

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Sister Eileen GLANCY

Support person present: No.

Others present: Lesley Allen, Kennedys, Solicitor for the Order

1. My name is Eileen Glancy. I am also known as Sister Eileen. I have not been known by any other name. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1951. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I entered the community of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul in September 1968 at Mill Hill, London. On entering, I undertook a period of study known as 'initial formation', which is training in spirituality, ministries, theology and different aspects of life in the community. That training is mostly carried out internally with other Sisters, but also at college in Strawberry Hill, Middlesex.
3. I remained at Mill Hill for the first two years of my initial formation and then moved to a hostel at Blandford Street in central London. There, I combined my continued study with service, during what is called my 'juniorate' period. The hostel was for young women who had come to London for work or to study and were having difficulty finding somewhere to live. While there, I worked alongside and shadowed another Sister.
4. After that, in August 1971, I moved to St Vincent's School for the Deaf and Blind at Tollcross in Glasgow and remained there until June 1973. I had an interest in catering and cooking and the Sister who had been in the kitchen at Tollcross had moved back to Ireland, so there was a post to be filled. In those days, a Sister was more or less told where they were going for their initial placement, whereas nowadays there is much more joint discussion.

St Vincent's School for the Deaf and Blind, Tollcross, Glasgow

5. St Vincent's was a big old building in the Tollcross area of Glasgow. It was bright and it had the new school built on the side by the time I started there in August 1971.
6. I had seen St Vincent's before I entered the Community when I attended an initial weekend for people who were thinking of entering the community. The purpose of that weekend was an introduction to the community and to provide an opportunity to meet with others who were interested in joining. There were a few talks and discussions that were held within the old building of St Vincent's.
7. There must have been about ten Sisters in the community at St Vincent's and as happens in any other house, when I arrived I was welcomed by the whole community who resided there. I was shown around and I was given the timetable. The other Sisters who resided there all had various roles, including teaching and residential work, or they might be retired or have their ministry outside the school. They were not all involved in the school.

My time at St Vincent's

8. My role was as a cook in the kitchen within the older part of St Vincent's, although I also had some study commitments. I would spend all morning in the kitchen until after dinner, when I had time to do some study in the early afternoon. Then I would go back down to the kitchen to prepare the evening meal.
9. The new block of St Vincent's was the main school and I was only in there once or twice, taking a message or some post over to the office. I never saw any of the teaching.
10. There were about four of us in the kitchen and the others were all lay staff, one of whom was in overall charge. There was Anne and Rose, but I can't remember the

name of the third person. Anne trained me and managed my tasks day to day, and Rose was an experienced cook.

11. The lady in charge of the kitchen was effectively my line manager with regard to cooking, but for general life it was the Sister Superior, Sister Monica Connolly. She would call into the kitchen every day to check all was well, but she also had a responsibility for overseeing my ongoing formation. Perhaps every fortnight I would meet with her and discuss my studies, the rest of the time I would be doing work on my own.
12. The kitchen was on one side of a corridor within the old building, immediately across from the main dining room, which was for the older children. The smaller children had their meals in their own sitting and dining room areas.
13. Everyone, including the Sisters, the staff and the children, ate the same meals. Food was taken into the main dining room by the kitchen staff on a trolley and put on a dumb waiter to go upstairs to the Sisters' dining room. The care staff for the younger children would come to the kitchen and take the younger children's meals to their dining rooms on trolleys.
14. I would see the children coming in and out of the main dining room, but I never stayed in the dining room with them. The care staff served their dinners and supervised them and the staff were also responsible for washing the plates and the cutlery afterwards. I can't remember where the washing up area was, but it wasn't in the main kitchen and I don't know if the children were expected to assist with the washing up.
15. The children were not allowed into the kitchen and never did any chores in there. The kitchen staff, including me, were responsible for washing the pots and pans.
16. There was no cooking involved with breakfast, only perhaps porridge, because the rest was cereal and toast. The main focus of the morning work in the kitchen was to prepare the dinner, which was the main meal and was served in the middle of the day, around 12:30pm.

