

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PDP

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is PDP, I am 59 years old and my details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I was born PDP but changed my name by deed poll in 2015 because, to me, PDP has always been my punishment name, not only in the home but when I went back to live with my mother. It was the name used by the Matron I will go on to talk about every time she was about to abuse me. My wife, PDP, calls me PDP as do my kids and everybody who knows me so I decided to change it legally. The reason I didn't change it earlier was because my mother said it was my grandfather's name but it turned out his name was PDP, which is my middle name.

3. I am married to PDP and we have 3 daughters. I am a full time driving instructor. My mother's name was PDP nee PDP. She remarried and had the surname PDP when she died five years ago. The only thing I know about my father is that, when I was about thirteen, the police came to the door and gave me a card I was to give to my mother. It simply said that my father had died. I know he had been in the Merchant Navy as that was how we ended up in the home we were in.

4. My brother PDP is dead and I haven't spoken to my brother PDP for some time. My sisters are PDP and PDP but we rarely speak. All five of us were in the same residential home together.

5. I have no recollection of my time before I went into care. When I was 42 my mother told me I was put into care when I was born. She never told me why except that she was a nurse at the time and, since my father had left, she was a single mum and nurses couldn't be a single mum. In other words her career came before her five kids. I've been told I was in a convent school when I was born but I have no recollection of this.

6. I tried to find my name from the records for the convent in question but they said they didn't have any records from 1947 onwards. I think that is what has happened with some of these places. They've heard about all these inquests going on and are running scared.

Lagarie Children's Home, Rhu, Dunbartonshire

7. The home opened in 1948 and closed in 1982. There are ledgers from Rhu primary, which the police have, which show that me and my brothers and sisters were there from 1960 – 1967. It was run by The British Sailor's Society at the time though they have since dropped the word "British" from their name. I know I was in the home from the age of three until I was ten. The Sailor's Society had this little booklet that described the home and made it out to be the most wonderful place in the world. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

8. I've tried to find out information from local district councils for the area but so far the first ten years of my life don't seem to exist in any records. The home is in Rhu which is just outside Helensburgh in Dunbartonshire, Scotland. My brother [REDACTED] started primary school in Rhu in 1960 or 1961. The ledger from Rhu Primary shows that my brothers had originally gone to a Catholic Primary School in Rutherglen.

9. The home was funded by donations from charity as well as donations from relatives of those children that resided there. You had to have family in the Merchant Navy to get in to the home. It not only took in long term kids like us but would also take kids in short term if there were problems in a marriage or the parents were struggling. We were put in the home on a voluntary basis i.e. it wasn't a court order of any sort that put us there.

10. The home was run by the Matron whose name was Ann Millar and it was her that The Sailor's Society picked to be the Matron of the home. They apparently picked her because she was such a caring and loving person which showed they didn't know her at all. She died two years after we left the home and was replaced by a Reverend Barry. From what I've heard, he was even worse than her.

Routine

11. I cannot remember much about the routine. I remember you got up and if you had clean hands you got breakfast. I can't even remember what the meals were like. Then it was school, back to the home at dinner time and if you had clean hands you got fed. It was then back to school for the afternoon then back to the home at 4pm then dinner and bed at 6:30pm.

12. I am an atheist because, if there is a God, why did I go through what I did. We had to memorise all the books of the bible every night and had to go to church every Sunday which was a mile's walk there and back.

13. There were between thirty and forty kids from under one year to sixteen years in the home that we split into three types. There were the lifers who we thought nobody cared about which included us [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED]. Then there were the weekenders, they would only be in for a week or so and never

got touched. Finally there were Matron's pets. You learned to say nothing to them as anything you said immediately got back to staff.

14. You were put in the nursery until you turned five then you were put into the big rooms. There is an [REDACTED] for the [REDACTED] which I have to turn off every time I see it because it shows a wee boy standing in a cot. That was me and [REDACTED] crying our eyes out but it didn't matter how often you cried, nobody came and you soon learned not to cry. I hear the phrase "Big boys don't cry" but I've only recently learned that crying is a great release. I'd lose the head if anybody ever said that phrase to my grandsons.

15. The boys' dorm was separate from the girls' except in the upstairs dorm where the older kids slept and it was mixed with girls at one end and the boys at the other end.

16. At the home you could stay outside on a summer day but you would hide behind the swings because you couldn't be seen there. We had no toys except that day somebody brought them for Christmas. We went to the cinema to see Born Free once but that was the only trip I recall. I was also in the cubs but, even there, the Lagarie and the others wouldn't mix. Doctors, dentists and barbers came in to the home to see us.

17. The only chore I recall is my brother doing the shoes. My sister [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had to get up in the morning and serve tea to Matron, tidy her room and at night clean her dirty knickers. If she was in a bad mood they would get her dirty knickers rubbed in their faces. Although I don't recall Matron ever being out of the home, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] told me that one week a year they would go with Matron to Kirkcaldy where she was originally from and they were her personal slaves. They would clean her house, do her washing and anything else she told them to do.

18. [REDACTED] used to be her personal slave until the judge gave her three years for running away. He actually called her a delinquent. Simply for running away? She only ran away because she was scared. [REDACTED] actually told us that the three years she spent inside was the cushiest time she ever had after having been in the home. In prison she had her own room and got three beautiful meals a day and there were no beatings, no shouting.

