such
15 support as she can.

16 Then over to your -- further over to your left,
17 there are two women who are stenographers and they are
18 making a transcript of the evidence. They don't have
19 their own interpreter, but they may need to interrupt at
20 some time and if they do, I'm hoping that your
21 interpreter will help you understand what that's all
22 about. They may not, but just in case, it will be
23 something technical to do with the sound system and the
24 work that they're doing.

25 So far as breaks are concerned, I appreciate that

1 giving evidence at all in a public inquiry is daunting,
2 particularly when you're giving evidence about your own
3 life, your own life when you were very young, and about
4 events which were distressing at the time. That of
5 itself takes a lot out of people. It can be upsetting.
6 It can just be exhausting. If you want a break or pause
7 at any time, you must let me know. My key purpose is to
8 do what I can to enable you to give your evidence as
9 well as you can.

10 In any event, I'll check in with you in about 40-odd
11 minutes to see how you're doing and whether you need
12 a break at that stage. And we can go on or pause then,
13 whichever you want. And I always do take a break at
14 about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, so that's 50 minutes
15 from now in any event. You can bear that in mind.

16 Do say if you don't understand anything we're
17 asking. If we don't make it clear, it's our fault, not
18 yours.

19 A. Okay.

20 LADY SMITH: Otherwise, if you're ready, I'll hand over to
21 Ms Innes and she'll take it from there; is that okay?

22 A. Okay. Thank you.

23 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

24 Ms Innes.

25

1 Questions by Ms Innes

2 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.

3 'Adam', if I can first of all refer to the statement
4 that you gave to the Inquiry and it has the reference
5 WIT-1-000001595.

6 And if we look at the final page of your statement,
7 I think it might be page 18 in the ...

8 A. Yeah, 18 or 19, did you say?

9 Q. 18. And I think we see there that when you were
10 providing your statement, you had sessions with members
11 of the Inquiry team and that, during those, two British
12 Sign Language interpreters interpreted for you on the
13 occasions that you met with the Inquiry team?

14 A. Mm-hmm.

15 Q. And you signed your statement, I think, on 5 May of this
16 year, having had your statement interpreted to you and
17 more recently, I understand --

18 A. That's right, yeah, that's correct.

19 Q. And more recently, I understand that you've met with the
20 intermediary and gone through your statement again and
21 there may be some points that we will clarify, which
22 you've highlighted to the Inquiry, and I'll deal with
23 those in the course of your evidence; is that right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And you've told us in your statement that you've got no

1 objection to your witness statement being published as
2 part of the evidence to the Inquiry?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you believe that the facts stated in your witness
5 statement are true?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Now I'm going to go back to the start of your statement
8 again.

9 A. Back to the start, okay.

10 Q. And you tell us that you were born in 1970; is that
11 right?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. And you tell us that you weren't born deaf but you
14 became deaf at about 3 years old?

15 A. That's correct, yeah.

16 Q. And then you go on in your statement to say that your
17 mum thought about which school she would send you to?

18 A. Mm-hmm.

19 Q. And she made a decision to send you to St Vincent's
20 School?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Do you know why she made that decision?

23 A. I don't know. I really don't know. I was little at the
24 time. I think my mum had gone to the other school and
25 thought St Vincent's was better, the Catholic school --

1 Roman Catholic school was better, she was more
2 comfortable sending me there.

3 Q. And when you mention the other school, do you mean the
4 Glasgow School for the Deaf?

5 A. Yes, Glasgow School for the Deaf.

6 Q. Now, you tell us that you think you went to St Vincent's
7 when you were about 3 or 4 years old?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. And you left in 1988, when you were 17; is that correct?

10 A. That's correct.

11 Q. And you were always a day pupil there; is that right?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. And then you go on in your statement to say that there
14 were boys and girls at the school and that there were
15 deaf and blind children there?

16 A. That's right.

17 Q. Did you spend time with the -- with all of the children
18 at the school, so the blind children as well as the deaf
19 children, or were you separated?

20 A. Okay, if I can maybe explain it a little bit.

21 So it was only at break time in the hall deaf people
22 would mix. There was blind children there at the same
23 time. When we went back into school to teaching, they
24 separated us, deaf children and blind children
25 separately taught, I think because the blind children,

1 obviously, the teachers would speak orally to them, but
2 at break time or in the dining room, we would all be
3 together.

4 Q. And you have told us in your statement that you didn't
5 know sign language when you started the school. Did any
6 of the children use sign language?

7 A. That's right, I didn't know any sign language when
8 I arrived.

9 Q. And did any of the other children know -- use sign
10 language at break time, for example?

11 A. Yes, the other children signed, yeah.

12 Q. And how did you find that when you went to the school to
13 begin with? How did you feel about that?

14 A. I mean, it did feel like quite a barrier, if I remember.
15 I wasn't born deaf, I became deaf. I could speak but
16 when I became deaf, I lost my speech, my speech was
17 impaired by that. And I didn't know how to use sign
18 language so I didn't know how to communicate with the
19 children, but I did pick it up, like the alphabet.
20 I was quite late by the time I got the alphabet. I did
21 struggle a bit with communication but, through time,
22 I picked it up and then it was fine, I could
23 communicate.

24 Q. Now, you tell us a bit about the building at
25 St Vincent's and you say that there was -- sorry, it's

1 my fault.

2 A. I was just going to say there were two separate

3 buildings; do you want me to carry on?

4 Q. Yes, please.

5 A. There were two parts to it. The original old

6 St Vincent's School, it was formally the convent, so the

7 nuns were -- the Sisters were in there as well. I think

8 later, latterly, the school for the deaf and the

9 deaf-blind opened. That might have been about '66 or

10 '67, I'm not totally sure of the date. The older part

11 of the building was for residential children and there

12 was a hall in there and -- that they would have their

13 dinner, et cetera, in and that's all I remember about

14 that part of the school, the hall.

15 It was -- there was big pillars. Erm, there was

16 stairs and there was a chapel up there as well, er,

17 yeah.

18 LADY SMITH: 'Adam', do you remember there being a new

19 building at any time?

20 A. Yes, that was the school, the new building was the

21 school. I do apologise if I've not been clear. So the

22 new building was the school part. So it had proper

23 classrooms, et cetera. The old building was where the

24 Sisters would stay and also for the boarders, for the

25 residential children. So whenever school was finished,

1 they would then go back to the older building and that's
2 how that worked.