17. The food that was prepared was normal meals. The main meal in the middle of the day might be steak pie, mince or fish and that sort of thing. The evening meal might be scrambled eggs, or bacon, or baked potatoes and beans and that kind of thing. Something lighter than what was served for the main meal.
18. In my last few months at St Vincent's, before I left to go to London, I used to go along to sit with a group of blind boys in the evenings, for about an hour or so. I think I had probably volunteered to do so, but I don't really remember. I had been asked if I would go on and study teaching and I knew I would be leaving in the summer and I wanted some experience with the children before doing so.
19. They were older boys and they had their own sitting room in the old part of the house. I maybe did that about three evenings a week, but I wasn't responsible for them in any way. It was a very informal arrangement and Sister Cecilia Coyle, who was responsible for them, was always present, as was a lay member of staff. I do not recall who that was.
20. It was not a big group of boys, possibly six or eight, and they were older, in their teens. I had actually forgotten all about my involvement with those boys because it was such an informal arrangement. There had been no training involved because I was not fulfilling a specific role, I was just being friendly, sitting and chatting with them.
21. Other than my work in the kitchen, my studies and my involvement with the group of blind boys, I did not have any other role at St Vincent's, either formally or informally. I never covered the duties of any other Sister or member of the staff there.

Structure and recruitment of staff

22. The staff at St Vincent's comprised of both Sisters and lay staff. Sister Monica Connolly was the Sister Superior and so she was responsible for the community overall. SNR [REDACTED], Sister LXH [REDACTED], was responsible for [REDACTED]

- to do with the children, including their education. Sister [LXH] changed her name at some stage. She had been Sister [LXH], until she took her own name of [LXH].
23. Sister Monica was very jovial and relaxed. She was really lovely with everybody. Sister [LXH] was a quieter, more reserved person, but she was very caring.
24. Each group of children had a Sister who was responsible for their care. That Sister also had a number of lay staff, but I don't know how many staff she would have had. Sister Monica used to go in and out of each group to make sure everything was okay, but I think that ultimate responsibility for the children would be [SNR].
25. Amongst the other Sisters, I recall Sister Kay, who was in charge of the care of one group of children. She was only there for my first year at St Vincent's, after which she was replaced by Sister Kathleen Hogg. Sister [KTA], who started at St Vincent's at roughly the same time as me, was in charge of another group.
26. Sister Barbara was one of the teachers and Sister [PUC] taught the blind children. Sister Ailish taught children who were both deaf and blind. She went away for a while to do some training and was at St Vincent's for several years after she returned. However, by the time she did return from that training, I had left.
27. The children were divided into groups of boys and groups of girls. There was a group of smaller boys, another of older boys, a group of smaller girls and another of older girls. I think the groups of younger boys and girls comprised both deaf and blind children, but I'm not certain. When they were older, both the boys and the girls were separated into groups of deaf children and groups of blind children. There were much fewer blind children than there were deaf, though.
28. I was aware that a few volunteers would come in of an evening to help with the groups of children, although I never had anything to do with them. They would have been members of the local community who knew of the school, or who would perhaps have been young people from one of the high schools in the area. I presume they would have played with the children and helped with homework and that sort of thing.

29. The volunteers would not have assisted with any of the school trips, they would only have been involved with St Vincent's in the evenings. The volunteers who I was aware of were all young and were possibly at school themselves and so wouldn't have been free to go on school trips with St Vincent's.
30. I do not know whether any of the volunteers would have previously been known to the Sisters.

Training

31. I was not involved in the training or the personal development of staff or others.

Supervision/appraisal/evaluation

32. I was not involved in the supervision or appraisal of other staff.
33. I presume the volunteers that came into St Vincent's in the evening would be supervised by a Sister or a member of the permanent staff, but I have no knowledge of that.

Policy

34. I did not have any training or involvement in policy in relation to the care of children. At the time, I was not aware of there being such policies.

Children

35. My understanding was that children came to be placed at St Vincent's because of their disability. Children who were deaf or blind or both and who came from the west of Scotland. They would tend to be at St Vincent's long-term, for the duration of their education and I presume they would leave when their schooling ended.