19. I don't remember my birthdays. There's even photos of me having a party when I turned ten that I don't remember. All the photographs taken in that place were staged because they were usually taken when people were visiting or for photos in the Sailor Society's magazine. They actually advertised it as going there for a holiday. Seriously? How the hell could they say that with that bitch running the place?

Visits

20. I think we got visits from my mother once a month if she could make it. It would have been on a Saturday or Sunday though she wouldn't come if she was

working. When she did come we'd sometimes just sit in the home or maybe walk into Helensburgh. I do remember going into Dino's café.

21. There was no fun on these days. Though we had our freedom for a few hours there was no real interaction between us. We could never tell our mother about the abuse that was going on because if we said anything we'd get battered by the matron. That was enforced on us, especially us lifers, that if we said anything we would get battered.

Other staff

21. There were staff there other than Matron but the only ones I remember is [REDACTED], who was always nice to us, and the gardener Mr Skelton who later died of cancer. I remember one time I was playing at the windows which were on the third floor. I was going out one window, along the ledge and in the next. I fell but was so small my feet got caught in the gutters. [REDACTED] tied dressing gown cords and sheets together and rescued me. Not only did she not punish me, it's the first time I remember getting a cuddle.

22. As nice as [REDACTED] was, we were too scared to tell even her what was happening to us. She's now dead. She had been a child there and when she turned sixteen she stayed on as a member of staff. I think it's all she knew. I think the only reason I remember [REDACTED]'s name is because she was so nice, the exact opposite of the others.

23. There were no inspectors that I recall. There was the odd famous person who visited but they were just photo opportunities. There was a garden fete every summer, it was all posh people that came to them, but Matron always warned us that if we were asked a question we were to give "yes" and "no" answers, nothing else. You went to school, you said nothing. Even when we saw doctors or dentists we were too scared to tell them what was going on.

24. I went to the school of dentistry last year and couldn't believe all the modern equipment. I told them I remembered the dentist coming to visit where we lived, I didn't say I had been in care, and that he used to bring his own equipment. I told them how he had these big fly wheels and used to stand there and press a pedal as he drilled into our teeth. They were astounded. The dental procedures we got were very painful but I'm sure it was the same for every child in those days.

Abuse

25. If I was to talk about all the abuse that we suffered in that home it would take a book to tell it all as the abuse happened every day. It's probably easier to give you a number of examples.

26. My first memory of abuse took place on the very first day when we arrived. I remember seeing this big house with a door that looked like something out of a

Harry Potter film. When we arrived I saw this woman with white hair and, being only three years old, I ran to her shouting "Granny, Granny". Instead of getting the cuddle I was expecting she whacked me across the face sending me sprawling across the floor saying "I am not your Granny and you will never address me as Granny. I am Matron".

27. For years I thought that, maybe, I had just imagined that and that it was a bad dream because myself and my brothers and sisters never talked about our time in the home. However, a few years ago I was with my brother [REDACTED] when he was giving a statement to the police and he said his first recollection of the home was seeing his brother getting a smack on the face that sent him flying. I actually cried when I heard him say that as I then realised I hadn't imagined it.

28. I was in the nursery until I was five years old. That's when I became a "big boy" and was given a new uniform and shoes and went to Rhu Primary School.

29. I remember when I first went in to the class I went to the very back of the class. We weren't liked at the school. We were scum, we were dirt. We were picked on because we weren't seen as normal because we were in care. I remember it was the first time I had ever seen plasticine.

30. We were taken there by [REDACTED]. I think her name was [REDACTED] but we called her [REDACTED]. She worked at the home having formally been there as a child. She was the nicest person you could meet. She was the only nice person I remember from the home. There was no minibus in those days and it was a mile walk to and from the school. That meant four miles a day because you went home for lunch.

31. Because I was a "big boy" I was moved to the dorm upstairs and on my first night I wet the bed. A member of staff told me not to worry about it and that they would get the bed tidied up. I can't remember her name.

32. I was at breakfast the next morning and everything seemed fine until I heard Matron shout "[REDACTED]". I went over to her and she battered me. It was with her hands and fists. There are two things about that battering that stick in my mind. The first is that it started a pattern of every time she shouted "[REDACTED]" I knew I was going to get battered hence the reason I've always thought of "[REDACTED]" as my punishment name. The second is that it was one of the few occasions she didn't strip me of my clothes before battering me.

33. After wetting the bed I was moved to what was called the "pee the bed" room. There were about eight boys in that room. Once you were in that room you were humiliated especially when you got home from school and your sheets would be continually hung up on the fire escape so as everybody knew you had wet the bed. The other kids didn't actually say anything because they were too scared.

34. I was in that room till I was ten and didn't stop wetting the bed till I was fifteen. I think I stopped because I wasn't scared to get out of bed anymore. In the

home you'd be terrified to get out of bed in case you got caught because if you did you got the living daylight beaten out of you again.

35. I remember on one occasion, I'd be about five or six when my mother brought in some clottie dumpling. I was starving and stuffed myself with it. The next morning my bed was full of vomit and I had to sleep in the same unwashed sheets for four days. Wet the bed and they cleaned the sheets. Vomit in your bed and you slept in the vomit. You lived every day in that home in a state of fear. It was six or seven years of living hell.

36. When I was five I went to the hospital to get a squint in my eye fixed. When I got back Matron said "So you hate your mum". She claimed I had told all the doctors and nurses that I hated my mother. I don't know if I did or not.

