

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PWV

Support person present: No.

1. My name is PWV. I am known as PWV. My date of birth is 1971. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I left school with basic qualifications and did my catering qualifications at College, . I was a chef to trade until I had an accident at work. I and had five operations. I didn't work for years and was told after my last operation that I wouldn't walk again. Through sheer determination and a good physiotherapist, I was able to walk although I'm still in pain.

Qualifications/Training

3. While I was off sick because of my accident, the government ran a scheme where you could do three courses for £10. I did two basic accounts courses at Community High School, and the only other thing that was available on the day I attended was sign language. I got my Level 1 and 2 in British Sign Language (BSL) from the Council for Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP). Then I got my Level 1 and 2 in Deaf Awareness, and a separate qualification for teaching Deaf Awareness.

4. The unwritten rule was that, once you had a Level 2 in BSL, you could work as a communications support worker. I need a job where I can stand and move about, depending on my pain level. [REDACTED] College were looking for a communications support worker and I was active within the deaf community at this point. The role at [REDACTED] College was a new one and I had never done the role of communications support worker before. It was based in the college and was three days a week with two deaf adults.
5. I went to [REDACTED] College and got my Level 1 and 2 in British Sign Language from the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Whilst I was at Donaldson's College for the Deaf (Donaldson's), I did my Level 3 BSL with CACDP, and a course in Bereavement Counselling. I love learning and, since I left Donaldson's and through the Open University, I have obtained a Psychology BSc (Hons) and I'm finishing a Sports and Fitness Psychology BSc (Hons).

Donaldson's College for the Deaf

6. Originally, Donaldson's was at West Coates in Edinburgh and then we moved to Linlithgow. When I started with Donaldson's, it was a school for the deaf and was called Donaldson's College for the Deaf. That changed over time and there were less deaf children going in and more autistic children. The name changed to Donaldson's School for the Deaf and then to Donaldson's because less deaf children were coming. When I first went there, it was amazing. When you walked up to the old building, it was daunting because it was like a big castle. It took your breath away.
7. There was a split culture. There was the deaf culture and children who were profoundly deaf and, as time went on and the more hearing young people arrived, there was a divide amongst the students. A big part of what we had to do was to try to break down barriers. We tried to teach some sign language to the children who were hearing and with autism, so at least there was communication. As less deaf students were involved with the school because they were going to mainstream education, the more the deaf

community saw it as their school being taken over. To keep the doors open, the school had to be more diverse in what it was doing.

8. There was always a difference in culture between deaf staff and hearing staff. I sat in the middle because I have hearing loss. I was classed as hearing and I wasn't allowed to go to deaf staff meetings because I couldn't produce a proper audiology report to show my deaf level. The difference didn't cause any issues, it was more comments. For example, sometimes at meetings there was no interpreter and they asked staff to interpret, so staff would say they were entitled to professional interpreters. I was one of the few people who were hearing and teaching sign language. Within the culture, that was seemingly a no-no and sign language had to be taught by deaf people. I wasn't the most popular person with the deaf staff within the school because of that. Donaldson's was an invigorating place to work. It was challenging but a good challenge, and there was something new every day.
9. The attitude of staff to the children, and their relationship with children, was generally fine. The deaf children looked up to the deaf staff and that was obvious. That was a good thing because the deaf staff could talk to the children culturally. We had many staff who were profoundly deaf and some were ex-Donaldson's students. That set a good example of what could be achieved. The younger hearing people didn't understand the history of it. With any of the staff I worked with, it was always about encouraging the young deaf people. It wasn't about certificates and getting high grades but about getting them ready for going into that big hearing world outside. We had some unruly kids at times but I didn't see anything that was upsetting or made me think there were big issues there.

My time at Donaldson's College for the Deaf

Recruitment

10. I worked at Donaldson's from 2002 until I was suspended in 2013. It was through my teacher at [REDACTED] College, who worked at Donaldson's, that I got the job there.

They were looking for a communications worker and she asked if I would mind the school contacting me. Steve Kelly was the deputy principal at the time and he contacted me to say my name had been passed to him as a possible support worker and would I come in for an interview. He said he would speak to me about what they were looking for. All I knew was that they were looking for someone to support young people in college. I got an interview and spent some time with Steve Kelly. We spoke about what he wanted, my qualifications, my expectations, what the school was looking for and whether I could do that. Then we walked around the school and he showed me the different parts of it.

11. We spoke about a one-year contract, signing for deaf students at colleges both in their local area and in Edinburgh, so I was only in Donaldson's on a Friday. Then, depending on what young people were going to what colleges after that, Donaldson's would look at extending it. A couple of days later Steve Kelly phoned me and said if I wanted the position, it was there and he told me the salary. It was slightly higher than a classroom assistant. Donaldson's had never had a communications support worker, so they banded the role a couple of bands up. That caused an issue with the classroom assistants straight away because they have a set of rules and jobs they have to do. I came in and said I wasn't a classroom assistant, and I wasn't doing that. That caused animosity for me amongst them.
12. I expressed at the time that I wasn't sure how I was going to cope with the role. One young man was doing Higher Media Studies and two young people were doing Advanced Childcare, and I didn't know if I had the sign language for that. I agreed I would give it a try for three months.
13. Donaldson's contacted [REDACTED] College, who I gave as my reference. I can't remember who I gave as my second reference. I had a six-month probationary period and a review after three months. I only ever spent a day or two days a week in Donaldson's and all my work was outside.

Induction

14. I started after the summer holidays and the induction was a day during the in-service days.

Reviews and appraisals

15. After three months, I sat down with Steve Kelly and we had a review. There were some issues in regard to translating the more technical terms into sign language. We went to the college and asked if I could have the course materials up front, so I could go to the staff in Donaldson's and ask for help with some of the signs. The Deaf Studies Department was helpful. There was another review after six months.
16. Appraisals were ongoing. When I was communications support worker, it was Jane Richards I dealt with or Anne Clark. Jane was the principal teacher for young people who were post 16 years of age. Anne Clark was head of guidance. If I had any issues, I would sit with Jane or, if I was out, I could text Jane. She was deaf and couldn't use the phone.