3 MS INNES: And did you ever go into the old building?

4 A. Yes, I did, yeah. I don't really remember it very
5 clearly. I do remember going into the chapel and that
6 was for confession, et cetera. But I wasn't in the
7 residential rooms, et cetera. I think maybe once or
8 twice I went in, but I don't overly remember it.
9 I didn't, kind of, get full exposure to the building, if
10 you like, but I was in it occasionally.

11 Q. Okay. And in your statement you say that the nuns would
12 always be around the area of the hall that you've
13 described with the pillars. Did you ever see the nuns
14 in the school as well or just there?

15 A. They were different. So there was nuns that were in the
16 residential side. They didn't teach in the school.
17 They were kind of separate, if you like. So the nuns
18 that were in the residential side would deal with the
19 children who were deaf or deaf-blind that stayed there
20 and then there were different nuns that were in the
21 school.

22 Q. Now, you've told us about some of the staff in the
23 school and you've told us that there was a mix of nuns
24 and other staff; is that right?

25 A. That's correct, yeah. Maybe just to clarify that a bit.

1 The nuns were teachers as well. So they would go
2 between the schools. The staff didn't ever go into
3 residential. They stayed -- they went home, so the nuns
4 that taught in the school stayed in the residential
5 block. The staff that came to the school went backwards
6 and forwards every day so they didn't stay in the
7 residential. They were -- I'm going to use the term
8 auxiliaries, so they would be out in the playground at
9 break time, watching us, making sure we were okay, et
10 cetera, so they were auxiliary staff.

11 Q. You've mentioned some of the Sisters and I just want to
12 ask you about some of the Sisters that you've mentioned.

13 You've mentioned a Sister Mary. What was her role?

14 A. Can I just check?

15 Q. Yes, this is page 3 and paragraph 15.

16 (Pause)

17 A. Yeah, okay.

18 Q. So what was the -- what was Sister Mary's role; can you
19 remember?

20 A. I mostly saw -- she was in residential, I think -- no,
21 sorry, sorry, sorry, yeah, in the old building, but
22 I think in the new school she was the headteacher.
23 I was little at the time, so I didn't really have much
24 to do with her, but she had a very stern face.

25 Q. Then in the same paragraph you mention -- and it's

1 blanked out in your statement -- but it -- you say that
2 there was a Sister PUC who became SNR ?
3 A. Yes, that's right.
4 Q. What was she like?
5 A. I would say horrible, very tough, no kind of compassion
6 for deaf people. Very, very strict. I was, you know,
7 quite frightened of her, you know, I didn't really want
8 her to have anything to do with me. She was quite --
9 quite a figure.
10 Q. And you then mention a Sister zKYI . What was she
11 like?
12 A. Honestly, a lovely woman. When she arrived at the
13 school, it was kind of later on, I think maybe '85-ish,
14 '84/'85. Her teaching was amazing. She had empathy.
15 She explained why maybe I had made errors or things were
16 wrong. She then explained what it was that was wrong
17 about it. She taught me really well and I personally
18 wish she had been there since the start. I think if
19 she'd been there educating me, I would have had a much
20 better education, but unfortunately I only had her for
21 a very short time before leaving school.
22 Q. Now I'm going to ask you a couple of questions about
23 meal times. And did you have lunch at the school?
24 A. Yeah.
25 Q. What was the food like?

1 A. I mean, it was horrible, but, you know, I guess back
2 then you didn't really get great food. And I remember
3 once being forced to eat fish with milk. I didn't want
4 to eat it and the Sister forced me -- actually forced me
5 with a -- was spooning it into my mouth and I had to eat
6 it and I didn't like it and now I can't stand fish
7 because of that. I just can't. The bones were all
8 through it and getting caught in my mouth and, oh, it
9 was awful. And it's a very, very clear memory to me;
10 being made to eat that.

11 Q. Now, going on to page 4 of your statement, and to
12 paragraph 19 -- or beginning at paragraph 19, you say
13 there that your mum had told you that the school had
14 a Total Communication policy?

15 A. Mm-hmm.

16 Q. And that meant that you would learn using the oral
17 method as well as sign language?

18 A. So Total Communication is -- it's not the structure of
19 BSL. It's different. It's like -- it follows the
20 structure of English, so like sign-supported English.
21 Of course back then, I didn't really know. I found that
22 out much later in my life. So it was signing but in
23 English grammatical order. So 'I went to the shop',
24 which we don't do in British Sign Language.

25 In British Sign Language it would be 'me go shop',

1 so some of the parts of that sentence would be dropped,
2 because of the grammatical make-up of British Sign
3 Language, but of course back then I didn't know about
4 that, but that's what Total Communication was. It was
5 much later that I found the difference between that and
6 now I know obviously British Sign Language is
7 a completely different language but Total Communication
8 was based on English grammatical structure.

9 The oral side of things, you had Total Communication
10 and I think during the school holidays, I was home,
11 I came back, and when I got back to school, they put me
12 into the oral side so I stopped being in the
13 communication side, Total Communication, and I was in
14 the oral side and I would walk in and say, 'Good
15 morning', and you sign and I was told not to do that.
16 You speak only when you're in here.

17 I'm a profoundly deaf person so that seemed at odds
18 to me and I had been in the Total Communication class to
19 begin with. My mum had noticed that my behaviour was
20 a bit different and then when I said to her, 'I'm in
21 that oral class and that's the problem', my mum went
22 straight to the school, met the Sisters and said, 'No, I
23 want my son ... ', so Sister PUC was like, 'Oh
24 right, okay, I'll put him back into
25 Total Communication'. So, yes, we signed, but the

1 teaching standard was very low. It wasn't at the
2 standard we should have been for our age.

3 Q. In the classes using Total Communication, were the
4 teachers signing or not?

5 A. Yes, they did. Yes, they did.

6 Q. But not in British Sign Language?

7 A. Yes, that's correct. It was English grammatical order,
8 using signs.

9 Q. Okay. You've told us in your statement that they would
10 teach you to speak by sitting beside you and having
11 a mirrored board in front of you and sometimes a balloon
12 would be held to the teacher's mouth. Can you tell us
13 a bit more about that, please?

14 A. I mean, I have to say it was really stupid. I was
15 obviously, young at the time so I don't, you know, you
16 just think it's normal, but, looking back, oralism was
17 based on this idea of teaching you how to speak.