37. One beating I remember happened when I was six. We were told we were getting to watch TV which was a rarity and a real treat. The only things I remember ever seeing on TV were Winston Churchill's funeral and Celtic winning the European Cup. Anyway, we were told at supper to go and get washed and to put our pyjamas and dressing gowns on and go to the big room. I couldn't find the cord for my dressing gown and tried to hide in the middle of the rest of the children so as Matron wouldn't notice.

38. However, I heard matron shout "PDP [REDACTED]". She then grabbed me and dragged me to her chair and then she then stripped me naked in front of everybody and beat me black and blue with a stick. She beat me until she was simply too tired to continue. She then just shoved me to the floor and told me to go up to my room and she didn't want to see me till the morning. I was black and blue all over.

39. This was something she did to everybody to humiliate them. She would strip you naked in front of everybody else before battering you, even those who were older and going through puberty. When I look back I realise that she not only abused us physically and emotionally but also sexually the way she would strip us all either as punishment in itself or to beat us.

40. The day after this battering I was told to wear long trousers to hide the bruising. My mum actually came to see me the next day and I couldn't even sit down. One of the reasons I roll up my sleeves to this day is to show I have no bruises.

41. The beatings from the Matron were a daily occurrence. You could simply be walking passed her and she would lash out with a slap or a punch. It was as if it was fun for her.

42. KER [REDACTED] would visit now and again and she was just as bad. I remember one day we were in the laundry all standing in a line in our best clothes when Matron grabbed my arm and started to drag me towards one of the mangles. I was terrified as I thought she was going to put my hand in the mangle. I was so scared I wet myself. I could see the trail of pee. Matron called me all the names you could think of. KER [REDACTED] then arrived.

43. We were then all stood in a line and Matron suddenly slapped me then her and KER took turns in slapping me and the boy standing next to me. It was only after they stopped slapping us that I realised the boy beside me was my brother. After they stopped slapping me they just went about their business as if nothing had happened.

44. When I left the home at the age of ten my mother weighed me on a set of scales and I was only three stone in weight because being deprived of food was a common punishment. If you had dirty nails it was a slap and sent to bed with no food. It was not uncommon to go a whole day without any meals.

45. When I was nine there was an actress called Barbara Mullen who came to visit on Christmas. We were woken up we didn't know somebody was coming but we were all dressed in our best clothes and taken downstairs. What we saw were big pillowcases with each of our names on them. There were toys and fruit and we stuffed our faces. I think it was the first time I had seen an orange. When we went back down the next day we were all excited to be playing with the toys we had been given but everything was gone. There wasn't even an orange peel on the floor and we never saw the toys again. Nothing was ever said about it again and that is the only Christmas I remember inside the home.

46. Every night we were forced to use powdered tooth stuff to clean our teeth for 15 minutes. It was disgusting stuff.

47. Bath time was a member of staff holding you in the water until they thought you were ready. I remember seeing a magazine that The Sailor Society produced and it had a photograph of a little boy in the bath all smiling with soap in his hair looking like he was having a lovely time. That simply didn't happen.

48. One time I was supposed to be meeting my brother who had left to join the Merchant Navy by that time. He was going to be taking me to Glasgow to show me where we were going to live. The night before I was taken by two members of staff to the bath which was full to the brim with steaming hot water and would probably what you would call a sauna bath these days. I was fully clothed at this time. They picked me up and put me into the water fully clothed then held me under the water. They did this several times then asked me "Why are you doing that with your clothes on?" It was just a laugh to them. It was as if we were just toys to them. They then took my clothes off and scrubbed me. I don't remember their names. They were female.

49. My brother was Matron's personal punch bag. He was always at her side and she verbally abused him all day and if somebody else wasn't available to be punched then he got it. He got stripped and beaten every day.

50. If a car came into the drive you could see the lights reflecting on the ceiling. One night I saw this and got up to see who it was. I heard Matron shout "who's up?" and dashed back into bed. She came storming into the room and got us all out of bed. She made us all strip and then stand there asking who had got up out of bed. Nobody said anything. She left the dorm saying she would be back and left us all standing there naked. It was freezing. When she came back we still said

nothing and she said she would deal with it in the morning. The next morning I just remember being so relieved that she had forgotten what she had said the night before because it was never mentioned again.

51. I once saw my brother [REDACTED] almost being drowned. [REDACTED] had left by then but came back for Halloween. He'd be seventeen at this point. He was "dooking for apples" when Matron came over and held his head under the water until he fell unconscious. She didn't even panic. She just said "he'll be fine". That was the sort of hold she had over us. [REDACTED] was easily strong enough to stand up to her but he was simply too scared of her to do so.

52. The Sailor's Society produced a magazine which had loads of photos of the home, of Matron and even had pictures at one of my birthdays which also showed a birthday cake. I have no recollection of that. There was a picture that shows us all smiling but if you look closely it's clear the smiles are false.

53. My brother [REDACTED] has been an alcoholic ever since he left the home. This is all down to what Matron did to us. It was a living hell.

54. One time when I was ten we were brought together and told my granddad had died. I was walking to the TV room and was crying. Matron said "What are you crying for? The old bastard didn't even like you". I had never heard anyone swear before.

55. Even though me and my brothers and sisters were in the home at the same time, that is the only time I remember us all being together at the same time. We were never allowed to be together as a unit. Anne Miller really wasn't a nice person she was just pure evil. I still find it hard to believe that she was a midwife who brought children into the world and yet went on to destroy others.

