

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PCR

Support person present: Supporter and BSL interpreter present

1. My name is PCR. My date of birth is 1966. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life at home

2. I was born in and lived there with my family. There was my mum, my dad, and my older brother and sister, and. was about years older than me and was about years older than me. They had been born in Scotland.
3. My dad had got a job in and so the family had moved there, which was where I was born. We moved back to Scotland when I was about three or four years old. We lived in.
4. I was the only deaf person in my family. My parents didn't sign because they were hearing and they didn't understand what it was like for a deaf person. They weren't perfect. They learned to sign later, when I was older.
5. My parents sent me to Donaldson's School for Deaf Children at Henderson Row, Edinburgh when I was four years old. This was the nursery section of the school. I attended as a day pupil while I lived with my family. I later attended the main school at West Coates when I was eight years old.

Donaldson's School for Deaf Children, Henderson Row

6. I went to Donaldson's as a day pupil from the age of four to eight. I learned BSL while I was there. All of the teachers, nurse and children used sign language there. I didn't understand sign language at first because my family didn't use it, so I would just pretend, but then I started to pick it up.
7. I loved my time at Henderson Row. I remember Santa Clause coming to the school at Christmas and other happy memories.

Donaldsons School for Deaf Children, West Coates

8. I was eight years old when I started at Donaldson's School as a day pupil. It was a school for deaf boys and girls, aged from eight to sixteen. There were about a hundred children in the school.
9. Donaldson's had a big, main building with a big, wooden double door. When you went in, you could go to the right side of the building or to the left side of the building. There was a big clock on the right-hand side. There were big playing fields outside of the school.
10. Two residential staff members had bedrooms on the first floor of the building. One was called Mr **KNJ** who had a room on the right hand side of the building, as you were looking at the building, and Mr **PGJ** had a bedroom on the left side. There was a wall down the middle of the landing, so you couldn't see from one side of the building to the other.

Staff

11. Mr RJE was SNR Mrs Clegg was my English teacher and Mrs Purvis was the science teacher. A man called David Mchaffey or something like that, was the maths teacher. There was a teacher called Mr PZC who taught art and swimming. Miss PXF and Mr PDC taught English.
12. Mr PGJ and Mr KNJ were responsible for looking after the residential kids and did the sleepovers. I didn't see them at night because I was a day pupil but I would see them at break and lunchtimes because they would be there to watch over the boys and to break up fights and things. They would also watch over us when we were swimming.
13. All of the staff and teachers at Donaldson's were hearing, except for Mr KNJ, who was deaf.

Routine at Donaldson's School

14. I got picked up in the morning in a van to be taken to school. There were two other boys from Donaldson's who got picked up as well. They were called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. There were other disabled kids who went to a different school who also got picked up and dropped off in the van.
15. There was bullying and fighting amongst the boys in the van in the morning. Boys would be cheeky to each other. They would sometimes punch each other in the face and hit each other. It happened to me. It just went on all the time and it wasn't funny. There was the driver and a lovely woman in the van who would look after the children. If anything got too serious, the woman would try to stop it but she couldn't because there were too many kids.
16. School started at 9 am in the morning. We stopped for our first break at 10:30 am, which was a half hour break. We then went back to class until lunchtime, which was

an hour from 12 until 1 pm. We had our lunch in the first half hour and then had half an hour to play outside. There was some bullying that took place at school but it was just like what would happen at other schools.

17. We went back to class after lunch. We had classes and another break at 2.30, and then finished for the day at 3:30 pm. The van came to collect us at 3.30 pm, to take us home.

Mealtimes/Food

18. The food was rubbish. I remember it sometimes looked like brown sludge. I remember having a pudding that was brown stuff with custard on it. I asked people what it was and nobody knew what it was supposed to be. We then found out it was prunes with custard. Nobody liked it and we sent it back.
19. You could as much as you wanted and leave whatever you didn't want. Some people would eat all of their dinner and some wouldn't. There would be staff there telling the kids to eat their food but they never used physical force. The kids would say no if they didn't want it, so they weren't made to finish it.
20. We had an hour for lunch so we would have our lunch in the first half hour and then go out to play, and then the staff would go somewhere else to have their lunch. They didn't eat the same food as the pupils.

Schooling

21. Classes were mixed boys and girls and we were split up into age groups. There were six people in my class, boys and girls. Some were day pupils and some stayed in Donaldsons.

22. The level of education was very poor. It didn't improve my English at all. All the teachers were hearing. There were no deaf teachers and they should have had that. They taught us to lip read but it was so hard and I wasn't interested in it, so I would just pretend that I could do it.
23. We were never formally taught BSL properly. I picked it up from other children. Some of the teachers were ok at signing and some had no experience at all. This made learning very difficult.
24. Some teachers were quite cruel. Miss **PXF**, who taught English, would shout at children and order them about. She was nasty. Mr **PDC** was quite cruel too. He would shout at pupils to get things right and hit them on the back of their head.