18 Now, the balloon, you would sit at a desk, you'd
19 have a mirror in front of you, the teacher would then --
20 I don't know what the word was, but they would say the
21 word on the balloon and I would feel that vibration and
22 then I would try and mimic that and the balloon was just
23 moved between us. Didn't help to improve my speech at
24 all. I'm profoundly deaf.

25 My vocal chords were damaged. I don't speak well.

1 I'm profoundly deaf, I don't use my voice, so it was not
2 effective and the balloon passing between us, really, it
3 was a way of forcing you to try and speak better but
4 really it didn't work. It didn't work for any of the
5 deaf children in the school.

6 It's -- I just don't understand what the rationale
7 behind it was.

8 Q. And you've also told us in your statement that you would
9 sometimes have to wear headphones in the class, and can
10 you tell us a bit more about that and what its purpose
11 was?

12 A. So at first -- now, remember I said that I was just
13 little so I thought it was a bit like a headphone
14 with -- well, it was headphone with microphone, there
15 were six or seven children in the space and I was quite
16 excited. I thought maybe it was, like, I was a pilot or
17 something. You know, I was quite excited, thinking I
18 was going to be, like, pretending to be a pilot, but
19 then I had this kind of deep sensation. It wasn't
20 a clear -- it was loud, it was deep. It was vibrating
21 and I didn't have a clue what was going on. I just had
22 this kind of vibration in my ears.

23 When I was in the oral class, obviously, I didn't
24 know at the time, but having those headphones on, there
25 was a book in front of us and somebody would be reading

1 from the book and I had no idea that's -- and I was just
2 pointing to words in the book and the teacher -- I would
3 always look away, I'd still be pointing at the book and
4 I would look away and the teacher would say, 'Don't look
5 away', so then I'd just be pointing at the words on the
6 page but not actually understanding what it was I was
7 doing. I couldn't hear anything, I couldn't follow what
8 was being said.

9 Q. And did anyone explain to you what the purpose of this
10 was?

11 A. No, no. They were just sitting with the microphone.
12 I mean, for me, they should have been signing it as
13 well. That way I would have been able to, you know,
14 watch what was being said, but I couldn't. They were
15 just speaking into a microphone and we were to try and
16 follow the words on a page.

17 Q. Now, at paragraph 25 of your statement, you refer to
18 a maths teacher?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And you say that this teacher could hardly sign and she
21 used the oral method to try and teach you. How did that
22 affect your ability to learn maths?

23 A. I -- I'm awful at maths. I mean, even simple
24 explanations -- I mean, they ended up putting me into
25 a much higher stage and I had no idea what was going on.

1 It was very, very frustrating. I should have been able
2 to learn it, but that teacher had no understanding.

3 You know, I mean, you would think she would be
4 looking for the children's behaviour and the minute they
5 gave you maybe a hard sum, be able to see straightaway
6 that you were struggling with that, like nine times
7 seven, I was stuck and it would have been good if they'd
8 been able to kind of give you tips on, like, how to
9 understand how to do multiplication or whatever, but
10 I was just totally stuck with no explanation at all so
11 I had no idea.

12 That teacher, the maths teacher, thought that the
13 oralist method was much better. I mean, I didn't like
14 her. She was a horrible woman. She thought speaking
15 was best, that was superior, but, you know, deaf people
16 that sign are just as good as anybody, so she was just
17 not a nice person.

18 Q. And then you told us that she sent you to
19 Sister PUC . Why did she send you to
20 Sister PUC ?

21 A. I think I didn't understand or couldn't understand
22 something and, because of that, she sent me to
23 Sister PUC . So she was SNR so I had
24 to sit outside in the kind of waiting room. Mrs Kay
25 went in and then I was given a book, it was a blue book,

1 a blue maths book, and there were lots of sums inside
2 this maths book and then, you know, it was like, you
3 know, whatever times 16 and I struggled to do it and
4 I was told to sit and do this and I was told to sit and
5 do it over lunch so I missed my lunch.

6 And I just -- because of that, I absolutely hate
7 maths now. You know, if they had explained it clearly
8 and simply to me, if they'd allowed me to try and
9 understand, but that never happened. You were just
10 forced to do it. I was so upset. I wasn't crying but
11 really upset because I didn't know how to do this and I
12 couldn't do it and I was being punished for that.

13 Q. And what was Sister PUC's reaction?

14 A. Very strict, very tough. There was no softness, no
15 empathy, no nothing. It was very, very hard. Gave me
16 a very hard time.

17 Q. And you've told us that she made you stay in over lunch
18 and you didn't get any lunch when you were doing this?

19 A. Yeah, that's right.

20 Q. Okay. Now I'm going to move to some paragraphs in your
21 statement that I think you wish to correct or clarify.

22 A. Okay.

23 MS INNES: I don't know if you wish to stop just now or ...

24 BSL INTERPRETER: Yeah, so PZB's going to get a --

25 'Adam's' going to get a water and Brenda and I will

1 switch places.

2 LADY SMITH: That's fine.

3 MS INNES: Now, 'Adam', I'm going to look at some paragraphs

4 in your statement where I think you want to clarify some

5 of the -- some of what's said:

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. So on page 7, at paragraph 32.

8 A. Okay. 32, yes? 32, you said, yes?

9 Q. Yes. And we see in your statement that it says:

10 'We had to take our shoes and socks off and be

11 barefoot in the gym hall.'

12 And I think maybe 'gym hall' is wrong and it might

13 be the --

14 A. It's not the gym hall, no, it was the music -- music

15 room. It was in the hall but it was a time of music on

16 the stage.

17 Q. And then on page 8, at paragraph 41 --

18 A. Okay.

19 Q. -- you refer there to a visiting doctor and, in your

20 statement, it refers to him as 'he', but I think the --

21 A. It should be a she.

22 Q. Thank you.

23 And then on the same page, at paragraph 42, is --

24 A. Can I just check with the intermediary something here?

25 Paragraph 42, erm, I mean, the nuns would check your

1 ears, but I don't know whether I said it or not, whether
2 it was the nuns or the Sister or which one, or the
3 nurse.

4 Q. So it could have been a nurse rather than the nuns?

5 A. Yeah. Erm, I can't remember now exactly really.

6 Q. Okay. Thank you.

7 Then going on over the page, at paragraph 44 --

8 A. Could you clarify the question, please?

9 Q. You say there that there was a chapel upstairs in the
10 building and I think you wanted to clarify that that was
11 in the old building?

12 A. Yes, that's right.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 LADY SMITH: Is that the chapel you mentioned going to for
15 confession, 'Adam'?