Role

17. When I first went to Donaldson's, it was a joint post. I was communications support worker and classroom assistant. They developed the role of communications support worker. In the first two years that I was at Donaldson's, it was only deaf children I worked with. I worked in the Life Skills Department which was for 16- to -18-year-olds. In 2007, I was seconded to the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) where I became the basic skills officer for one year.
18. I came back to Donaldson's in 2008 in a communications support worker role and then, by 2009, we developed the [REDACTED] coordinator position because of the work I'd done with RNID. When I finished up working at Donaldson's in 2014, I was [REDACTED] coordinator. I opened up the [REDACTED] project, which developed into the [REDACTED] project, for young adults who were 18 to 24 years old. The first aim was to get young

people ready for transitioning from an establishment like Donaldson's into their local communities, the second aim was to teach young people about their rights, and the third aim was to break down barriers with local young people within their home and Donaldson's area. We had received funding to set up a [REDACTED] project.

19. It's not just deaf people who have to adjust to the outside world, the outside world has to adjust for deaf people coming into it. We applied for blocks of funding to do work with young deaf people and young hearing people. When I was at Donaldson's, my job was to get the young people into a position where they could go out and order coffees, go to work experience, and go to college. A lot of the work I did was about bringing down barriers between young deaf and young hearing people.
20. If we had a project, I planned it and would sit with Mary O'Brien, the headteacher, or Janice MacNeill, the principal, and go through what the plan was for the week. They would do risk assessments and all the stuff in the background, so I could run the project. The person who was the fundraiser had the criteria for the funding and we had to make sure we matched the criteria. I coordinated and supervised the project but I was not a manager.
21. For example, one of the projects was a United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) weekend. I did a plan, then sat with my managers and said it needed risk assessed. They would ask what I needed by way of staff. We knew the behaviour patterns of the people that were coming via Donaldson's, so we knew where we needed an extra member of staff. Hearing groups were involved as well. We used West Lothian Youth Theatre to do a joint session. My job was to go and speak to Youth Theatre, do a risk assessment, and find out about the young people.
22. I had three or four contracts over my time at Donaldson's. My first contract meant my holidays were the school holidays. When I came back from secondment to the RNID, my contract was changed to a general working contract. It was six weeks holiday a year, not just school holidays. I worked forty hours over the week, evenings and weekends. I had to be in school in the morning, wherever possible. I supported students all over Scotland. If the student was in, for example, Ayrshire, I couldn't go

into school in the morning but I was to make the meetings in the afternoon so I could touch base with the school first.

Line managers

23. When I started at Donaldson's, Steve Kelly was my line manager until he left. I had a weird position because Steve Kelly was my line manager as a communications support worker and Jane Richards was my line manager when I worked in Life Skills and was out supporting Life Skills students at college. When I supported mainstream students at college, the headteacher or deputy head teacher was my line manager. I always had two line managers. If I was reporting anything back, it went to Jane Richards, Anne Clark, or Steve Kelly. It was only in my last year at Donaldson's that I had one designated line manager, Liam Donoghue. Usually, it was the headteacher. Liam Donoghue took over as manager of [REDACTED] when we were setting that up.

Staff structure

24. When I started, you had the Board of Governors, the principal was the boss, and we had three deputy principals. The principal teachers were next, then teachers, and then classroom assistants. The Deaf Studies Department was a different area and the Speech and Language Department was also a totally different area. When I first started, Janet Allan was the principal and, when she left, Janice MacNeill came in around 2007.
25. When Janice came along, people compared their styles. Janet was more hands on and the kids respected her more because she had more to do with them. The kids knew who she was and she was always round about the kids. She went up to see them in their residence. I didn't see that happening much when Janice MacNeill was there. Janice was more in her office and more business minded than school minded. She was dealing with the move from old Donaldson's to new Donaldson's. We didn't have separate headteachers then. After Janice came in, Mary O'Brien came in as headteacher and [REDACTED] PZY as [REDACTED] SNR.

Recruitment of staff

26. I was involved in recruitment twice. First, when I came back from RNID and set up the [REDACTED] project and again, two years later, for a [REDACTED] worker. The Scottish Government funded it and the agreement was that the funding could continue if we matched funding from various sources. I was doing most of the [REDACTED] project myself and if we were doing anything, we invited staff in to come and work overtime and help us with that.
27. We got funding for another member of staff for two years and I was involved in the interview process. Olivia Lovely was the human resources manager. Me, Olivia, and Mary O'Brien did the recruitment process. We had a meeting and they explained how you recruit, Olivia set up the questions and showed me how to do the scoring sheet. I was leading the project and there were certain things I was looking for, so I wrote my questions and Olivia changed them to more appropriate questions. We interviewed four or five people over two days.
28. I didn't know about the recruitment policies and practices at Donaldson's.

Volunteers

29. Volunteers worked at Donaldson's, usually supporting classroom assistants. I had volunteers within the [REDACTED] project. We used them if we were doing an event or a residential, to support at a games night or something like that. I don't recall other volunteers at Donaldson's on a regular basis. I think everybody was employed.
30. In the [REDACTED] project, we would put a call out for volunteers. I was teaching sign language so I could tell my students. The school dealt with the volunteers. Volunteers would apply to the school and the school would do Disclosure Scotland checks. The volunteers had to give a background check on where they worked and say when they were available.

Managing others

31. There was a debate over whether I managed others and it was a debate over salary. Donaldson's said to me I could run the project but Mary O'Brien, or Janice MacNeill, or PZY [REDACTED] managed it. I was never employed or paid as a manager. I would coordinate the activities and supervise. When they brought Liam Donaghue in as manager, it was explained to me that I couldn't take a manager's role because I didn't have the qualifications. Donaldson's said they'd fund me if I wanted to go through the process and I had started my Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) but then I was suspended.
32. There was a lot of pressure put on me to run the projects but then everything had to go to one of the senior managers. They had to go through it all and question me on why I needed so many staff and so on. Then, they would approve it as the manager. I would tell the staff what the job was and what they would be doing. Although I was involved in the interview process for the members of staff for the [REDACTED] project, they kept saying to me that I wasn't the manager. People were split so many ways. I was doing the [REDACTED] work but I was also part of Life Skills. I did say, "Shouldn't I be getting paid more because I've taken all this responsibility?" I was told no, because I wasn't the manager.