56. I have no friends because I learned in the home that you couldn't trust people. Even though I was in the army for 24 years I just wouldn't let myself get close enough to people to make friends. I made acquaintances but not friends.

57. There were four sisters who were in the home at the same time as us. They were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We met up again in Manchester two years ago having made contact with each other via social media after [REDACTED] put the home on [REDACTED] and said she was looking for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. In a separate paragraph she spoke of a younger brother called PDP [REDACTED].

58. Through this I ended up talking to [REDACTED] on the phone for about half an hour. It had been 46 years since we had seen each other on the day they left the home when I cried my eyes out because I felt they were leaving me in that place. When we met in Manchester it was such a wonderful reunion, probably the most amazing meeting I've had in my life.

59. There were swings and a slide in the grounds of the home and we knew if we hid behind the swings then staff in the home couldn't see us. We used to eat leaves because we were so hungry. I only found out when we met the [REDACTED]

girls that one of them, [REDACTED], used to keep worms in a jar. I thought she was keeping them as some sort of pets but it turned out she would eat them at night when she was hungry.

60. There are so many things that were done to us in that home and to a certain extent some things that you would consider bad were almost a way of life to us. It would take forever to tell you everything that happened to us. For instance, I wouldn't count half the beatings we got as punishments, to us they were just beatings and that that is what happened.

61. Mr Skelton, what can I say about him? He was grooming me. I didn't understand this at the time. It was only years later when I spoke to my counsellor and she explained it to me. The first time I met him I would have been five or six. I had a sore throat and couldn't go to school so I was in bed. He came in to bleed the radiator. He then noticed me and came over and sat on my bed and rubbed my hair and said I had lovely hair. I thought nothing of it at the time and in fact thought "This is a lovely guy. He really likes me".

62. He used to take you into the shed and would put you between his legs while showing you how to shell peas. But his hands would be all over you, in your shorts and up your t-shirt. He used to love my hair.

63. One of the worst beatings I got was when I got my hair cut really short. We used to have a barber come in to cut our hair. I told him Matron said I could get a crew cut. When Matron saw it she shouted "What the hell have you done?" and gave me one of the worst beatings ever. The strange thing is that that turned out to be the best beating I ever got because after I got the crew cut, Skelton never came near me again. I think I was about six or seven at this time.

64. I think Skelton also abused my brother [REDACTED]. I say that because about seven years ago [REDACTED] phoned me. He had clearly been drinking and asked me "do you remember that wee rubber bucket Skelton used to carry about?" This was in reference to a wee bucket Skelton used to carry about to bleed the radiators but it also gave him the opportunity to be in the dorms. As soon as [REDACTED] asked me that, I hung up the phone on him and haven't spoken to him since. It just brought back all the memories about Skelton. It was as if he opened Pandora's Box.

65. We got a new pair of shoes every year but you never got a pair that fitted properly. I think they were donated by Clarks shoe shop. Matron's shoes were always polished. To this day so are my brother's because it was [REDACTED]'s job to do all the kid's shoes every night.

66. Another trait Matron had was bending your fingers back. She broke my sister [REDACTED]'s finger doing this. [REDACTED] wasn't taken to hospital. Matron dealt with it herself. People say "It happened years ago. Get over it". If I could, I would. My first happy memory was at sixteen getting on the train to go to Harrogate to join the army.

67. The room next to the "pee the bed" room was where there were toilets and a bath. One night I heard a voice calling "Is anybody out there? Come on in." I got up and went into the room and there was [REDACTED] in a bubble bath. She

was fourteen or fifteen and I was about nine. She told me to wash her with the face cloth and then she said not to bother with the face cloth. My hand was in places no child's hand should have been. I didn't understand what was going on. Eventually she said to stop and that I wasn't to tell either Matron or ██████████ who was ██████████ KER ██████████. Her second name was ██████████ RFP ██████████.

68. I reported that incident to the police but they said they couldn't do anything as she had been a minor at the time. I think a child of ten these days would have had more understanding about these things. It's strange when you look back and see how the generations have changed.

69. My brother ██████████ and ██████████ stole a rowing boat and rowed to Dumbarton. They then got a train to Glasgow and went to ██████████'s mum's house. The police came to the door and they got taken back to the home and got stripped and beaten shitless. They would have been in their mid-teens. I don't know if I ran away from the home but I do remember somehow being in Woolworths in Helensburgh. I stole a cream egg and got caught by one of the shop staff who asked where I lived and when I told her she just said "put it in your pocket but get out". That was the best cream egg I ever ate! Some did run away and when they got caught they got the same treatment, stripped and beaten

70. I remember being in bed one night when I saw a man in a turban looking into the dorm. Sometime later I was in Glasgow with my mother when I saw a man wearing a turban and I told her I had seen him before. My counsellor said I should point this out because I don't know what he was doing there but the light shining round his head was like a halo. Was he from the Arden Caple hotel next door? I don't know.

71. At the school in Rhu I remember getting put next to the cupboard with the biscuits and I stuffed my pockets with them. I got caught but I don't think I got punished for it except to be moved away from the cupboard. In the playground the other kids didn't mix with us.

72. My mother decided she would not get us out of care until she could put a roof over our heads. She bought and paid for a flat in Glasgow. Even though all my grandparents were still alive we were still put into care.

73. We left the home on ██████████ 1967 with the exception of ██████████ who was in the navy. Our mother was due to come to the home and get us. We all got up and dressed and gathered what I can only call our meagre belongings. From the window of the pee the bed room you could look to the bottom of the drive to the bus stop. The bus was every half hour and we ran back and forth to the window all day waiting for our mother to arrive.