16 A. Yes. And also for prayers as well. It was every
17 Friday, sometimes Monday and Tuesday for whatever
18 reason, but the nuns would make us go along for prayers
19 as well.

20 MS INNES: And just one more question about things in your
21 statement to be clarified.

22 On the same page, at paragraph 46 --

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. -- you say there that you went on a weekend retreat.

25 DEAF INTERMEDIARY: If you could just explain exactly what

1 that statement is saying there, please, for me? If you
2 could just read it out?

3 MS INNES: So you say there:

4 'The school took us on a weekend retreat somewhere
5 in Greenock when I was about 12 years old. We stayed in
6 a big place with priests and nuns. The staff from
7 St Vincent's stayed there with us. I don't really know
8 what the point of the trip was.'

9 And I think you wanted to clarify that it was a big
10 house that you stayed in?

11 A. Yes, it was a house. Can I just clarify something here?

12 Q. Yes.

13 A. I remember that. At that time there was a group of us
14 that were taken off to this big house in Greenock.
15 I didn't mean that there were nuns and priests there.
16 It was like an empty house. But it was only deaf
17 children, we went along and stayed in this property.
18 And we were taught sex education and it was like, erm,
19 male, women, people getting pregnant and for a man
20 having an erection and the sperm as well coming out,
21 ejaculating, and I got confused about this. I didn't
22 understand this. I didn't really understood what it
23 meant. So, it's like masturbating as well. I found out
24 about that. I didn't know about these things. I didn't
25 know what they meant.

1 And at the time, I think it was definitely nuns that
2 were the teachers. I can't remember exactly. But once
3 you ejaculated then that was it and I thought, 'I don't
4 do that'. I was really concerned. I thought, 'There's
5 something wrong with me. That's never happened to me',
6 because they weren't allowed to say the words like
7 'masturbating' or anything like that or signing it. So
8 it was very confusing for us, so we weren't taught in
9 a very clear way. It was just very basic that we were
10 told.

11 MS INNES: Okay. So were you taught sex education at the
12 school or just on this trip?

13 A. Just this one house in Greenock.

14 LADY SMITH: 'Adam', you think you were about 12 years old
15 at that time, am I right?

16 A. Yeah, there about.

17 LADY SMITH: Was everybody else who was on that trip the
18 same age?

19 A. Yes, they were. There was my class, yeah.
20 12/13-year-olds, yeah.

21 LADY SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

22 MS INNES: Now, you tell us in your statement that you were
23 forced to go to hearing and speech therapy and the
24 treatment wouldn't work because you were deaf and you
25 would be punished?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. What punishment would you be given?

3 A. Which paragraph is it you're referring to?

4 Q. It's up on the same page that you're on, I think page 9,
5 and paragraph 43.

6 LADY SMITH: It's at the top of the page, 'Adam'. Take your
7 time. There's no rush.

8 A. Okay. Thank you.

9 MS INNES: So in that paragraph, you say that you would be
10 punished by the nuns for the treatment not working, and
11 what punishment would you be given?

12 A. Well, I had to like write down lines, like 100 lines.
13 I can remember writing them, 'I must learn to do it in
14 the oral way. I must learn to do it in the oral way'.
15 That's all I can remember really about that. It was --
16 they were forcing me to speak. I was deaf. I was
17 profoundly deaf and I really felt that that was forcing
18 me to do something I didn't want to do.

19 Punishments were, yes, writing the lines, 'I will do
20 this, I will not sign, I will do this', you know, or
21 whatever it was that I had to do at the time.

22 Q. So were the lines that you were writing saying, 'I must
23 learn to do things in the oral way?'

24 A. Yeah. That's what they wanted us to do it in the oral
25 way. That was in the oral room, if you like, as well.

1 Q. Okay, and then I think you also mentioned that sometimes
2 the lines might be, 'I must not sign.'
3 A. Yes, that's right.
4 Q. And how did you feel about being given these lines to
5 write?
6 A. Erm, I didn't really understand things at the time, but
7 I didn't understand about writing lines. I thought
8 what's the punishment for? I didn't even know what the
9 punishment was for, but looking back now, I'm angry now
10 looking back. I should have been able to respond to the
11 Sisters or to the teachers, but I couldn't. I was
12 just -- I just took the punishment, as it were.
13 I didn't want to sort of fight back, or relay back.
14 I didn't know about the world or whatever was in it,
15 I just had to do these lines as was my punishment. And:
16 right, so I must use the oral system? I didn't know,
17 I thought: but I'm allowed to sign, aren't I? Why have
18 I got to say I mustn't sign? It confused me so much.
19 I mean, it was embarrassing. If I had told my mother
20 and father about it, they might actually have gone
21 really crazy about it and did something about it. So
22 all that kind of thing I kept bottled up inside me.
23 LADY SMITH: 'Adam', can you help me to understand how, as
24 a child, it felt physically to have somebody forcing you
25 to speak?

1 A. At that time I wasn't really aware that it was the right
2 or wrong thing to do. I didn't have that sort of
3 understanding of the concept. I mean, to sign -- and
4 that wasn't right, use the oral way, that was right and
5 sometimes they'll say: you can't sign, you must do this,
6 you must do the other one. It's very confusing.
7 I'm not good at using -- lip speaking and stuff like
8 that, I was forced to do it, yes. I was forced.

9 LADY SMITH: If you forced yourself to speak, did it hurt
10 physically?

11 A. Well, emotionally, yes. There were times it came up
12 emotionally. I would wet the bed as well at home and
13 occasionally things would come up, but, yes, made me
14 feel like that.

15 LADY SMITH: That helps me understand.

16 A. It felt like there was a lot of emotions about me, but
17 in the time then I didn't really understand what these
18 emotions were or what these feelings were, but now
19 I know -- and looking back, I would have been furious,
20 but as a child I knew nothing. It was a new world for
21 me, which I knew nothing about.

22 I mean, deaf people have their limits, I suppose, to
23 information because we just can't hear. You know,
24 everyone else can hear things and, you know, about
25 breaks, time to go home, get the bus. But for deaf

1 kids, we didn't have that. We just did everything in
2 complete silence and that's what I'm talking about every
3 day, living every day like that. It was limits to
4 information that we got.

5 LADY SMITH: Thank you. That's very helpful, 'Adam'.

6 MS INNES: Now, going on to page 10 and paragraph 51 of your
7 statement, you talk about --

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. You talk about inspections and you say that you would be
10 given a big speech in advance of the inspection. What
11 would you be told?