36. Looking back, I would have thought there would have been fourteen to sixteen younger children at St Vincent's. The dining room was busy, so there were perhaps sixty or so older children, although that was just an impression. I do not know what the ratio of children to adults would have been.
37. The children slept on the first floor of the old building. I have very little memory of the sleeping accommodation, but I think they slept in dormitories. I presume the washing and bathing facilities were also on the first floor, beside the dormitories. The Sisters had their own accommodation, including washing and bathing facilities.
38. My memory is that all the children went home at weekends. Perhaps a few remained over the weekend for some reason or other, but my recollection is that there was an exodus on a Friday afternoon. There were certainly no children at the school over any holiday period.
39. Leisure time for the children in the evenings was spent relaxing in their own sitting rooms, watching the television. I presume on the light nights they would go out to the fields and play football.
40. I was not aware of there being any organised trips during the week.
41. The children were only expected to go to Mass if there happened to be a special feast day during the week. That would happen perhaps four or five times a year and everybody was obliged to go. The teachers and all the staff would be there as well, looking after the children.
42. One of the Sisters was a nurse. I think her name was Elizabeth, although I'm not sure of that. The children would go to her if they needed to, but I don't know what system was in place with regard to healthcare. I am not aware whether any children were given medication.
43. I was never around the children's accommodation to know whether the children had to do any chores.

- 44. I have no idea how siblings were dealt with and I have no idea what contact children may have had with their families during the week.
- 45. I have no idea whether any professionals, for example social workers, psychologists or psychiatrists, visited the children.

Living arrangements

- 46. I slept in my own room on the first floor, which to my recollection opened off a corridor to the rear of the building, in an area where certain other Sisters also had their quarters. I had no responsibilities for the children and accordingly I had no need for a bedroom located close to them.
- 47. Other housekeeping staff did not generally live in, although some of the childcare staff did. Housekeeping staff would generally leave for home when their daily duties were completed.
- 48. The Sisters with childcare responsibilities had bedrooms close to where the children slept and they were responsible for the children overnight. There may have been lay staff overnight as well, I don't know.
- 49. I did have a degree of daily contact with those Sisters at St Vincent's who had responsibility for childcare, although not in the course of their duties. Along with the other Sisters, I attended Mass in the morning and in the evening and I attended evening prayer with the other Sisters. I would also meet with those Sisters with childcare responsibilities for their mid-morning break, while the children were in class. They would come for that break in the Sisters dining room and we chatted generally, as you do when you gather for coffee, but I can't remember discussing the children or their care.
- 50. I don't know where the lay staff went for breaks, I suppose it would depend what their roles were. The teachers would have had a staff room in the school, but I don't recall

where the childcare staff went for their breaks. They certainly didn't eat with the Sisters, we had our own dining room.

51. I would spend my time when I wasn't working reading and studying in my quarters. Weekends were much quieter however and we would have time to ourselves. We would go out shopping, go for walks and just relax generally. We were one community and you became friends with the people that you lived with and there might be a few of us together, going into town.
52. I had no concerns whatsoever about the attitudes of the other Sisters towards the children or about the care of the children. All the Sisters who were involved at St Vincent's were obviously very happy there and enjoyed their ministries. There was a general atmosphere of happiness and they were always pleased to see the children coming back after the weekend or after holidays.

Discipline and punishment

53. I do not know what the position was in relation to discipline and punishment. I did not, at any point, see any child being disciplined or punished.
54. St Vincent's was an oral school, although I suppose I did see children signing together in the corridor occasionally. I did not see any child being disciplined for signing.
55. I do not remember whether there was a policy regarding discipline or punishment and I do not recall if I was told how to deal with any child I saw misbehaving.

Restraint

56. I was not aware of restraint being used and I was not aware of any policies in relation to restraint.

Concerns about St Vincent's

- 57. At the time I was there, St Vincent's was not, to my knowledge, ever the subject of concern because of the way in which children were treated.
- 58. I was not aware of any complaints being received from parents about the care of children while I was there.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

- 59. I was not responsible for the children at all, so I have no idea whether there was a complaints or reporting process in place.
- 60. I suppose a child could have spoken to anybody, including myself, if they had a concern, but I have no knowledge of whether that happened.