Religious instruction

25. There was nothing religious about the school.

Trips and holidays

26. We never had any trips or holidays with the school. We just stayed in the school building.

Abuse at Donaldson's School

27. Some teachers were cruel and abusive. Mr **PDC**, who taught English, would shout at pupils to get things right and hit them on the back of the head with his hand. Your head would jut forward with the force of the hit. He did this to me once but other boys got it quite regularly.
28. If anyone got something wrong repeatedly or misbehaved in class, then Mr **PDC** would take them to **SNR**, Mr **RJE**'s room, to get the strap. This happened to me once when me and a few other boys were taken to Mr **RJE**'s room. Mr **RJE**

gave us all five of the strap on each hand. My hands were sore and red, and I had to wash them under the tap afterwards. Other kids were laughing when we got back to class because we had got the strap. Mr ^{PDC} would take other boys and girls to Mr ^{RJE} s room if they misbehaved, but it only happened to me that once.

29. Other teachers would also send kids to Mr ^{RJE} s room if they misbehaved.

Mr ^{PGJ}

30. One day, I was outside playing with the other kids after lunch. We were playing football but we were subbing and I had to wait for a turn to play. While I was waiting, Mr ^{PGJ} came up to me and told me to go with him. I told him I didn't want to, but he said, "Please, because you look really bored" and told me to go with him. I was young and didn't know what it was about so I went with him. I was thirteen years old at the time.

31. We went into the building and along the corridor and round the corner, and then upstairs. We walked through a big hall and into his bedroom. He opened a drawer in his bedroom that had shelves of clothes in it. He took something out and gave it to me and walked away. He had handed me a dirty magazine that had pictures of women's naked bodies and people having sex in it. I had a quick look and felt really embarrassed. I didn't want to look at that sort of thing. It was dirty and I felt really shocked.

32. Mr ^{PGJ} then came back in the nude. I ran out of the room, back the way I had come but the door in the hall was locked. I then tried to go out the door at the other side but that was locked as well, so he had got me.

33. He was standing further up the hall from me. I was panicking and he came towards me and said, "Please don't worry, just come with me." I kept saying no and he told me to just try and to go with him, so I followed him to the bedroom. I was quite mortified.

34. We sat down and he asked me to hold his willy. He took my hand and physically put it on his willy and told me to move my hand up and down, so that's what I did. He kept telling me to do it faster. Then, when he finished, he pulled off my trousers and underpants. I didn't want him to do that but that's what he did. He was holding my private parts and I didn't want him to do that because it felt dirty. Then he tried to have sex with me. When it was over, we sat in the hall. He said, "Please don't tell your mum or dad, or brother or sister, or any teachers, or the police. If you do tell them, I will kill you and you will die." I was very frightened and promised that I wouldn't tell anyone.
35. Then it happened a second, third time and so on. It carried on from when I was thirteen until I was fifteen years old. It always happened at lunch times when I was outside playing with other boys, and it always happened in his bedroom. There were never any other staff members around at the time because they would be away having their lunch. Mr RJE, SNR would have been in his office so he didn't have eyes on what was happening.
36. Mr PGJ did this to other boys too. I saw other boys following Mr PGJ into the building. I think he was abusing them in the same way he was abusing me. I know he abused a boy called [REDACTED], who was a year younger than me. [REDACTED] told me about this when we were still at Donaldson's. I told him it had happened to me as well and said we should go to the police, but [REDACTED] said no because he had threatened to kill him as well. We didn't tell anybody else about the abuse because we were frightened in case Mr PGJ did try to kill us.
37. I don't know how old Mr PGJ was. I think he was in his thirties or forties when I was thirteen years old.
38. Mr PGJ is dead now. A boy called [REDACTED], who was also at Donaldson's, told me that Mr PGJ had hung himself because somebody did tell the police about his abuse. This was years ago now. It was a brave guy who told the police, unlike me, who was too scared.

39. Mr KNJ would sometimes watch over the boys when we were in the pool. He wasn't a teacher, but he would just watch us as we played in the pool. One time, when I was swimming, I was joking around and calling Mr KNJ a "poof." I was only fourteen years old and was quite young at the time. I was just mucking around and I was doing the hand gesture and calling him that name. There were other younger boys in the pool at the time as well.
40. Mr KNJ got very angry and lost it. He came right up to me when I was sitting on a bench at the side of the pool. He stood in front of me and opened up his fly and trousers and pulled his private parts out and started gyrating and rubbing it on my face. It was really horrible and I was really embarrassed. He then just walked off. Other boys saw it happening. One of the boys said it was my own fault for calling him that name, but I was just joking. Mr PZC, the swimming teacher, wasn't there at the time.
41. I didn't tell anybody about what Mr KNJ did. I was frightened because I thought he might be the same as Mr PGJ and might kill me as well. Mr KNJ's full name was KNJ.