12 A. Can you explain a bit more what you mean?

13 Q. So you say that the teachers would give you a big
14 speech, telling you about the inspectors coming to watch
15 you. Can you remember what they said?

16 A. I remember feeling -- I remember a little bit about it.
17 I remember one of the teachers, it was like behaved in
18 a different way, they were more relaxed, you would copy
19 off the board and the blackboard and so on. I didn't
20 know why, but we did, we just copied it. And their
21 behaviour was changed. The teachers were more
22 professional and the children would look at them as if
23 to say: what the heck's going on? The inspector was
24 coming, I don't know why he was coming or what for, but
25 looking back, I think they knew they were inspecting the

1 school.

2 But surely they should have behaved as they did
3 every way. Once the inspectors had been and gone, we're
4 back to how we were beforehand and you just thought:
5 well, well, well, you know, there's the difference. You
6 know, they think we're silly, we're writing things down,
7 there was no explanation. All we did was copy from the
8 blackboard and I felt -- I wish that the inspectors had
9 come back every day to see just what it was like and
10 they would realise what it was like for us, but they
11 just came once a year or something. I don't remember
12 unfortunately.

13 Q. Did the inspectors ever speak to you or any of the
14 children?

15 A. No, no. They were all hearing. Couldn't speak to us,
16 no. Nobody's ever talked to me. When you looked at
17 them you thought: oh, my goodness, you know, they had
18 their, like, clip boards and folders and looked very
19 sort of well-to-do.

20 LADY SMITH: I think I know what the answer to this is going
21 to be, 'Adam', but did the inspectors bring their own
22 interpreters with them?

23 A. No, no.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

25 A. No, no, definitely not. A big fat 'no'.

1 LADY SMITH: I thought it might be.
2 MS INNES: It's been about 40 minutes since you've been
3 giving evidence 'Adam'.
4 LADY SMITH: That's right. Do you want a break just now,
5 'Adam'?
6 A. Yes, please, that would be good.
7 LADY SMITH: Would that help? Let's do that for ten minutes
8 or so. However long you need.
9 (2.52 pm)
10 (A short break)
11 (3.06 pm)
12 LADY SMITH: 'Adam', welcome back. I hope that break
13 helped?
14 A. Yeah, thank you.
15 LADY SMITH: But that doesn't mean if you need another one,
16 that you can't have it.
17 A. I will, thank you, I'll let you know.
18 LADY SMITH: Just let me know.
19 If you're ready, I'll hand over to Ms Innes and
20 she'll carry on with her questions, yes?
21 A. Yes, thank you.
22 LADY SMITH: Ms Innes.
23 MS INNES: Thank you, my Lady.
24 If I can refer, please, to page 10 of your statement
25 and paragraph 53, where you start talking about abuse at

1 St Vincent's.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. So in that paragraph you talk about Sister PUC who

4 you describe as a really tall and really vile woman, who

5 was SNR for a while. And you've already

6 told us about her keeping you in over lunchtime as

7 a punishment because you couldn't do maths and you

8 weren't able to get anything to eat.

9 Do you know if the same sort of thing happened to

10 other pupils at the school?

11 A. It must have, yes, I believe so.

12 Q. And then at the next paragraph, paragraph 54, you say

13 that the staff were really physically forceful with the

14 kids. You say there:

15 'They would always be grabbing kids and dragging

16 them about by the scruff of the neck or the arm. It

17 happened every day. The teachers were sometimes

18 physical ...'

19 A. Yeah, normally every day. If somebody was being naughty

20 or whatever, they would be grabbed, yeah. I thought

21 that was normal, you know, but now I realise it's very

22 much not, but I thought it was normal.

23 Q. And where would they take the children when they grabbed

24 them?

25 A. To the headteacher's room. They would sit in the

1 waiting room so they'd be left to sit in the waiting
2 room. I mean, I don't know, I did -- I didn't see
3 exactly where they were, but yeah.

4 Q. And you've said the teachers were sometimes physical but
5 it was mainly the non-teaching staff that were more
6 physical. Is this the auxiliary staff who you've
7 referred to in your evidence already?

8 A. Yes, that's right, yeah, the auxiliaries, yeah.

9 Q. And you mention a couple of people, a Mrs PWJ and
10 a Mrs PXC ?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. And you say that they would always drag kids around and
13 even spank them?

14 A. That's right.

15 Q. And where on the body would they hit them?

16 A. It would be, if I can stand and show you, it would be
17 like the thigh or the bum.

18 Q. And did this ever happen to you?

19 A. No.

20 Q. You saw it happening to other children, I think you tell
21 us?

22 A. Yep, I did.

23 Q. Now on page 11 of your statement, at paragraph 55 --

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. -- you say there:

1 'Violence and attacks happened every day. I saw
2 children being battered by the nuns and hit about the
3 head and body with a belt.'

4 A. So can I just clarify that? It wasn't the belt, it was
5 like the rubber thing the school had. It was -- sorry,
6 leather, it was like a leather strap, if you like, the
7 thing they used to -- it was like two bits of leather
8 that they used to punish you with, and strap you with.

9 LADY SMITH: We sometimes call that a tawse, which is an old
10 Scottish word. Did you come across that?

11 A. Oh, no, I was never told what it was, I just remember it
12 being -- the other word I think, I don't know, it
13 was the -- I don't know how to spell this word, it
14 was the C belt, the -- it's a Glasgow sign. At that
15 time -- the Strathclyde Regional Council was where we
16 were at that time. Glasgow Corporation would use the
17 corporation belt. That's what it was called in Glasgow,
18 'the corporation belt'.

19 LADY SMITH: This is interesting 'Adam'. At one end of the
20 belt, was it divided either into two or three parts,
21 like a fringe?

22 A. It was two, yes, uh-huh, yeah that's right, yep, that's
23 exactly it.

24 LADY SMITH: Two fingers?

25 A. Yeah, two -- two -- I can't remember if it was two or

1 three actually because the thing was moving so fast, but
2 it was either two or three.

3 LADY SMITH: Don't worry I've got the picture. That all
4 makes sense.

5 MS INNES: And did they hit the children -- well, you say in
6 your statement that they hit the children about the head
7 and body with this?