Training

33. I came to the first two in-service days at the start of the year, after summer holidays, which were where child protection and safeguarding was done. That was compulsory but I didn't have to come to the other in-service days. My line manager arranged any additional training I needed or brought it up to me. Training was done with the rest of the school, during in-service days, and was continuous over the years. We had training folders within the staff intranet area. We would get emails saying there was a new policy or something had been changed or updated, and it would be put in the folder for us to read. The staff intranet had all the policies.

34. I did not see any personal development statements at Donaldson's. I did the course on Bereavement Counselling as a result of two young people coming back after the summer holidays, having lost family members. The family didn't know how to explain things to them and that was part of our job. I did the course to help me speak to young people, as a lot of them did not have someone who signed at home. When the young people found someone who signed, they unloaded a lot onto us.

Supervision / appraisal / evaluation

35. I wasn't involved in the supervision, appraisal, or evaluation of other staff. I can only talk about myself. I could get access to whoever line managed me when I needed them. I had to be in school in the morning, so I'd have to access to a manager then.
36. Volunteers were supervised by permanent staff. For the projects, volunteers were supervised by me and Carol Johnson, who was part of the [REDACTED] team. We had full-time school staff come along and support the projects. Volunteers were never left by themselves. Supervision of volunteers was not recorded, as far as I know. There was only one weekend where we used volunteers throughout the full weekend.

Policy

37. I did not have any involvement in, or responsibility for, policy in relation to the care, including residential care, of children.

Strategic Planning

38. The closest we got to planning was when we were doing application forms for funding for projects. I would sit with the fundraiser and line manager and tell them what my idea was. We asked the young people what they needed and how could we support them. For example, young people were struggling with the driving theory and so we

would run courses on driving theory. The young people led us, on what they needed. I do not know if the potential for abuse featured in the school's strategic approach.

Children at Donaldson's College for the Deaf

39. Parents or local authorities, if the child was under the care of social work, requested that children be placed at Donaldson's. The council paid the school fees and, as far as I know, it had to come via social work. I don't know what assessments were carried out before a child was placed there. The leaving age was sixteen but the children could apply for another two years. Most children stayed until they were eighteen and came to Life Skills for those last two years.
40. Donaldson's had a nursery but a lot of the children I worked with came in late, starting in high school. They were between twelve and thirteen. A couple came at sixteen to eighteen, just for Life Skills. They had been in mainstream school, but Donaldson's was suggested for the Life Skills project. There were about thirty children in the high school. Life Skills always had between four and eight young people. For children with additional difficulties who didn't do the mainstream part of Donaldson's, there was Skill Start. They were twelve or thirteen years old to sixteen. Then they'd move from Skill Start to Life Skills. There were more boys than girls. At the first Christmas party I was at, there was thirty boys and three girls.
41. I don't know the ratio of staff to children in the school. In Life Skills, the ratio was one member of staff to two children. I found out later, when I went to [REDACTED] meetings, that they could request one to one funding.

Food

42. There were a lot of complaints from staff and children about the food, when I first started. I ate there. The first chef cooked stuff in the morning and said that would do lunch and tea. I had been a chef, working in a busy kitchen, and knew what you could prepare. There was always a choice. Generally, the food was fine but not the best.

The vegetables weren't crunchy but mash. One or two young people were vegan or vegetarian and there was always a choice for them. They said it wasn't much of a choice. We got a new chef called Peter and it was a lot better. Everything was fresh, they tried new ideas and introduced a lot of new foods to the kids. Peter did educational stuff with the kids. He talked about where the food came from and so on.

43. In West Coates, the chef catered for the night-time meals. There were mezzanines inbetween some of the levels and there was one where senior students could cook once a week. Three or four of them, and the staff, cooked a dinner for themselves. In Linlithgow, the children cooked the night-time meals themselves. The chef gave them all the ingredients to cook with the residence staff. I loved the idea of that. Each of the residences in Linlithgow had their own kitchen. The residence staff met with the chef and they had an ongoing rota of what was needed. It was delivered during the day and the kids cooked with the staff at night.

Sleeping arrangements

44. When we came back from summer holidays, we got a list and it told you which residence the children were in and who their keyworker was. The difference between West Coates and Linlithgow was that they were different children. At West Coates there were a lot of deaf children and some of the residential staff were deaf. At Linlithgow there were more hearing young people at the residence. At West Coates, they were shared bedrooms and at Linlithgow it was individual bedrooms. That was better for the young people and they liked that, although they missed the chat in the middle of the night.
45. The first year I started at Donaldson's, at West Coates, they were short-staffed in residence and they asked a few classroom assistants to volunteer to do a few hours in residence. I worked in residence a couple of weeks or nights in a year, if they were short-staffed.

46. When I did the [REDACTED] work, I worked with the keyworker. I'd get two or three young people who were leaving that year for one night a week, for two or three weeks. We talked about what their plans were.

Washing and bathing

47. I don't know what the washing and showering arrangements were in the residence at West Coates. In Linlithgow, it was en-suite with private showers in every bedroom.

Leisure time

48. There was loads to do in leisure time, even if it was just watching a DVD. The residence staff were good at keeping the young people amused. Residence staff did a homework club and the children did homework straight after school. They would go shopping, and on bus and day trips. They had barbeques. On a Thursday night the older residential deaf young people could go to the Deaf Club in Albany Street in Edinburgh. We would take them by bus but if we were working with some young people around independent travel, that was a good thing to try. The boys always played football out in the front or in the chapel at West Coates, or they had access to the football pitch at Linlithgow. The times I was in residence, we went to some parks and took them shopping.

Trips

49. There were trips for the young people in the residences and they had activities that they knew about in advance. The staff sat with them and decided what they would do over the next one to three weeks. In the school, they didn't do school trips. Life Skills did a week's caravanning holiday at places like Butlins in Ayr and Haggerston Castle near Berwick-on-Tweed. Over the year, the young people learned how to cook and budget money. Then we took five or six young people away for a week and they did the cooking, shopping, and budgeting. There were four staff. I didn't go every year. I did three or four with them.

50. I don't know if individual staff took individual children out for leisure activities. I don't recall that happening. Children would not be taken to a staff member's home.

Schooling

51. I only worked in the Life Skills department but if they were short of communications support workers then I would sign the odd class for children who were profoundly deaf. For example, if they got a new science teacher who couldn't sign. As far as I know, they followed the curriculum.
52. In Life Skills, we followed a list of modules and SQA qualifications. It was everything from budgeting to transport, making decisions, planning a meal, and work experience.