Abuse

- 61. I am not aware whether St Vincent's had a definition of 'abuse' that it applied in relation to the treatment of children.
- 62. I did not see any behaviour that I considered to be abuse of any kind taking place at St Vincent's.
- 63. I am aware that the Inquiry has heard evidence to the effect that the Sister in charge of the kitchen made children touch hot crockery and cutlery and slapped them if they did not do so. I am not at all aware what this is referring to. The kitchen was out of bounds to the children and the children did not come into the kitchen. Perhaps this is a reference to where children may have done washing up, but I do not know.
- 64. No child ever reported being abused or harmed in any way to me during my time at St Vincent's.

Child protection arrangements

65. I was not involved with the children and I do not know how staff were given guidance and instruction on how children in the care of St Vincent's should be treated, cared for and protected against abuse, ill-treatment or inappropriate behaviour towards them.

External monitoring

66. I was not aware of inspectors or other officials visiting St Vincent's during my time there.

Record keeping

67. I have no knowledge of record keeping practices during my time at St Vincent's. I do not know whether children had their own files or what records may have been kept about them.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

68. I was not involved in any investigation into allegations of abuse during my time at St Vincent's.

Police investigations/criminal proceedings

69. I have been provided with a copy of a letter addressed to Sister Joan and signed by myself on 2 February 2007 (Nuix reference PSS-000034533). This letter was in response to a request from the police, who had contacted the Order during the course of their investigations into allegations of abuse against Colin MacDonald to establish whether any Sisters could remember him.
70. I confirmed in the letter that I had worked at St Vincent's between 1971 and 1973, firstly as a cook and then caring for a group of blind boys, but that I had no recollection of this man. I also stated in the letter that I had no memory of groups of children going on camping or skiing holidays to the north of Scotland.

Convicted abusers

71. I believe Colin MacDonald was convicted in 2008, but I had no further involvement with the investigation and I did not subsequently provide a statement or give evidence at the trial.

Other staff etc. working at St Vincent's at the same time

Sister ^{KTA} [REDACTED]

72. There was a Sister ^{KTA} [REDACTED] who came to St Vincent's around the same time as me to work in childcare, but years before there had been a Sister [REDACTED] who was a teacher. She had left a long time before I arrived.
73. The Sister ^{KTA} [REDACTED] who came about the same time as me was young, although older than me. She was a lovely person, who had a lot of experience with children and was very good with the children.
74. I only saw her with children in the passing, going up and down the corridor.

Sister ^{PBF} [REDACTED]

75. Sister ^{PBF} [REDACTED] was an older person who had something to do with the older girls. She was a lovely companion, but I never saw her with the children.

Sister LXH / Sister LXH / Sister LXH

76. During my time at St Vincent's, there was only one Sister LXH and she was SNR SNR and had changed her name to Sister LXH. She was possibly in her forties and she was at St Vincent's for all of the twenty-two months I was there.
77. She was a lovely person. A reserved character and quite quiet. I only really saw her in the community, I did not see her with the children.

Mr KXZ

78. I do not remember a Mr KXZ

Margaret Walker

79. Margaret Walker was a lay member of staff, who worked with the older deaf boys. I recall she did a lot of sewing, but I think she may have been involved in childcare as well. She lived in, but I don't know where she slept. The lay staff had different quarters to the Sisters.

Sister Monica

80. Sister Monica Connolly was the Superior of the community and she was lovely. She was a very jovial, caring person. She was on the residential side, but she was only involved with the children in the passing. I occasionally saw her chatting with children in the corridor and she was always very jovial.

LXF

81. I don't recall anyone by the name of LXF. I don't know the name at all.

Mr LXG

82. I do not recall a Mr LXG.

Sister Margaret

83. I don't recall a Sister Margaret at St Vincent's during my time there. There was a very old Sister who was long retired and had nothing to do with the children called Margaret Brannigan, but I don't recall a Margaret who was working age during my time there.

Mrs LXM

84. I do not recall a Mrs LXM.

Mr KXX

85. I do not recall a Mr KXX.

Mr LXJ

86. Mr LXJ lived at the top of the drive. I think he was the caretaker and responsible for overall maintenance. I only saw him when he was repairing things, I did not see him with children.