8 A. So if we were playing in the hall at break time --
9 I can't remember actually if it was lunchtime or break
10 time, but I do remember somehow there was a person who
11 was being cheeky to one of the Sisters and the Sister
12 lost her temper, dragged him away. I don't know what
13 happened. He's taken away. When he came back, he had
14 red marks down his face and down his arms and of course
15 we're saying, 'What happened?', and he was saying,
16 'I was hit. I was hit'. And I wasn't sure exactly what
17 that was. I was really shocked at the thought of being
18 hit. I was a good boy so it didn't happen to me, but
19 I was shocked.

20 Q. And did you see this happen over the whole time that you
21 were at the school or did there come a point that it
22 stopped?

23 A. So when I was young, that happened. The person was
24 older than that happened to. They were a good five or
25 seven years older than me.

1 BSL INTERPRETER: Can we just clarify that question, please.
2 Could you just repeat the question, please?
3 MS INNES: Sorry, so I was asking: did children being hit
4 with this belt happen over the whole time that you were
5 at the school or did there come a point that it stopped?
6 A. It did stop, yes, that's correct, yeah. I didn't see it
7 when I was very young. I do remember that two-strapped
8 belt, 7 or 8, I think probably it stopped when I was
9 about 14 or 15, but I think there was -- I think there
10 was a new law in place that stopped that. I mean, it
11 was a very cruel thing to do.
12 Q. And then you've told us in your statement that you were
13 threatened with the belt one time. You weren't hit but
14 you were threatened with it. How did you feel about
15 that?
16 A. They threatened me because -- it was a teacher, and they
17 thought that I had -- was causing trouble, but I hadn't.
18 I think somebody else had said, 'oh, it's him, he did
19 it', and accused me. But I was taken into the corner,
20 beside the door, and they came right into my face and
21 held the belt and I was crying, you know. I wasn't
22 signing but I was saying, 'I never, I never'. And I was
23 terrified. Absolutely terrified. Really, really
24 frightened. And I just kept saying, 'I'm sorry, I'm
25 sorry, I'm sorry'. I hadn't done anything. As you say,

1 I wasn't actually hit, but the image of that is very
2 much fixed in my mind. It was awful. I think if I had
3 of been hit, it might have been worse, I don't know, but
4 certainly the fear is still very much there in the front
5 of my mind.

6 LADY SMITH: 'Adam', do you remember how old you were on
7 that occasion, roughly?

8 A. Probably somewhere between 7 and 9. I -- I --
9 I remember it happening but I can't quite remember what
10 age I would have been. Probably aged between 7 to 9,
11 somewhere round about there. I was small.

12 LADY SMITH: Still quite a little boy?

13 A. Yes, I was, yeah.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 MS INNES: Now, going on to page 12 and paragraph 59 of your
16 statement --

17 A. Yes, I remember this.

18 Q. -- so you talk there about a member of staff who looked
19 after kids at break time. He wasn't a teacher. And one
20 time, he got really angry at a comment some boy made and
21 he thought you had made the comment even though you
22 hadn't, and you say:

23 'He absolutely flipped his lid and dragged me from
24 the gym hall, where we were, into the girls' changing
25 room. He lifted me up and slammed me against the wall

1 so my feet were dangling. There were metal coat hooks
2 on the wall ...'

3 A. He didn't have me by my throat, he had me by, like my
4 lapels, I guess you would call that, the kind of scruff
5 of the front of my shirt.

6 Q. Okay. So he lifted you up by your clothing?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And you say:

9 'There were metal coat hooks on the wall which
10 I just missed. I could have died if they'd hit me in
11 the head.'

12 A. Yes, uh-huh, yeah.

13 Q. You say:

14 'He held me there and was screaming in my face with
15 bad breath and spitting on me.'

16 A. Yes, that's right.

17 Q. And what effect did this have on you?

18 A. It was awful. Like, I didn't know why I had been
19 targeted for this. I was lifted up, I was put against
20 this wall. The gym had the girls' and the boys' side
21 and of course he'd taken me to the girls' changing room
22 and that's because nobody could see. There was nobody
23 around and he just lifted me up. Honestly, it was
24 awful. You know, what -- what if that happened again?
25 What if he accused me of something again? What would

1 happen next? It was really terrifying and really very
2 traumatic.

3 Q. And did you see him do this to other children too?

4 A. Yes. I mean, I never saw it, but I saw the children
5 getting dragged away and he would take them wherever he
6 would take them.

7 Q. At paragraph 61, on the same page, you say at the
8 beginning of that paragraph that:

9 'Boarders definitely got treated differently than
10 day pupils.'.

11 In what way were they treated differently?

12 A. So obviously I was going home at night and that was
13 fine, but one of my friends, [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED], a very
14 good friend of mine, he was a boarder and he said, 'oh,
15 it was horrendous.' They were beaten all the time.
16 Lots of punishments. He didn't go into too much detail,
17 but he was suspended from school for what, I don't know
18 and then he unfortunately passed away [REDACTED] years ago,
19 I'm not sure of what, but I hear he passed away.

20 Q. Then in the next paragraph in your statement at
21 paragraph 62 --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- you tell us that you would be allowed in the gym hall
24 at break times and there wouldn't usually be teachers
25 around:

1 'There was the boys' changing room next to the gym
2 and there would be a big group of older boys and two
3 girls in there having sex.'

4 And then I think you go on to tell us that you and
5 others of your age would have to stand and watch or keep
6 a look out. Are you able to tell us about that?

7 A. Yeah. So that was the gym hall and it was the boys'
8 changing room. I mean, I didn't know what was going on
9 in there at the time. One of the bigger boys -- there
10 was three boys altogether -- having sex with two young
11 girls. So they were naked in there and when I saw that,
12 I was really shocked, but I didn't understand what sex
13 was. It didn't -- I didn't really know what that
14 concept was, and they were like, 'Never mind, watch for
15 the teachers coming. If the teachers come, you let us
16 know'. So I had to kind of walk backwards and forwards.

17 Looking back, I mean, having unprotected sex, you
18 know, I don't know what was going on in there. The
19 girls -- I don't know if they thought that was normal or
20 if it was fun or -- I don't know what was happening with
21 that. Was it normal? Was it not normal? And I was
22 asked did I want to come in and join and I said,
23 'Absolutely not'. I didn't know what it was and
24 I thought: I'm not getting involved with that. It was
25 awful.