Health

53. They had a local doctor for the boarders. Janice Davidson was the school nurse. In Life Skills, we had a young girl with a lot of health problems and we were trained before she came into the unit on how to do things. She was celiac so, for example, we were trained that there had to be no flour in the kitchen. One young man walked about with his diabetic's bag. I don't remember a lot of kids with medication. If they were residential kids, then the residential staff dealt with all that.

Work

54. The young people didn't do manual work and there were cleaners. The cleaners went into the residences every day. When they moved to Linlithgow and were cooking their own meals, they'd do their own dishes. They had dishwashers. I think I was told that the young people had to keep their rooms clean and tidy. The only exception to this was in Life Skills, where we taught cleaning. The young people hoovered and put their trash out. That was part of the SQA module.

Visitors

55. Parents and family visited. As far as I know, people coming in were not vetted. I don't think they came into the residence but arranged to meet elsewhere. Once or twice, parents took children out for dinner but they weren't allowed in the residences.

Professional visitors/ reports/ reviews

56. I don't recall professionals such as psychiatrists and psychologists visiting residences but I wasn't in residences often. They would see the young people in school. We had pods or they would be given a room. If they needed communication support, one of the staff could sign for them if they were deaf.
57. Reports would have gone to the school. I went to annual reviews to talk about [REDACTED] and reports came up then. I don't know where the reports came from but we knew who they were from because they were signed.
58. Every child had an annual review. Sometimes there would be two reviews, depending on the complex needs of the child and especially in the last two years of [REDACTED] or if something wasn't working out. The annual review included the child's continued residence and schooling at Donaldson's. At the review meetings, you had someone chairing it. That was either Mary O'Brien, the headteacher, PZY [REDACTED], SNR [REDACTED], SNR [REDACTED], or PZZ [REDACTED] who was below the deputy head. There was a note taker, the residential keyworker if they were a resident, the guidance teacher, and the tutor teacher. If it was related to [REDACTED] then I would be there. If it was related to Life Skills then Jane Richards would be there. You also had the parents, the young person, the communicator, social work, and psychologist. They were big meetings. Everybody put a report in. The meetings could last for between one and three hours, depending on how complex the need was.

Preparation for leaving Donaldson's College for the Deaf

59. Some young people came through [REDACTED]. Having a [REDACTED] worker was new, and we were developing the model as we went along. I visited children in their home area as part of the [REDACTED] project. Part of the [REDACTED] was to get young people ready in their home areas. We did work with them on independent travel. We wanted every young person to be able to travel. Not all parents and social workers agreed with that.
60. One of the biggest issues for deaf kids was that there wasn't a lot of sign language, especially back home. Something like 85% of deaf children are born to hearing parents, and only around 15% of hearing parents have signing abilities. Parents were offered training in BSL but very few families were fluent in BSL, which is what the children were used to for communication whilst in Donaldson's. Some were the only deaf person in their area and so there was no peer support. In the [REDACTED] project and in applying for funding, our work was all around open communication. We had hearing and deaf people involved and it was about breaking down barriers. In Donaldson's we had a total communication policy, so if a child decided they were just lip reading, we would speak and let them lip read. If they wanted to sign, be they hearing or deaf, they were encouraged to sign. All the hearing and deaf kids learned sign language but most families couldn't sign and what sign they had was basic.
61. We tried to get the young people into their local community and we'd find out if there were Deaf Clubs there. Researching the local area was a big part of my job, to see what was there, work with the family to get the young people access into that, into a local college, and into work experience. My biggest barrier, every year, was getting them into college because the college was then responsible for paying for the communications support worker, and they didn't have a budget for it. Communications support workers weren't cheap. The only college I didn't have a problem with was West Lothian College.
62. Part of the last two years of high school, which tended to be Life Skills, we put them into a local college for the first year. That was either West Lothian College or Telford

College in Edinburgh. For the second year, they'd go to a college in their home area. When they were leaving, we could try to get them into a course at their local college. For every young person, a member of staff had to go to that area to work for a day or two. If the young person was doing work experience, we had a list of companies who we'd use in the first year. In the second year, we tried to get them work experience in their home area. That involved staff going into their home areas. Residential staff also went to their home areas when they did home visits.

63. The [REDACTED] project developed into something that was really good. At the heart of that was what the young person identified they needed. They weren't forced to do anything, such as work experience or college but they were encouraged to take on new skills. We just wanted them to leave school, contribute, and do something. We didn't want them sitting in the house. More demand was put on us, so the [REDACTED] project developed. We realised there was nobody supporting these young people if they weren't based in Edinburgh or Glasgow. That gave us an extra service to sell the school. The [REDACTED] project carried on supporting young people after they left school. I would keep in contact with the young person and their family for a year or more, after they left. This included informing the young person and their family about upcoming projects or training. I might have to go to their college and remind the college what the agreement was and I might have to fight to get the communication worker in place. We developed relationships with the colleges, so they knew we'd keep an eye on the young person and we'd be there to support them if things changed.

Living arrangements

64. I stayed outside Edinburgh when I worked at Donaldson's. Most of the staff stayed in Edinburgh. At West Coates, Janet Allan stayed in a flat but that was before my time. One of the caretakers stayed in a flat. There were two houses at the bottom of the gate. Robin, the groundskeeper, had one and Catriona, the chef, had the other. When West Coates was sold, staff were told we weren't moving more than ten miles from Edinburgh. However, we moved to Linlithgow which took staff way out. We all got a

one-off payment of £1000 for relocation and staff who had to travel got renumeralated for travel for two years after the move.

65. The residential staff had access to the children's residential areas. Everything was key fobbed to let you into certain areas, and your card had to be authorised to access those areas. Teachers didn't have access. I had access because I was covering residences. I wouldn't get into their bedroom but I could get into the staff area and reception area. There were night staff who were responsible for the residential area overnight. There were staff sleeping in and waking staff, in the residences.

