

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

PJA

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is PJA or PJA. My date of birth is 1963. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I think our family home was in Edinburgh. I know my maternal grandparents stayed on a farm in and my paternal grandparents stayed in in Edinburgh. My dad was and my mum was. My mum died when I was about six months to a year old. Me and my brother, who is three years older than me, then went to stay with my maternal grandparents.
3. My grandparents couldn't cope with two young children so and I both went into care. I have no memory of home life at all.

**Widowers Children's Home, Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh**

*General*

4. The council had a hand in the running of Widowers but I think it was run by a charity organisation for people who had lost their mothers. Originally, that's who got places there, but later on there was people in there who had been abused or whose parents were divorced.

5. I would have been about eighteen months old when I went to Widowers with my brother. It was in 1965. My earliest memory is going out to visit people and having tomato soup. That was with [REDACTED], a friend who was also at Widowers. I would have been about three or four then and that's my first memory.
6. Widowers was a huge building in huge grounds and I remember a gardener, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and his family stayed in a cottage there. His wife was [REDACTED] and she was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had three children, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
7. I remember when you came in the front door there was a room directly opposite, which was [REDACTED] sitting room. To the right there was the dining room and to the right of the dining room was the office. The older boys' sitting room was directly opposite the office. There was also a wee alley way that led through to a staff area.
8. On the left there was stairs and the kitchen and older girls' sitting room. There was boys and girls toilets on the ground level as well. Then there was another set of stairs and just by them, there was a bathroom area, toilets and a younger persons sitting area. At either end the stairs went down into the basement and up to all the bedrooms.

*Staff*

9. The woman [REDACTED] at Widowers was [REDACTED] [REDACTED], we called her auntie [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was [REDACTED]. Other staff members I remember are [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who was not a nice woman, Mary Baxter and [REDACTED] who used to be [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had an American accent, she would have been in her thirties and was a big woman with huge feet.
10. There would always be [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on duty, but the staff all lived in, so there was always someone. They had rooms on the same floor as ours and I think there was about five of them in total.

11. To start with there was about thirty children staying there but that dwindled down to about fifteen or twenty while I was there. I have heard the children weren't to be under two years old and the ages went up to sixteen.
12. My paternal grandmother knew someone on the committee and that's how I got in because I was under two. She didn't want me and my brother split up.
13. There was a few children got adopted out but most of the children were there for quite a while. Sometimes members of their families did come back and get them.
14. I still have contact with many of the children that were at Widowers, when I was there. I did lose contact initially, but I then got back in touch through [REDACTED] and annual reunions.

### **Routine at Widowers**

#### *Mornings and bedtime*

15. There was older and younger boys' dormitories and older girls and younger girls' dormitories. Younger ones were from the youngest to about thirteen and older ones were from about thirteen to sixteen.
16. The younger girls' dormitory had cubicles, two beds to a cubicle, and I'd say about nine or ten girls in the dormitory. The older girls had a room, for three or four girls, and a new girl would move in when an older girl moved out.
17. It was really just your beds and a wardrobe in each cubicle. All your clothes and shoes, which were donated, were in the wardrobes. The beds were metal, cast iron and you had a wee bedside cabinet. You could put posters up and things like that.

18. Members of staff would get you up in the morning, about 7.30 am, just by shouting at you. If we didn't get up they would shout some more and pull off our duvet covers. Then we had breakfast in the big dining room.

*Food*

19. We had porridge or cereal for breakfast. I like porridge, but I remember it was horrible porridge. There was a place outside the kitchen area, that was always locked, it was where all the nice things were, but it was always kept locked.
20. All the food was prepared at the home, in the kitchen which was off the dining room. We all had our meals together and you could just sit where you liked.
21. The food wasn't nice, I remember one of the cooks would smoke and her ash would fall into the food then she would just stir it in. It was things like macaroni cheese and shepherd's pie. We had a lot of custard and I remember the fag ash going into that.
22. We had lunch at the school, we got free school dinners, then we came home for our dinner and tea. There wasn't any food I liked at Widowers.
23. If there was anything you didn't like then you were forced to eat it. You would have to sit there until you ate it and if you didn't eat it sometimes they kept it until the next day and they'd tell you, you weren't getting anything else until you'd finished it.
24. That happened to me quite a few times. I wouldn't eat my dinner and it would be served up to me the following morning for my breakfast. If you didn't eat it you just went without and I would wait until I was at school and get food there.
25. All the staff did that really, and that was from about primary school age right through. From the age of about six or seven until thirteen, that was a bad era, after that things didn't seem as bad. It was still the same staff so perhaps it was just because I was getting older.

26. Now and again we did get a treat. It was always at the weekend and we would line up outside SNR office and put our hands out for a sweet. If SNR didn't like the look of your face that day, you didn't get anything, she would bypass you and you got nothing.
27. There was no snacks or anything like that. We were never asked if we wanted anything and you wouldn't dare ask for something if you were hungry. We would just go and raid it ourselves. You could go and get a drink of water if you were thirsty.
28. The evening meal was about 5:00 pm and we didn't have anything after that, nothing before we went to bed. After dinner we would go outside to play or, when I was older, go and visit friends or have them come round to visit me.
29. Bedtime went with your age, but I'd say it was never any later than 9:00 pm. When we were little there was never anything like bed time stories or getting tucked in or anything like that.
30. The staff stayed there and supervised us all the time, they would work all day until we went to our beds. Then they would go and sit in their living room area. The staff bedrooms were on the other side of the corridor from all the children's bedrooms.
31. If you wanted to go to the toilet in the night you could just get up and go. If you had a nightmare or couldn't sleep, there wasn't really anyone to go to, you just didn't do that kind of thing.