74. All day the buses kept leaving but there was no sign of her. It was so disappointing. She showed up in the evening and it turned out that she had decided to do an extra shift at work rather than picking her children up in good time. When she did show up all I remember is walking down this big driveway with a group of strangers who were my brothers and sisters.

75. Before my mother arrived Matron kept saying our mother wasn't coming because she didn't love us. She was just a sadistic bitch who took any opportunity to hurt us. In the late afternoon she said that it was clear our mother wasn't coming and didn't want us and that we should just unpack. I remember she didn't feed us that day saying she didn't want us to be in the middle of a meal when our mother showed up. We were starving but that wasn't anything unusual.

Life after care

76. We got the bus to Helensburgh then the train to Glasgow. We went up three flights of stairs to the top flat. My first memory of my mother's house was seeing a big goose on the kitchen table. It terrified me and I ran out. I wet the bed in my mother's house that night and I remember it was the first time that I wet the bed that I wasn't humiliated. My mother simply stripped the bed and washed the sheets. Not a word was said about the fact I had wet the bed. Having said that, my mother was a bully. My wife brought our three daughters up. She did it with love, hugs and kisses. There was none of that in my mother's house. We saw her on a Friday and Saturday night and that was it. She worked the other nights. Work was her priority.

77. My mother never said she loved us even though she claimed she did. Sometimes I even wished I had stayed in the home. We tended to fend for ourselves. Our mother would come in off a night shift then go to bed until it was time to go to work again. Her room was like a box room while a lodger that stayed in the house, a Polish man called [REDACTED], stayed in a separate room. His proper name was [REDACTED]. We didn't know at the time that he and my mother were lovers.

78. One day I got sent for butter and when I returned my mother accused me of having stolen tuppence from the change. I hadn't and denied it but she was screaming that I had then told this [REDACTED] to take his belt off. He then pulled my trousers down to my bare buttocks and he then leathered me until I confessed to something I hadn't done. My mother had no problem telling [REDACTED] to slap us

79. [REDACTED] has since died. I found out, sometime in the eighties during a family argument that he had been raping my sister [REDACTED] and I don't believe my mother didn't know what was going on. I remember the night my mother kicked him out. He had been out fishing and brought home this huge fish he had caught. As a joke he started slapping my mother about the head with it. She lost the plot. She poured ketchup over his head. There's something in my head that says she had hit him with something and that it was actually blood but I'm sure it was just ketchup. He was then put out and never allowed back in.

80. For the first two years that we were in the flat my sister [REDACTED] had a terrible habit of biting me. My arms were covered in bruises. After 2 years I snapped and battered her over the head with the Hoover. The biting stopped. Life with my mother was nearly as bad as in the home. I can't say anything nice about my mother except maybe she tried to be nice to her grandkids.

81. I got on well in school, especially in the first one in St George's Road. I was always first to put my hand up but soon learned not to as I got constantly bullied because of it. I couldn't fight back against the bullies because I had never been allowed to retaliate in the home. I was easy pickings for the bullies. My brother [REDACTED] was the same. I'd go home with black eyes and probably got another slapping for getting a black eye. She would never go the school and ask what was happening to me.

82. I joined the army at sixteen to get away from my mother. At first my mother refused to sign the papers but I eventually persuaded her to just let me go. My mother bought me a suit for the interview and I was paying her back for it at £10 a month until I got married. She actually phoned my pay office to make sure I paid it to her every month. She later claimed she had been saving it up for me but I never saw a penny.

Impact

83. The first time that life in the home affected me in later life was when I walked into the married quarters at my base in [REDACTED]. I went upstairs to the bathroom and was ready to vomit because [REDACTED] had got a bar of carbolic soap. I just lost it and unfortunately took it out on [REDACTED] asking her "what the hell is that doing in this house?" This was because that was one of the ways that bitch used to punish us when she would put the bar of soap in our mouth, make us bite down on it and make us eat the flakes. It was only last year that I told [REDACTED] about Skelton and [REDACTED] RFP [REDACTED]

84. It all became a big bubble when my army base was mortared in 1994. That was the first time I learned to cry because it was a bubble bursting. It was unfair on my wife and kids but that was everything suddenly coming back. As my wife [REDACTED] will tell you, I used to shout at the kids and get angry. I would never hit them but the whole situation caused me to be a different person. I would add though that I have always loved my children and grandchildren and we are a very loving family. As [REDACTED] will also tell you I've mellowed over the last few years and myself and the kids get on really well.

85. When I was in the army I never really had time to think about things in the past. The important thing was staying alive but I've since learned that if you're in a traumatic experience, like getting blown up, it can cause previous trauma to come up. The problem is that since it came up in 1994, it's never gone away.

86. People in authority don't bother me. I was in the army and it was after the bombing that I changed. Before it I would bollock somebody privately if I had to tell them off but, after the bombing I would do it in front of others. When I first saw a psychiatric nurse he said it wasn't the mortar attack that changed me and I realised it was my time in Lagarie. I was taking anti-depressants and thinking a lot. I was even shouting at the kids which is why I went to see my medical officer. Basically I was suffering from PTSD from both the mortar attack and recalling my time in the home.

87. Another way it affected me was that I became extremely jealous of my grandsons and just wish I could have had the wonderful childhood that they have. They are not spoilt but they have love and affection and I look at them and know that that was what I wanted as a child. It wasn't just the home that took my childhood from me, my mother and father are to blame as well.