Discipline and Punishment

66. Behaviour in Donaldson's deteriorated after the move to Linlithgow. When I started in Donaldson's, all bar two children in the high school were deaf and, in the deaf community, the young people respect the people above them. When the school became mixed and we had the same amount of hearing and deaf young people, communication was a problem. There were a lot of arguments between kids because, for example, they thought someone had said something because they'd signed it wrong. We never had issues in Life Skills and we were separate from the school. In the last couple of years I was at Donaldson's, you constantly heard them calling for CALM staff who were trained in de-escalation and restraint. You knew somebody had kicked off somewhere.
67. Anne Bain was the principal teacher for behaviour and discipline, and was responsible for disciplining and punishing children. There was a formal policy in relation to discipline. It was on the staff intranet in a section which contained policies. There was a hierarchy of who would deal with it. If there was an issue, the teacher would deal with it. If need be, it would go to Anne Bain. If it was serious enough, it would be escalated to Mary O'Brien, PZY [REDACTED], or PZZ [REDACTED]. If a young person was at the headteacher, then it was serious. It would not go to the principal because Janice MacNeill was dealing with the business side of the school.

68. Discipline was a detention at lunchtime. I saw that for arguments, fights, arguments on the football pitch, bullying, and calling names. The students were supervised from the minute they arrived in the morning until they left, however I didn't supervise children at breaks. I never saw children physically disciplined. Sometimes, the classroom assistant would go with a child who was put out of the class, for example if they weren't doing the work or talking. They would go to the common room. Sometimes students were taught away from the class, in the pods behind the reception at Linlithgow. This was always done by classroom assistants and not teachers. Classroom assistants took on the burden of dealing with students who were being disciplined. There could be between one and four classroom assistants in any class. There was a School Council but I don't know how the children would know about policies around discipline.
69. I am not aware of young people being responsible for the discipline of younger children. I don't know how the residences dealt with misbehaviour. I didn't discipline children. Teachers filled out a form as a record of discipline measures. The template was kept in shared documents on the staff intranet. I don't know where the actual record was kept. A daily bulletin came to the staff. In that would be the students and staff who were absent as well as detentions.

Restraint

70. Restraint was used during my time at Donaldson's. I was exempt from doing CALM restraints because of my [REDACTED] injury and so I wasn't trained. I never restrained a child at Donaldson's. My training was Level 1, which is de-escalation. Stuart Ritchie was the CALM instructor. I was to talk the children down and, if it had to be escalated, I was to get out of the way and take any children with me. Restraint was carried out by any member of staff who was trained. All school and residential staff were trained to some level. I don't know about office staff.
71. I've seen restraint used to calm children down, especially if they were going to put themselves in danger. I saw children held to calm them down and someone standing in front of them, so they could communicate with them. I never saw any 'take downs',

or anything like that. I've heard it and been outside a room when it happened. You can be trained up to that level. A lot of the children would throw and smash things. They would kick or spit. Spitting was becoming very regular. The de-escalation worked a lot of the time. The problem is, when you hold a deaf child's hands then they can't sign, so that was a last resort. We would try everything to sign to them, to de-escalate. Children would be removed from the room. They were not left alone and would be with staff. There was a form to be filled out for restraining a child. One person filled it out and everyone signed it.

72. There were policies for restraint, in shared documents on the staff intranet. CALM restraint policies were regularly updated. It was regularly spoken about and you were constantly reminded to check the CALM policy. When I left Donaldson's, Carol Johnson and one of the residential members of staff were responsible for CALM training. They met weekly or fortnightly and went through the forms that had been filled out. I knew that because Carol told me. I never had to fill any forms out but you would have if you used de-escalation.
73. I am not aware of medication being used as a form of restraint.
74. I was questioned by the head of care, Neil Donald, and the principal, Janice MacNeill, about my views on restraint because a member of staff said I was against it. They said I had made bad comments about staff abusing children because they were restraining them. I said I didn't know where that came from. All I could think was that someone had asked why I didn't do restraint and I said I wasn't trained, and they took that from it. I never saw excessive restraint.

Concerns about the institution

75. Donaldson's was not, to my knowledge at the time I worked there, ever the subject of concern, within the institution itself or to any external body or agency, or any other person, because of the way in which children were treated. I know now that concerns were raised.

Reporting of complaints/concerns

76. There was a complaints process. It all went through the headteachers and deputy head. If the [REDACTED] project had a complaint to make about a member of staff, behaviour, or if you were concerned about something, then you had to write it and send it to Mary O'Brien. If the complaint was about Mary, we had to send it to PZY [REDACTED]. You could fill out a form and send it to your line manager or Olivia Lovely. I assume there was a complaint form for parents but I never saw that.
77. Complaints were received. I didn't receive any complaints and I didn't receive any complaints about abuse. Everything went through the senior managers and was confidential. At review meetings, sometimes parents would raise concerns. Food was constantly complained about and parents would complain about bullying. That was taken up by Mary O'Brien, PZY [REDACTED], or one of the seniors. If a child raised concerns about bullying, then we would contact the Child Protection Officer, who was Mary O'Brien. We would get an appointment with her and the complaint would be recorded by Mary.

Trusted adult/confidante

78. In the school, the children had their tutor groups and their tutor was allocated each year. The tutor was usually one of the teachers and the person they contacted if there were any issues. Residents had a keyworker. Outside Donaldson's, they had their social worker but I don't know how often they saw their social worker. Some children didn't know who their social worker was. Most had a social worker because they needed them to get the funding for the school.
79. I can't recall concerns being raised by a child by way of a trusted adult or confidante. That wouldn't come down to my level. I know parents raised concerns. In West Coates, one young person raised a concern with me when I was signing for the new science teacher. He said he was dragged out of bed early in the morning. I said he had school but he said he didn't want to get up. The science teacher reported it and I was

questioned about what the young person signed. I had a meeting with Janice MacNeill because Mary O'Brien wasn't in post at that point. I said we spoke about it, and it was a case of, he didn't want to get out of bed. I never heard anything else after that.

Abuse

- 80. I can't recall a specific definition of abuse that Donaldson's applied in relation to the treatment of children.
- 81. I did not see behaviour of any kind that I considered to be abuse taking place at Donaldson's. Children did not report abuse to me.
- 82. Looking back, I am not confident or I really don't know, that if any child was being abused or ill-treated, it would have come to light at or around the time it was occurring. I only know what happened in my time there. I didn't work with all the children and I don't know about the relationships. The closest relationship the children had was with the classroom assistant because they were in the classrooms and around at break. I never saw anything.
- 83. During my time at Donaldson's, abuse could have happened and gone undetected because not all children were good at communication. Communication is key for these things and some of the young people wouldn't have the ability to communicate the kind of experiences that, for example, I have been shown by the Inquiry.