LXL

87. I do not recall an LXL

Mr KQE

88. I do not recall a Mr KQE

Colin MacDonald

89. As stated, I do not recall a Colin MacDonald.

Mrs PWJ

90. I do not recall a Mrs PWJ

Mrs PXC

91. I do not recall a Mrs PXC

Leaving St Vincent's

92. I left St Vincent's at the end of June 1973 after I had indicated a desire for teaching and had been earmarked to do so. There was no particular reason for my desire to move from catering into teaching. I suppose as I was getting older, I was looking at different ministries and a lot of Sisters were involved in teaching, childcare and social work.

93. As somebody who was still in formation, the Sister Superior would have reported on my progress to the Provincial and, as I had been mostly working in the kitchen, I went down to Langdale House in London for one year to give me experience working with children. Langdale was a residential establishment for children who were in need of care, albeit they did not have special needs.
94. I do not know who replaced me in the kitchen at St Vincent's, I don't even know if I was replaced by another Sister or a lay member of staff.
95. After my initial training as a Sister, I spent four years between 1974 and 1978 at St Mary's University, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham undertaking a Certificate in Education and B. Ed. Course. In 1978, I began teaching in St John's School for Hearing Impaired Children and remained there until 1987, having completed the course for hearing impaired teaching during that time.
96. I then joined the leadership team of the Daughters of Charity at Mill Hill, London, spending the next nine years as a Provincial Councillor, three of those years also as Seminary Directress and three as Assistant Provincial.
97. Having completed my term of office on the leadership team and after going to the United States to study pastoral theology, I went to St James's Parish, Paisley to be the Pastoral Director of the Parish.
98. In 2000, I returned to London to establish a new project named the Vincentian Millennium Partnership, which brought together under one umbrella charity, several branches of the Vincentian 'Family' for spirituality and justice issues relating to people in poverty.
99. I returned to Scotland in 2002 and worked as pastoral assistant in St Mark's Parish, Shettleston, a parish run by Vincentian Priests. In 2006, I became Provincial Bursar at Mill Hill, London and remained in that position for ten years. In 2016, I moved from Mill Hill to Central London where I am the named Safeguarding Representative for the Daughters of Charity.

100. On my return to London, I worked in the field of Modern Day Slavery through volunteering in a Safe House for trafficked women and being involved with national and international groups working to relieve the suffering of trafficked people. As a trustee, I spent a few hours each week in 'The Passage' which provides a resource centre, outreach services, hostel accommodation and semi-independent living accommodation for homeless people in Central London. Additionally, as a local superior of the Daughters of Charity, I was responsible for the administration of a house for Sisters attached to The Passage Resource Centre. In 2024 I moved from Central London back to the Provincial House in Mill Hill, North London where I am now responsible for the running of this Centre, whilst remaining in the role of Safeguarding Representative for the Daughters of Charity in the UK.

Helping the Inquiry

101. I have been asked why I did not make clear in my oral evidence to the Inquiry that I had spent time at St Vincent's. When I gave evidence at the Inquiry, I did so in my role as Safeguarding Representative for the Daughters of Charity, with the understanding that the Inquiry was aware of the fact that I had spent just under two years at St. Vincent's in the early 1970s. On that basis, I presumed that if the Inquiry wished to ask specific questions regarding my role and/or my time at St Vincent's, it would do so. I thus responded honestly and sincerely to all questions put to me, and after giving evidence, presumed that the Inquiry had not wished to ask specific questions regarding my time there, but rather questioned me about St Vincent's in my role as Safeguarding Representative.
102. I am now aware there have been a number of allegations of abuse from former residents of St Vincent's. I was absolutely not aware of any abusive behaviour during my time there because of my limited contact with the children.

103. It saddens me very much to think that any child had been abused in St Vincent's because the children always appeared to be happy. I was shocked and saddened to hear that children had been abused.
104. These days, there are so many safeguarding policies in place and there is training for any staff involved with children that I would hope there would be far less abuse now. Sadly, however, in our world abuse is still going on.

Other Information

105. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed.....
Signed by: [Redacted Signature]
Dated..... 06 October 2025