88. It's hard to believe that the simple act of my father walking out on us destroyed my childhood. I hate my mother and didn't cry when she died. My sister [REDACTED] loved my mother but she never liked her. To [REDACTED] my mother was just a wee lady who came to visit us. I think it is because we were kept apart as children that we are now such a disjointed family. If one of my brothers or sisters contact me it's just to give me bad news. As my sister says, the only times we're together now is at weddings and funerals.

89. I don't have problems any more expressing my emotions. I learned as a kid that the sooner I stopped crying the sooner Matron stopped hitting me. I eventually learned not to cry and I stayed that way until only a few years ago. Now I can't stop crying and it's one of the greatest emotions we have. If anybody ever said to my grandsons "big boys don't cry" I'd crack up, I'd go through them.

90. I get anxiety attacks and get depressed on the odd occasion and sometimes just want to be on my own. I was on anti-depressants for six months from the medical officer and then when I went back to see him he wanted to renew my prescription but I told him I hadn't been taking them for weeks. He chewed the head off me because apparently you were meant to come off those tablets slowly and not simply stop taking them. To be honest, I'm not even sure they helped me. Certainly I didn't experience any adverse effect when I stopped taking them.

91. Twice, since I've been to Manchester in 2014, I've thought about ending it all and that's down to how The Sailor Society has treated me. I had a gagging order put on me by them but they didn't know how to respond to me because they knew I was telling the truth. I feel they are treating me now the same way they did fifty years ago.

92. I have the support of my wife [REDACTED] and my counsellor and I've told [REDACTED] I'll never get that low again. It was the most frightening experience I have ever had. The chances are that if it wasn't for the support of [REDACTED] and the counsellor I wouldn't be here now.

93. My sister [REDACTED]'s husband, years after they were married, contacted our mother to say that he would never have married her if he had known the damage my mother had done to her.

94. [REDACTED]'s children went into care. His wife was schizophrenic and he woke up one morning to find her standing over him with a knife. My sister [REDACTED] paid to have a hysterectomy at the age of 21 simply so as she couldn't have kids. [REDACTED] has been an alcoholic since he left the home. There is speculation that he has a wee girl but we don't know for sure. I feel as if I am the only one of my brothers and sisters who has had a normal family life.

95. Trust remains an issue. I don't make friends.
96. I remember the first time I got shot at was when we were opening up [REDACTED] and they opened up with an M60 machinegun. The way the army dealt with such things at that time was to say "right, into the bar. Get a few drinks down your neck". Whether it was bravado or whatever, this meant you had no time to think of the incidents. You finished your drinks, went to bed and the next day you were back out.
97. There was no "You're my best mate" sort of thing. It just didn't happen with me. These were my buddies and I still believe in the "buddy buddy" system because you need to look after each other but it doesn't mean you have to be friends. It doesn't mean you have to be best mates and drink with each other. I've never had a relationship with anybody like that except [REDACTED].
98. That is a definite impact of having been in care because, in care, you didn't trust anybody. When I was younger I would trust people because as a child it's what you did. But then I didn't realise that they would go and clipe on me and I would get a beating. I'm not saying that every beating was like the one I got over the dressing gown cord but, when an adult slaps you it fucking hurts, it was worse than getting the belt at school.
99. I always allowed myself to be bullied because it's what happened to me in care. My teachers begged me to stay on at school but I couldn't as I had to get away from the bullies. That's why I joined the army. Ironically, in the army it was my accent as much as anything that protected me because people were very wary of you if you had a Glaswegian accent.
100. There are times I think about the home every day especially when you see the idyllic Christmas lives on TV. I see them and think "my childhood was never like that".
101. My time in the army distracted me from talking about my time in the home because you were often thinking "Am I safe? Is somebody following me?" So my mind then was self-preservation. It made my time in the army almost a normal life.
102. I was always stand offish which I think stopped me going further in the army. It was the same at school when I would rather sit at the back of the class, I was one of those kids who didn't want to be noticed. If I knew the answer to something I was always one of the first to put my hand up but that became one of the reasons I got bullied so I soon stopped that.
103. It was only after the mortar attack that I learned to stand up for myself. I remember the Operations Officer who used to say "PDP [REDACTED], can you get me such and such on the phone?" and I would have to do so and put it through to him. One day I said to him "Sir, do you have a problem with your fucking fingers?" He said "What?" whereupon I sarcastically showed him how to use a phone. He never again asked me to dial a number for him. That was probably the first time I ever stood up for myself in the army.

104. There are things that can trigger the memory of the mortar attack like somebody lighting a match and you get the smell of sulphur. It's the same with my childhood. Things can trigger off the memories like films or if I'm reading books. I read books about people who were in situations like I was. I can laugh at them, cry at them and one book in particular is "A Little Bit of Candy" by Cupcake Brown. It's about a young American girl who was in the foster system and she was beaten raped, was into drugs and shot at when she was in a gang but she is now a top barrister in America because somebody believed in her and put her through rehabilitation.

105. I've read books like that for years and [REDACTED] will ask me why and the simple answer is that I don't want to be the only one that went through what I went through. When you read about other people's experiences you realise you were not the only one. I know that some went through hell and back compared to what I endured but I now know I was not the only one to go through it. Some might say that that sounds stupid but I actually find reading such books to be quite good therapy.