Child protection arrangements

- 84. Child protection was a huge thing. It was one of the big training things we did at the start of the year, as a whole school. We looked at what the rules and the laws were, what we were supposed to do, key things to look for, and how we would report it. We were taught what we were supposed to do as a member of staff and what our responsibilities were. We knew where the child protection forms were, who the child protection officer was, and who we needed to contact. That was done at least once a

year. Child protection training was given by Mary O'Brien at the main in-service day, at the start of the school year. It was communicated to me when I was working with Mary O'Brien, when she was my line manager. We always did a risk assessment for any activity we were doing, and, if something happened, how I would report it. There was a policy on child protection, in the shared documents on the staff intranet.

85. There was guidance and instruction on how to handle, and respond to, reports of abuse or ill-treatment of children by staff, other adults, or other children. We were told things like you couldn't interview the child because they are only allowed so many interviews by law. You could listen to the child. Where possible, you were not to question the child. If you had to ask questions, they were to be open ended. If a child was disclosing something, you couldn't lead the conversation. There was training on what was a leading question and how to deal with a child, i.e., you don't dismiss them. You recorded everything and took it straight to the child protection officer, Mary O'Brien if it was in school, or head of care, whoever that was at the time.
86. I have been asked how much autonomy or discretion was given to staff and other adults in relation to these matters. Anything we felt was the slightest form of abuse or ill-treatment had to be reported.
87. I have been asked what child protection arrangements were in place to reduce the likelihood of abuse, ill-treatment, or inappropriate conduct by staff or other adults, towards children. Most of the time in school, most of the children were taught in classes and, apart from the training on child protection and knowing how to take a complaint forward, I'm not sure how else I would answer that question. In residence, there was an organisation called 'Who Cares?' and every wall had a poster with information about how children could contact them. There was nothing like that in the school. As far as I'm aware, 'Who Cares?' were an outside, independent helpline for children in residential care.

External monitoring

88. The Care Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) would come in. They both did 'announced' and 'unannounced' visits. HMIE came in about once a year. They checked policies and procedures and spoke to the children. I signed once for an HMIE visit, for a group of young people. Staff weren't usually present and it was the communicator who was. Most of the time, HMIE brought interpreters so they didn't have to use staff.
89. HMIE spoke to me about the [REDACTED] project. They asked about the project, how it came about, and where the funding came from. They went through a folder with the information about one of the projects that we did. I wasn't interviewed or spoken to about school. I didn't get feedback from them.

Record-keeping

90. I kept a folder for every project we did and it was kept in the office. Only me and Carol Johnston, or Paul Hull, a transition worker when he worked there, had access to it. Whoever was line managing me at the time, for example Mary O'Brien, would go through the folder as I was building it up. Paul worked there for a short period of time. The folder had all the consent forms, the policies I needed, timetables of events, and feedback from the young people which was done after every project. I took the information from the folder to write a final report for the funders. The report included the young people's feedback, how many males and females attended, and the age group. Most of the classrooms had locked cabinets.
91. I don't recall a policy about record-keeping but there probably was one. I don't know where information about complaints, or abuse, was kept. I do not know about historical record-keeping.

Allegations of abuse

92. I have not been the subject of an allegation of abuse or ill-treatment of a child, or children, who resided in Donaldson's when I was there.

Investigations into abuse – personal involvement

93. I have not been involved in any investigation on behalf of Donaldson's into allegations of abuse or ill-treatment of, or into inappropriate behaviour by staff or others towards children.

Reports of abuse and civil claims

94. I have not been involved in the handling of reports to Donaldson's by former residents, concerning historical abuse.
95. I have not been involved in the handling of civil claims made against Donaldson's by former residents, concerning historical abuse.

Police investigations/ criminal proceedings

96. I have been asked if I became aware of police investigations into alleged abuse at Donaldson's. I knew about alleged abuse before I started at Donaldson's. When I started learning to sign, the principal, David Scott, was under investigation for kicking a kid in the gym hall or something like that. I knew that because somebody in the deaf community told me and it was in the paper.
97. I gave a statement after my conviction when one young man made a complaint about when I took him away to Ayr and Edinburgh. They were saying it was part of his [REDACTED] but it was three years after he left school, when the [REDACTED] project was up and running.

98. I have not given evidence at any trial concerning abuse of children at Donaldson's.

Convicted abusers

99. I have been asked if I know of any person who worked at Donaldson's who was convicted of the abuse of a child or children at Donaldson's. I just know of David Scott. I did not have personal dealings with any such person.

Other staff working within Donaldson's College for the Deaf

KKW

100. KKW was at Donaldson's when I left. Drew Graham was the physical education (P.E.) teacher at West Coates, and KKW came in when we moved to Linlithgow and Drew left. I'm not sure of the dates. KKW was in her thirties when I knew her. She was the P.E. teacher. I didn't work with the kids at that point because I was in . I had to ask her permission if I needed equipment for the gym. I knew her as a teacher. I didn't know her well.
101. I saw her with children if they were out training or in the gyms. She seemed fine with them. I didn't see her disciplining children. I didn't see her abusing any children. I didn't hear of her abusing children until I read information provided to me by the Inquiry.

PHY

102. I've known PHY since I started in Donaldson's because he was a residential care worker then. Something happened and he was put into the school. I don't know what happened. He became a classroom assistant a couple of years after I started. He was 26 or 27 years old when I started and younger than me. I knew him and I saw him at the Deaf Club and at deaf events. He seemed okay. He was one of

the few deaf people I got on with and I talked to him. I didn't take much to do with him in school and he didn't get involved in any of the [REDACTED] work.

103. I saw him with children. A lot of the deaf children liked him because he was profoundly deaf and a signer. I didn't see him disciplining children. I didn't see him abusing any children. I didn't hear of him abusing children.

PZZ [REDACTED]

104. PZZ [REDACTED] came in as a teacher and they promoted her up a level, to learning and teaching co-ordinator. She was above the principal teachers but below the headteachers and the deputy head. She was about my age. I knew her as a teacher and in her promoted role. A lot of the kids could be boisterous and she was known to be strict with them.