Reporting of abuse at Donaldson's

42. I didn't tell anybody about my abuse because Mr PGJ had threatened to kill me

Leaving Donaldson's School

43. The school did discuss what I was going to do after leaving Donaldson's. They just told me I could go to college and that was it. I wasn't really given any options.
44. I left Donaldson's in 1982, when I was fourteen years old. I was due to start College after the summer.

Life after Donaldson's School

45. My parents decided that I would go to [REDACTED] College and I started there in September 1982. I studied science, English, maths, P.E. and other subjects. It was a curriculum of loads of different subjects. I was there for a year. I then did the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in [REDACTED].
46. I went to [REDACTED] College from 1990 to 1992. I studied [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and passed all my exams. I couldn't get a job after that and was unemployed for ages, which was very frustrating.
47. I then got a job in [REDACTED] who helped people who were deaf, blind, disabled, or had mental health problems and seizures, by getting them into jobs. They had a factory in [REDACTED] in Edinburgh, where people made different things in different sections of the factory. I was in the [REDACTED] sections. I worked there for eleven years and I loved it. Unfortunately, I got into a bit of trouble and had to stop working there.
48. I was unemployed for a while again, before getting a job in [REDACTED] where I was [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. That was interesting but I was getting bullied by a woman at work so I left that job. I then worked in a small factory for three months then got paid off because they said I wasn't taking things in and my work wasn't good quality. I was unemployed again.
49. I got a job in a [REDACTED] outlet and worked there for three years. I finished up there and have been unemployed since. I haven't worked for eight years. I have tried to find a job but have found it difficult because I am deaf and people worry that I won't be able to communicate, so they don't give me jobs. I am really frustrated about this.

Impact

50. I was never taught to read and write English properly at Donaldson's, which has had a big impact on my life. The social work have to send support workers or interpreters to communicate letters and emails to me, and help with all of my admin because I can't do it myself. When I apply for jobs and employers find out that they will need to get interpreters for my training and how much work is involved, it puts them off and they don't employ me. If I am out and write something for a hearing person, they will not understand what I have written. It is the same when I write emails so I have to get those checked by a supporter or interpreter as well. It effects everything, including text messages, reading menus, newspapers, subtitles on television.
51. I feel like there is a lot of stress and pressure going on inside my head. I have tried to kill myself and end my life. [REDACTED]. I told them I wanted to kill myself because I had had enough. I was a bit bullyish towards them because I was frustrated but they were nice to me. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
52. I have been in hospital because I tried to kill myself. I have tried to be calm and talk about what happened to me at Donaldson's, at [REDACTED] and various places, but it is hard. I feel really down and frustrated. I can't switch off.
53. I want to put Donaldson's out of my mind completely because it makes me think of the abuse and what happened to me but people mention the school to me and then it all comes back. I think about the abuse I suffered at Donaldsons, sometimes weekly, sometimes more. It varies.
54. I have tried so hard to get a boyfriend but nobody wants me because it is so hard to communicate. If I met a deaf person, that would be great but that hasn't happened. There is nobody out there for me. I just sit at home on my own, playing games.
55. [REDACTED] is a lovely man. [REDACTED] was the other boy that I know was abused by Mr PGJ [REDACTED]. I am in touch with him now and we talk about things. He has told me that he

has stopped having sex. He doesn't have a girlfriend or boyfriend or anything, and he says he feels better not having sex.

Treatment/support

56. I have medication for anxiety and depression. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
57. I have a support worker through [REDACTED] who helps me with correspondence, everyday admin, is helping me to find a job and looks out for deterioration in my mental health. I have also been appointed someone through the Supported Employment Service at [REDACTED] Council who are looking to get me some volunteering work, which may lead on to fixed employment.

Reporting of Abuse

58. I reported my abuse at Donaldson's to the police a couple of years ago. I can't remember the exact date. They said it was too late to do anything now because Mr PGJ [REDACTED] and Mr KNJ [REDACTED] are both dead.

Records

59. I have a photo of the dining room in Donaldson's, which shows the layout of it. I also have a picture of all the children in rows at the back door of the building from when I am about nine or ten years old. There are about one hundred kids in it, and you can see the clock tower in it too. I don't have any other papers or documents from the school.

Final thoughts

60. There were no deaf teachers at Donaldson's. Deaf schools should have deaf teachers.
61. I wish Donaldson's would have had more staff around at lunch time. That would have stopped me being taken away and abused by Mr PGJ [REDACTED].
62. I hope kids in the future would be safe from abuse from adults.
63. 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... PCR [REDACTED]

Dated... 28 - 2 - 2025