Disclosure

106. The first person I told was my wife [REDACTED]. She knew I was in care but it was only after we got married that I told her about the abuse.

107. In 2001 I saw an article in the Sunday Mail written by Marion Scott called "Home from Hell". There was a picture of Lagarie and I went cold. I threw the paper at my mother and said "Now do you fucking believe me?" She said she hadn't known. I don't care what anybody says, you can't lock up your kids for seven years like that and not know about it. My mother destroyed all photos and documents of us as kids to forget about it.

108. The article mentioned two people had been abused in the home. The only member of staff mentioned was Ann Miller. After reading the article I went to the RUC and told them about what had happened to me at the home. It was the police officer I spoke to on that occasion who put it to me that we had also suffered sexual abuse because of the way we used to be stripped naked. I had never thought of it that way before.

109. That statement was sent to Scotland then my brother gave a statement at Dumbarton Police Office but nothing happened because everybody was dead. However, now new lines of enquiry are on-going but I don't know who the accused are. The police say they have to wait until these new enquiries are completed before they send another report to the Procurator Fiscal to make a decision.

110. Another person I have spoken to is my GP which I have to do from time to time because I'm a driving instructor. I felt as if there was a knot in my stomach so anxious was I about the test I had to take. I did take the test and passed it but the whole thing with the Sailor's Society had caused me a lot of undue anxiety.

111. I want to be involved in this Inquiry to force those who were responsible for the abuse to me and others to own up and accept responsibility for what happened.

Dealings with The Sailor's Society

112. In 2014 [REDACTED] phoned the Sailor Society and spoke to Stewart Rivers who is the CEO of the Sailor's Society. He said [REDACTED] had gone through it. [REDACTED] thought that this sounded good because he seemed to know what had been going on and that he was going to be sympathetic. He made arrangements to call her back but he never did. [REDACTED], her sister, then called him giving him hell saying how dare he ignore her sister so he arranged a meeting. By that time several of us who had been at Lagarie had met through [REDACTED].

113. [REDACTED] phoned him back and by then there were fourteen of us complaining about the home. We all went to a meeting in Manchester in a church. Present were the CEO, Stewart Rivers, the chairperson Alan Fishbecker and [REDACTED] for The Sailor's Society. I was suddenly made spokesperson and I was asked what we wanted out of the meeting. I said I wanted an apology but not one of those apologies that was undermined by add ons that lessened the effect. I wanted a proper apology.

114. I showed them the photos I had and pointed to one of Ann Miller and asked "How can you call that bitch a nice woman?" I told them that they had glorified the place yet all of us sitting there that day could tell them that that was no holiday home.

115. They then had individual meetings with us all and we told them of our experiences in Lagarie. Alan Fishbecker couldn't believe that what we had to tell him had gone on. He said that they also ran old folk's homes around the world and I said that he better hope the old folk were getting treated better than we had. [REDACTED] stood and said "I was at boarding school and it couldn't have been as bad as there". I can't remember who it was but somebody screamed at her "Fucking boarding school! We were in hell". [REDACTED] just sat down after that. She knew she was beat as soon as she had mentioned the boarding school. It was just such an insult to us as has been the whole way they have treated us since. They couldn't wait to get rid of us because, I think, they all had flights to catch.

116. When we saw the copy of the so called minutes of that meeting they simply didn't represent what had been said. They actually had Ann Miller on the minutes asking questions. Ann Miller? She was dead! And had been for God knows how many years. Also, they missed so much out. They also added things in.

117. For instance, I told you about [REDACTED]. The minutes said she had pubic lice but what she had said was that she had nits in her hair. They said she had nits in her knickers. When I got the minutes back I thought I just couldn't do this anymore. I was disgusted by the way they were treating us. They had told us that this was all

going to be done so professionally but they had twisted everything. For instance, where I had mentioned Skelton they had added "but no penetration had taken place". There had never been any mention of anything like that happening yet there it was in the minutes.

118. After the meeting The Sailor Society offered me counselling which, to me, meant they were accepting some sort of responsibility. They offered me three sessions which horrified my counsellor who I was seeing because of chronic PTSD from my time in the army because of the mortar attacks and things like that. She couldn't believe that they honestly thought that three sessions would cure me and make me forget all about my childhood. In fact, two years on, my counsellor is now seeing me free of charge because The Sailor Society just dumped me. I did eventually get about 28 sessions paid for by them but my counsellor can confirm that my counselling was nowhere near finished when The Sailor's Society dumped me.

119. The Sailor Society set up a liaison officer called Paul Langam. We all got e-mails from Stewart Rivers to tell us this. I went to see the police in Scotland in 2015 and Paul Langam asked to see me on the same day. He put me in this filthy hotel while he stayed in a nice new hotel which was where we met the next day.

120. The first thing he said to me was "Before I say anything, don't go off on one". He had never met me before yet that was the first thing he said to me. Me and my wife [REDACTED] were at the meeting. He said "You were in the army" and at first said nothing about Lagarie. Eventually he said he was going to visit Lagarie and I thought "What the hell is the point of that to you". All he asked me about was my teenage years and nothing about what it was like living in hell. I felt he was doing a costing exercise.

121. Once he heard about this Inquiry he said to several of us that the Inquiry would take five, eight or fifteen years, depending on which of us he was talking to, and as such it wouldn't be worth our while to pursue it. He was clearly trying to talk us out of getting involved with the Inquiry. I contacted them and told them I didn't care if it took me till I was seventy, I would continue until they paid for what happened to us.