105. I saw her interacting with children but I was never in her class. I didn't see her disciplining children. I think she was responsible for discipline along with one of the principal teachers. I didn't see her abusing any children. I didn't hear of her abusing children.

PZY [REDACTED]

106. PZY [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED]. She came in just after Mary O'Brien. They had worked at another school together. Janice MacNeill brought her in just before we moved to Linlithgow, around 2007 or 2008. I reported to her if I couldn't get a hold of Mary. She was approachable but strict with the kids. She tried to install discipline.

107. I saw PZY [REDACTED] with children. She was a strict teacher. If they answered back then she would get them into trouble. If they were misbehaving then she dealt with the more serious punishments and detentions, for example, letters going home, exclusions, or expulsions. I didn't see her disciplining children, other than general stuff. I didn't see her abusing any children. I didn't hear of her abusing children.

PTZ

108. PTZ was a temporary teacher who came in at the end of my time at Donaldson's. I didn't know her. She was about my age. I didn't see her with children. I didn't see her disciplining children. I didn't see her abusing any children. I didn't hear of her abusing children.

PHZ

109. I thought PHZ was PHZ. PHZ came into Donaldson's as a temporary, substitute teacher and at first, he worked in Skill Start. That was the younger ones. Then, when Jane Richards went off on long-term sick, they moved him down to Life Skills working with the sixteen-to eighteen-year-olds. He was my age or slightly older. He was my teacher the one day a week I worked in Life Skills and I worked with PHZ with the kids. PHZ was task orientated. He wanted the young people to get SQA certificates and to sit and do those. That wasn't the way we worked Life Skills and a lot of the kids were surprised at being sat like a school kid. I knew him very little, just the day I worked with him.
110. He was joyful and lackadaisical with the children, but it was all sitting at desks doing worksheets when we'd usually be out shopping or going for a meal. The young people in Life Skills usually had their eighteenth birthday and could choose somewhere to go out for a meal but he said we weren't doing that. I didn't see him disciplining children. I didn't see him abusing any children. I didn't hear of him abusing children.

Allegations that have been made to the Inquiry about me

PFY

111. In a written response to the Inquiry, Donaldson's have advised that a complaint against me was made in 2015 by PFY, a former pupil, during a police

investigation. Donaldson's say that, when the complaint was made, I no longer worked for them, and that the nature of the complaint was alleged indecent sexual propositioning between 2006 and 2011. Donaldson's go on to say that a police investigation identified alleged inappropriate comments of a sexual nature, made by me to PFY [REDACTED] when he was in the process of leaving the school. To their knowledge, no charges were brought.

112. PFY [REDACTED] was a young man [REDACTED] who I worked with. Part of the transition was that I supported PFY [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] where he stayed. I drove down to [REDACTED] once a week and supported him at college there. He had additional needs. He was convinced he was going to be the next David Beckham and he was going to be rich. He was absolutely money-orientated, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] PFY [REDACTED] would make up stories, especially about where he lived and his house. He imagined himself being grander. He didn't mix well with the other young people. The whole thing about this allegation was that it was at a time when we were trying to get him reintegrated back into the deaf community.
113. When we set up the [REDACTED] project, we invited all the old students up to the age of 24 years back to Donaldson's, to see if we could get them back in. The first time we got them together, we found out what they wanted and what support they needed. PFY [REDACTED] attended the first session and told us he didn't like it because, "It was for the poor students." He then lost contact with a lot of the deaf community.
114. The allegations are from the time he was in the [REDACTED] project and three years after he left the school. The two trips he talks about were to Ayr and Edinburgh. We were trying to encourage him back into the [REDACTED] project. It was just the two of us on the trips. He was about 20 or 21 years old. PFY [REDACTED] couldn't be allowed to be out and about because he didn't understand boundaries and couldn't be trusted not to wander. The only reason we had twin rooms for both the things and I shared with him, was because I had to make sure that he wasn't going into other people's rooms. For example, we'd go into jewellers' shops and he'd go around the counter.

115. I talked to his mum to try to encourage him to come to some of the events and she said there was nobody else in his area who he hung about with. His mum was his only form of communication. She had another son who had a baby. Working with PFY [REDACTED] on those things was trying to get him back into the deaf community. The trip to Edinburgh was to go to the [REDACTED] public house. Once a month, the young deaf people met there. The one in Ayr was to meet up with a student he went to school with. We tried to get him to go to Deaf Club in Edinburgh but, because he lived in [REDACTED] there was no transport to get him back.
116. I did not sanction or punish him. I did not abuse him. My response to the allegation is, "No." I spoke to PFY [REDACTED], it was part of the job. PFY [REDACTED] came out with really random questions. I don't know where he got the allegation from. I never propositioned him at all. I knew him from whenever he turned sixteen and came into [REDACTED] until 2015. The passage of time has not affected my recollection of what is alleged. When I first heard about this, it was a year after my conviction and the police interviewed me about my work at Donaldson's and about this. I left that interview and I had no idea where the allegation came from.
117. I have no idea why he's making these allegations, other than a bit of attention maybe. PFY [REDACTED] needs to be the centre of attention and that was always the thing when we were doing work with him. He was known for making up elaborate stories. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We tried to get him involved in the projects. It wasn't very successful because he didn't mix with the young people.
118. If a child was treated in the way described, that was abuse.
119. I never heard anything from the police after the interview. At that time, I was on probation and I spoke to my probation officer about it. They knew I was going to be interviewed about this and my work at Donaldson's. After the police arrested, interviewed, and released me, I spoke to my probation officer and they said as far as they knew, nothing more was coming of it.