1 Q. Were they ever caught by the teachers?

2 A. No.

3 Q. On page 13 at paragraph 65, you talk about the school

4 bully.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. You say there that he -- this boy was the school bully

7 and the leader of the pack of bullies and he would tell

8 you to give him your tuck shop money or he would batter

9 you. And you say:

10 'I gave him a lot of money this way and it meant

11 I never got to get anything from the tuck shop.'

12 And you go on to say that some personal items that

13 your parents had bought you were taken from you by this

14 boy?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. You say that you asked him for the items back but he

17 said he'd knock you out and you didn't challenge it?

18 A. Yeah. That's correct, yeah.

19 Q. And what effect did this have on you?

20 A. Back then or now?

21 Q. Both, so at the time?

22 A. I mean, I still am not his friend. I'm very careful

23 with my boundaries. I wouldn't answer back. I wouldn't

24 talk, even now -- now I don't want to have those

25 conversations. Back then, he was, you know, the leader

1 of the gang, the bully, the lead bully. He was
2 a horrible person. I -- you know, back then we're
3 talking about 10p, 20p, that you were given for your
4 tuck shop, but it had to be given to him every day, so
5 I just had to make sure to keep him happy so that he
6 didn't come for me.

7 But I guess my brain -- I guess I was really quite
8 vulnerable. I didn't have any confidence and it really
9 affected me. I mean, even now I don't have much
10 confidence. If something happens now, whatever the
11 situation is, very quickly, very easily I become very
12 anxious, very unsure. I have to walk away. I can't be
13 in those types of environments.

14 I mean, that doesn't happen to me every day, but if
15 something occurs, I'm extremely sensitive to things like
16 that and I can't be around those types of environments.

17 LADY SMITH: 'Adam', do you know whether this chief bully
18 took money off other children as well?

19 A. Yeah. It happened to others. Not all the children, but
20 some of the children. So he was the kind of gang leader
21 with maybe two or three of the other boys and they would
22 kind of all go about kind of demanding the money from
23 certain children. It wasn't just me, there was others
24 as well.

25 LADY SMITH: So this was like demanding protection money,

1 was it?

2 A. Yeah, I mean, I certainly didn't want to be punched.

3 I'm not a fighter. It's not in my nature to be

4 confrontational at all and I certainly wouldn't want to

5 enter into a fight with anybody. I mean, I'm terrified

6 of even the thought of fighting with somebody. So,

7 yeah, I didn't want to think what would happen.

8 MS INNES: Did you feel able to tell your parents what was

9 going on with the bully?

10 A. I should have said. I mean, I guess I wasn't --

11 I didn't know if I told my parents it might make it

12 worse, so I just kept it to myself.

13 Looking back, I should have said something, I should

14 of, but I didn't. Too late now. But, you know, it's

15 that -- it's the fear, you know, and I would have

16 dreams -- I would wet the bed, because of this. My

17 parents didn't know what was going on obviously.

18 I should have said to my mum, but I didn't. I just --

19 I guess I thought that might be just what happens when

20 you're at school.

21 Q. And was there anybody at school you could tell?

22 A. Sorry, could you clarify what you mean by that?

23 Q. Was there anybody at the school that you could tell

24 about the bullying?

25 A. Not in St Vincent's, no. People outwith the school,

1 yes, I would say to them, but not within St Vincent's.

2 I mean, I maybe mentioned it to one or two -- one or

3 two of my pals I might have -- school pals. I would

4 never have said to the teachers.

5 LADY SMITH: What about the nuns, would you have told them?

6 A. Oh, no. No, no. No.

7 MS INNES: Why not?

8 A. I'm getting a wee bit lost. I'm not quite

9 understanding, sorry.

10 DEAF INTERMEDIARY: So, sorry, if we could just go back to

11 the question again and just ask that with a bit more

12 clarity, please.

13 MS INNES: So we are talking about the school bully and what

14 was going on and whether you felt able to talk to anyone

15 about that.

16 A. Right, okay, well, just making sure I got the question

17 right. If I'd said -- yeah, so what you're meaning is

18 why would I not have told the nuns about the school

19 bully -- is that what you're asking?

20 Q. About the school bully.

21 A. Yeah, because I was too frightened. Far too frightened

22 to say anything. I just held -- I had to hold

23 everything inside. I was far too frightened.

24 Q. Okay. Now, going on to page 15 of your statement and

25 paragraph 77, you talk about -- you talk there about the

1 impact of your time at St Vincent's and you say that the
2 education was very poor. You were never taught BSL and
3 only picked it up by watching other kids, and you say:

4 'I've always struggled with using it because I never
5 learned to use it properly with the proper structures.
6 Even now, I get most things but I don't always pick up
7 on anything.'

8 What impact did that --

9 A. Yeah, so it depends on -- yeah, it depends on whether
10 I'm understanding the content or -- et cetera, so, like,
11 you know, when I was in school, yes, the education was
12 very, very poor at my time, very, very poor.

13 Q. What impact would you say that the poor education has
14 had on your life?

15 A. I've faced many, many barriers. I can't write English.
16 If I go into the shop and I want to buy something, I try
17 and write it down and the shopkeeper tries to read it
18 and doesn't understand what I'm asking for. It makes me
19 feel awful. I feel -- I've got no confidence.

20 English isn't my first language. I try my best.
21 I feel really confident writing it and then I take it in
22 and they don't understand and I just think, 'Och, forget
23 it', and I'll leave and that happens a lot. And that's
24 a really -- a big effect on my daily life, you know.
25 For example, the news -- BBC News subtitles, can't read

1 them. I'm trying to understand what's happening in the
2 news, current affairs, you know the One O'Clock News,
3 for example, there's an interpreter coming on for the
4 One O'Clock News for half an hour, but that's it. So if
5 there's any other news comes on and I need to access
6 that via subtitles or captions, I can't do that. And
7 really I blame the school for that, because they should
8 have taught us English. We should have had a good
9 education and we didn't. We got taught nothing. All we
10 got given was, they wrote something on the board and we
11 were to copy it and that's all we got.

12 I mean, I have some very basic English but certainly
13 not enough, certainly not enough to have a good standard
14 of life.

15 Q. And then if we move on to page 17 and paragraph 85 --

16 A. Yeah, unfortunately.

17 Q. -- you say there that a lot of children from
18 St Vincent's went on to take their own lives because of
19 the abuse they suffered. Are you able to tell us a bit
20 more about that?

21 A. I remember one person, [REDACTED], so he was in
22 school. He was bullied a lot. I saw him being bullied
23 a lot and I should have done something about it, but
24 I didn't. When the bully left, I would go over and be,
25 like, 'Oh, just forget about it, you're fine, fine, come

1 on with us'. [REDACTED]

2 [REDACTED] everybody would kind of mock him for
3 that and his mental health was really poor because of
4 that.