122. When I phoned Paul Langham and asked why he had given three of us three different suggestions as to how long the Inquiry would last he denied he had done so and when I asked if he was calling us liars he simply reiterated that he hadn't given three different time periods. I told him I wanted to deal with Stewart Rivers but Langam said he had been hired to do the job and insisted that I would deal with him.

123. I then sent a personal e-mail and at the end of it put a specific note to Stewart Rivers saying what had happened to me since I had met him in Manchester and said I did not want a conversation with Langam but with him. Eventually an arrangement was made for me to speak to Stewart Rivers on the phone, the first fifteen minutes of which was just him talking. I asked him if he had even read the e-mail I had sent about what Langam had been doing to me and other ex-residents of the home. He said he hadn't then put me on hold for five minutes.

124. When he came back on I heard a voice in the background saying "Hello Mr PDP". It was Paul Langam whom Stewart Rivers had said wasn't even in the building. When I pointed this out to Stewart Rivers he said "Well Mr Langam is the liaison for this". He brushed over the fact that he had told me Langam wasn't in the building but, yet, was now in his office and then said he now had a copy of my e-mail. I then pointed out that three different lengths of time had been handed out and that he (Stewart Rivers) was now sounding as big a liar as Paul Langam. Paul Langam again denied he had done so and I asked "So are me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] all lying?" This went back to and fro and the conversation lasted about one and a half hours.

125. During it I was not told that the transcript of the conversation was going to be confidential and at the end they asked me if I wanted a copy. I said I did but only as long as they marked it clearly that I had called both of them liars. He accused me of trying to set them up. I denied this and suddenly it was "Right Mr PDP that's the end of the conversation" and the phone went dead.

126. A few weeks later I got a letter from them with a form to sign saying I could have a copy of the transcript of the telephone conversation as long as, at no time, would I go to the press with it. They would only release a copy of the transcript if I signed and dated this form. So I did as I was asked but returned it with a form for them to date and sign saying either they were lying or me and two former residents were lying. They have since turned round and said they don't need to sign the form I sent them.

127. My argument with them is why did I have to sign their form when they wouldn't sign mine. They simply won't answer me when ask I why the transcript of that telephone call has to be confidential. They seem convinced that, for some reason, I am trying to set them up. I have no reason to do so and am simply trying to point out that they are a couple of liars.

128. After that they informed me that the only way they would communicate with me in the future would be by e-mail or by letter. When I learned of this I wrote and told them that they were now doing to me what they did to me back in the sixties i.e. making sure I couldn't speak. That is exactly how I felt and is how I still feel to this day. Basically they have put a gagging order on me by telling me I can't go to the press with that transcript. They have threatened me with legal action if I do yet at no time during the telephone conversation in question did they tell me that the conversation was classified so I just don't see how they can put a gagging order on me.

129. Paul Langam was supposed to be a liaison person looking after our welfare but I feel he has destroyed us. Mind you, he's a wine maker from some place in England so what his qualifications were to look after our welfare is beyond me.

130. It was after the telephone conversation that they stopped paying for my counselling. They told me they wanted me to thereafter get my counselling on the NHS but when I gave them reasons as to why this wasn't possible they simply dumped me. That was when my own counsellor said that we should finish the

journey of my therapy together and is why she sees me for nothing now. I see her periodically and have seen her eight times this year.

131. The Sailor Society need to take responsibility for what happened. I know it wasn't those who were at the meeting but the Society has to take responsibility. We did get an apology of sorts when they said "We apologise for what MAY have happened". I asked Stewart Rivers how he could apologise for something which they then say didn't happen to which he replied "well we felt we had to say something".

Records

132. There are no records of our time in Lagarie. Having said that, I have been told by The Sailor's Society that they have no records of any kids who were in the home and on various occasions they have said that the records have simply been lost, got destroyed in a flood after they had been transferred to London and also that they were destroyed in a fire. All three can't be true. It was Stewart Rivers who told us this and that that was what he had been told.

133. Paul Langam, as liaison officer, was supposed to try and find the records for us but he passed the buck by saying that they weren't responsible for the day to day running of the home and that they weren't therefore responsible for the records and he suggested that it would be a headquarters in Glasgow. He said they would be the ones who dealt with the day to day running of the home. Apparently the Glasgow office went bankrupt in 1982 when they ran out of money.

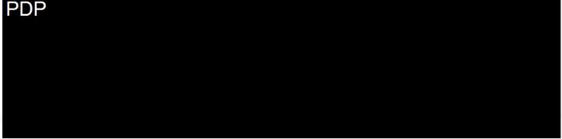
Lessons to be learned

134. I don't know what the vetting was back in those days but the vetting process today sucks. If you haven't a criminal record you can't get caught. This means that inappropriate people applying for jobs to work with children can do so simply because they haven't been caught regardless of what they've done. I think there should be a DNA bank so if people do commit crimes then they can be caught. All vetting of people should include them being thoroughly interviewed. It is insufficient to simply ask the police if a person has ever been charged with something.

135. I believe that talking face to face with people allows you to learn a lot about them. I don't trust some people who get into my car simply because I learn about them by talking to them.

136. Ian Huntly had never been interviewed but I saw him on TV and knew he was guilty. I don't know how I knew but there was just something in his face that told me he had done it. So, for me, vetting must be done face to face and only then do you do checks with the police.

137. 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.

PDP


Signed.....

Dated..... 03/03/17