Other information given to the Inquiry about me

120. I have been provided with a statement given to the Inquiry by PHW [REDACTED] and dated 9 December 2019. The statement is about her son, PHX [REDACTED]. The statement does not contain any allegations made by PHX [REDACTED] about me. PHW [REDACTED] was the only parent to shout and scream at me at meetings because part of my job was to teach the children about their rights under the UNCRC, and she said I shouldn't be doing that. She said her child only had the rights she gave him at home. I understand where she's coming from, as a mother, because of PHX [REDACTED]'s limited ability to understand the meaning of rights, and the responsibilities and consequences which go along with them.
121. I remember PHX [REDACTED] I worked with him [REDACTED]. We got some funding to do the UNCRC stuff. The Scottish Government were running 'The Big Blether' and 'The Wee Blether' and we had to encourage all students. Part of the work I was doing was with the [REDACTED] class that PHX [REDACTED] was in. There were seven or eight of them. Over three weeks, I had an hour one afternoon a week, with two classroom assistants, to do some work on 'your rights as a young person'.
122. It might have been an Easter service and I was in the main hall. The mother shouted at me, "You have to stop telling my son he's got rights. It's causing me huge problems at home." I replied, "I'm sorry but I have to teach them." I completely understand if they don't understand the concepts of rights and responsibilities but I had to do what the project aims were. She brought this up again during PHX [REDACTED]'s January review when I was there as [REDACTED] coordinator. I agreed with her that not all the young people understood it but I had to do what I was asked to do. She said it was causing her hassles at home because PHX [REDACTED] was refusing to eat, because he had the right to refuse to eat.
123. Some of the information in the statement about the date of the conviction is completely wrong. I wasn't convicted in the summer. I was convicted on 15th January 2014. The conviction is nothing to do with PHX [REDACTED]. Before I worked with the children in [REDACTED],

the parents were informed that I would be working with them. Either me, Jane Richards, or the school contacted them.

Convictions

124. I have an indecent assault conviction against a young man in Falkirk, at a party at a night out. The young man was sixteen at the time and he reported it four years later. The conviction was on 15 January 2014 at [REDACTED] Sheriff Court. The offence was from October 2009, at his mother's house. The sentence was two years' probation and I was put on the Sex Offenders Register for two years. I didn't have the conviction when I started work at Donaldson's.
125. The young man was the son of a member of staff at Donaldson's and not a pupil. I'd been at the party beforehand and ended up back at the house. Seemingly, I smelt his hair but managed at the same time to put my hands behind my back and touch his groin. I was convicted of that. I have no other criminal convictions. Only one [REDACTED] said it was indecent assault against a young man. All the rest jumped on it being a Donaldson's thing.
126. The mother challenged me in the school and I spoke to my union representative. The union representative said the young man was not a school student, it never happened on school premises, it was nothing to do with Donaldson's, and the mother had been advised by the union that she had to take it to the police. I heard nothing until four years later.
127. I still deny the offence. I was asked to speak to the young man that night, by his mother. This was due to the success I had in getting young people back into education because the young man had left school and had taken a job at a local shop. His mother felt he would get more out of life if he had a proper education. Unfortunately, I had probably the worst legal representation. I had no way of appealing the conviction. The night before my case, my lawyer's secretary phoned me and said they couldn't represent me because they were dealing with somebody in the High Court and they'd send

somebody in the morning. I'd never met the lawyer who turned up at my court case and he had never read my file. My trial was starting in the morning and the lawyer said there was no time to discuss the case because we had five minutes to get into court and we couldn't be late. I asked to meet him at lunchtime to discuss the case and he said he wasn't allowed to speak to me during lunchtime. I asked him what would happen. He said I'd go into the dock and be asked all these questions. During the trial, he kept turning round and saying to me, "Is that true?"

128. At the end of it, when I got convicted, I met the lawyer outside. I asked how I put an appeal in and said I'd need help. The lawyer said my PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups certificate) would be null and void, I'd hear from them but they'd get it sorted. Then I heard nothing. I tried phoning the lawyer for months, to then be told they weren't my lawyer but only stepped in at the last minute for that one case. They said to go back to the union, who had arranged my legal representation. The union said I was too late to put an appeal in and I should have done it months ago, hence why there was no appeal. It was one of the things my probation officer was talking to me about, why I didn't appeal. I was told by the lawyers they were going to help and I got dropped like a hot cake. The union said I wasn't a paid-up member with them anymore, and they had sent another lawyer to represent me. I read later, in the newspapers, that there was a lot happening in Donaldson's at that time with allegations about people. I'm not doing the 'woe is me'. That's not me. I've rebuilt my life.

Leaving Donaldson's College for the Deaf

129. I was fired for gross misconduct because I got convicted for indecent assault. That was in breach of the school policies. I was suspended just before the school started after the summer holidays, at the end of July 2013. As far as I know, that was the first that the school were aware of the allegation. I got a phone call from the principal, Janice MacNeill, saying she'd been advised by the Board of Governors to suspend me on allegations of misconduct. She told me it was nothing to do with school, nothing to do with my work in school, nothing to do with any young person in school, but it had recently come to the school's attention that something happened years ago that the

Board of Governors were obliged to investigate. I was suspended that day. I haven't had another job since then and I don't know what I could do, with my conviction. My PVG certificate says I can't work with children.

Helping the Inquiry

130. I have been asked, if I did not see or hear of allegations of abuse whilst I was at Donaldson's, can I help the Inquiry to explain how it can be that such allegations of abuse have been made? I have no idea because, for most of my working life in Donaldson's, I was out of the school for between three and four days. I had four or five members of staff who I saw regularly but I wasn't part of the main staff community of the school.
131. I have been asked, the Inquiry has information to the effect that the experience or abuse that children had at Donaldson's has continued to affect them and impact on their lives, and if I didn't see or hear of any abuse while I was there, can I help the Inquiry to explain how that can be? I've done two degrees in psychology so I completely understand how the mind works. Part of that has been looking at people who have been abused, so I can understand why it would still be impacting people years and years down the line.

Lessons to be Learned

132. The one thing that I'd say was missing was an independent person in the school who the children could talk to. I think that's key. We didn't have that. They had a guidance teacher and their tutor teachers, and they could talk to any member of staff but maybe an independent agency will be set up in the future. The organisation 'Who Cares?' were involved. That was supposed to be independent but they only appeared in the residence and not in the school.

133. If we take Donaldson's as an example, for a lot of deaf young people the staff were their signers. If they were being interviewed and there was no interpreter, then the staff were asked to act as interpreter and at the same time, be a member of staff. That might be intimidating for the young person and you might not get the full story. Using staff who are communications support workers as interpreters when a complaint is being made, is a conflict of interest for those staff. Using my psychology brain, I can understand why things might not be said because it's a member of staff doing the signing.

Other information

134. 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. ^{PWV} 

Dated... 5/9/2025