5 And I did see him occasionally and I would always
6 try and kind of have a conversation with him, but by
7 that point his mental health was really poor and he
8 decided to take his own life.

9 Q. Did -- do you know if the staff knew that this bullying
10 was going on?

11 A. They were -- they were -- it was as if they were
12 sleeping, they just didn't -- didn't look -- didn't --
13 I don't know if anything was ever reported. I don't
14 know if it was or not, but it was almost like they were
15 just sleeping, like they hadn't taken anything in. As
16 if they were sleeping.

17 I know my friend that took his own life, that was
18 after school. That was about [REDACTED] years after school that
19 he took his own life, just to clarify that.

20 Q. At paragraph 86 of your statement -- sorry --

21 BSL INTERPRETER: We're just going to do a swap.

22 MS INNES: -- you say there that you went to counselling for
23 a while but you didn't find it helpful:

24 'It was a hearing counsellor with an interpreter
25 there. I felt that they were really nosey and asked me

1 just a lot of questions but I didn't really get anything
2 back. I didn't see the point and I wouldn't go back.'

3 A. Yes, they were asking lots and lots of questions.

4 Q. Are there particular difficulties for deaf people in
5 accessing counselling?

6 A. I don't know myself. I only ever went to that thing
7 [REDACTED]. I don't know about anything else.

8 Q. Okay, and you would always have to have an interpreter
9 with you as well as the counsellor. The counsellor
10 couldn't sign?

11 A. Yes, that's right.

12 Q. In the next paragraph, you talk about records at
13 St Vincent's, so paragraph 87.

14 A. Yeah, okay, I've got that.

15 Q. You say there:

16 'The deaf staff who had worked at St Vincent's told
17 me that when the school was closing, the headteacher
18 told the staff to shred all the documents and photos at
19 St Vincent's, which they had done. They should have
20 been given to people.'

21 A. Yeah, that's right.

22 Q. And is this more recently that you've been told this?

23 A. Not that recently. When it was the time for the school
24 actually closing, then moving to another school, some of
25 the staff, they were new, deaf staff as well, they

1 thought: well, what are we shredding? Why are we doing
2 this? And they -- talking about photographs. Some of
3 them actually kept the photographs and sort of hid them
4 among their person so that not everything was shredded.

5 I had something given to me. Very rarely do I see
6 anything of me and my peers. It was of value, you know,
7 and at the time the DHS, the Deaf History Society in
8 Scotland, we should have given it to them or to the
9 libraries in Scotland that have history sections, we
10 should have given it to them. Why -- why have they
11 destroyed all the paperwork? Why did they do that? So
12 where's the evidence? It's gone.

13 All the evidence is gone. I got my information and
14 it was lovely to see that, but not now, it's all gone.
15 It's all gone. Completely disappeared. And that's why
16 I think, well, why? Why did they do that? I mean,
17 I only met one of the new teachers once. I'd left, but
18 to think about -- they had no idea about deaf pupils'
19 feelings. They just shredded everything.

20 Q. And did you say that you got your own information or
21 not?

22 A. I was given photographs. The staff gave me the
23 photographs. It wasn't mine, [REDACTED] was at that
24 school. It was actually his and I gave it to [REDACTED]
25 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] passed away now.

1 Q. Now, if we go on over the page, to page 18, and
2 paragraph 91 --
3 A. 91? I looked at the wrong bit. Okay.
4 Q. You say there in the first sentence:
5 'The staff from St Vincent's should be in prison for
6 the abuse of children.'
7 A. Yes, yes.
8 Q. And why do you think that?
9 A. Because they treated us badly and they're, like, getting
10 away with it. It's like they think: oh deaf children,
11 forget all about it, they'll just move on with their
12 lives and that's why the time passed -- I just want to
13 go off the point a little bit here -- the Inquiry here,
14 if there was an inquiry at that time, I would have come,
15 I would have come, but I didn't know anything about
16 inquiries and things, but, yes, they should have been
17 put into prison for their punishment. They treated us
18 very badly.
19 Q. And then in the next paragraph, you go on to say how you
20 found out about the Inquiry and came forward and you,
21 of course, were a day pupil and you say there that you
22 feel that there needs to be legislation covering people
23 like you, as well as people who were in residential
24 care?
25 A. That's right. Yes, that's right.

1 MS INNES: Okay. I've come to the end of my questions for
2 you, 'Adam'.
3 LADY SMITH: 'Adam', I don't have any more questions for you
4 either. But I do want to thank you again for coming
5 here this afternoon. It's been enormously helpful to me
6 to hear from you in person and to see how you
7 communicate so forcefully what you're trying to explain
8 to me. It's been really good for me to see that as
9 well.
10 I know you were a day pupil, but your evidence has
11 been really good at explaining to me what the whole
12 regime in the place was like during that long period
13 that you were a pupil at St Vincent's. So thank you so
14 much for that.
15 I suspect you're now pretty weary and I'm going to
16 be able to let you go. At least it's Friday, so you've
17 got the weekend ahead.
18 Now, don't worry, we'll get the screens right across
19 the room before you leave. If you just wait a moment or
20 two, we'll get that done now and then you can take your
21 time going out.
22 A. Thank you.
23 LADY SMITH: There you are, whenever you're ready.
24 A. Thank you.
25 (The witness withdrew)

1 LADY SMITH: Just let me finish off with some more names
2 I want to mention, names we have used this afternoon and
3 they're of people whose identities are protected by my
4 General Restriction Order and that's a Mrs PWJ ,
5 a Sister PUC , a Mrs PXC , a boy called ,
6 a boy called and also at one point the
7 witness's own first name PZB was used. Now, none of
8 these identifications are to be referred to outside this
9 room as being of people who were referred to in our
10 evidence.

11 That completes the evidence for this week and,
12 Ms Innes, I invite you to give me an update on where we
13 are going after this.

14 MS INNES: So, hearings will recommence on 23 September for
15 a final block of hearings in this case study. The focus
16 of those hearings will be primarily in relation to
17 Donaldson's School for the Deaf in Edinburgh, but there
18 will be some other evidence from other sources.

19 LADY SMITH: Yes. Thank you very much.

20 Well, thank you all. I hope you all have a good
21 weekend and I look forward to seeing people again on
22 23 September. Thank you.

23 (3.45 pm)

24 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am on
25 Tuesday, 23 September 2025)

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