*Washing / bathing*

32. The nit comb came out once a week, every Sunday, and I think we got a bath once a week as well. When you were older you were allowed a bath whenever you wanted one. We shared things like shampoo and toiletries.
33. There was no privacy, not when we were younger, there was maybe two or three to a bath and they were supervised by members of staff. When we were older there

was some privacy. There was two baths in the bathroom so you would maybe be in one bath while a friend was in the other.

*Work / chores*

34. We had to keep the rooms clean and tidy and that was about it. You did that whenever you could, after school or whenever. We also had to make the bed in the morning before we went to school.
35. When I was about thirteen or fourteen, I got a Saturday job, in a local grocers shop. They delivered groceries to the school and I ended up getting a job with them, I'm not sure exactly how that came about though. I got money from that job and from my grandparents, so I did okay.

*Clothing / uniform*

36. We did have all the uniform for primary and secondary school, but it wasn't new and other kids could tell. There would be holes in your clothes and your shoes would be really tatty. We just wore shoes that were donated.
37. There was an area in the home, where you would go to get shoes that had been donated. There was never anything new and it was just a case of getting whatever fitted you. I think as we got older, the donations got better, they might have been new as well, but never up to date stuff.
38. We wore donated clothes outside school hours and if I ever got anything new it would have come from my paternal grandparents because I used to visit them every second Sunday.
39. I didn't have much in the way of personal possessions and things could get stolen because it might be something brand new and you didn't have anywhere to keep them. The bedside cabinet didn't lock.

*School*

40. I went out to school, to Carricknowe Primary, and from what I remember it was okay. I was bullied at primary, I'm not sure if that was because I was in the home but we used to get called 'homers' or 'home-ites'.
41. It might also have been because I was so tall, I was taller than everybody else. You were definitely made to feel different at school, by the other kids.
42. Then I went to secondary at Foresters High, and in between primary and secondary I thought to myself, I'm not having that, and I turned into the bully. I was a bit unruly in first and second year, always getting myself into trouble. Then come third and fourth year I became the model pupil, I don't know why.
43. I liked home economics, I hated PE. I remember a Mr Rae, who took science, he was a bit creepy, there wasn't anything specific he was just a bit leery.
44. The kids all knew we were from the home, we got dinner tickets, which I would sell, but they all knew. I did have friends at school though, I still see two of them now, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
45. We did get homework and we were just left to our own devices at the home. If you done it, you done it, kind of thing. You did it in your bedroom or in the older girls' sitting room.
46. I don't remember having any parents night or sitting talking about my report cards or anything like that. There was no encouragement.
47. I could have stayed on at school but I didn't want to, I wasn't bright enough. I left school when I left Widowers, so I was 16.

*Leisure time / trips / holidays*

48. We had a big back garden with swings and things like that. I also visited friends or friends would come round and visit me. That was allowed, when I was older, probably from about twelve.
49. When we were younger there was some toys, second hand ones, I remember some board games, but basically we made our own entertainment. We would go out and about with friends and play with the toys that were in boxes.
50. We had a television which we were allowed to watch after dinner and sometimes before bed. I can remember sitting watching Andy Pandy, through the day, when I was much younger. When we were older we would just fight over what we were watching.
51. I don't remember having any books, reading wasn't encouraged unless it was books you had from school. There was a library in Corstorphine and I might have been a member at some point when I was older, I'm not sure.
52. We were always just left to our own devices, the staff never organised anything. I did go to the Brownies and the Girl Guides and to a religious thing called Band of Hope. It was all just to get out the home for something to do.
53. There was trips, we got free tickets to go to the zoo and the tattoo and when I was older, about thirteen or fourteen, I used to go to the ice-skating every Friday. I used to go to the swimming as well, at the Commonwealth Pool.
54. I remember that because when I was eleven or twelve I was walking past the deep end of the pool and my brother pushed me in. I couldn't swim and a lifeguard had to save me. I don't remember getting any medical attention for that. We would go with older kids not staff.
55. We also had a yearly trip to Gullane beach. We did that whatever the weather and I do remember that was fun. We also had Christmas parties that were fun too. They were organised for us and we went out to them.

56. We went to the pantomime and the gang show every year. The staff at Widowers organised that and everybody went along.
57. I can remember going on holidays. There was one where I don't remember where I went, or who I was with, I might have been on my own, but it was in Scotland. I stayed with people who had their own children. I remember going to a fun fair and this greyhound going for me, but it didn't bite me or anything.
58. I also remember going on a holiday to Dunfermline once, with my brother, and staying with relatives. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were their names, they had two boys, I think they were an aunt and uncle. That was alright.
59. I mentioned my first memory was going out with [REDACTED] and getting tomato soup. That was before I was in primary school and we went out to a person's house up Craigmound way. It was just [REDACTED] and myself and that happened more than once, that's a happy memory.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

60. We had the Christmas parties that were organised and I remember Christmas being okay, I have happy memories of that. We had stockings left at the end of the bed for when you woke up. It was all donated, but it was new.
61. There was a huge Christmas tree and we had a sack full of presents, with your name on it. We had a Christmas dinner and I do remember it was a good time. There were good times, it's just that they were outweighed by the bad times.
62. I remember going out to one Christmas party, I don't know where it was, but there was a radiator on a wall and I burnt my leg on it. I still have a mark on my leg, I suppose I had cream or something put on it.

63. You did get a present for your birthday and that was about it, no party or anything. My dad and my grandparents would also give me a present so I was perhaps luckier, in a sense, than some of the other kids. Not all of them had people out with the home and some had nobody.

*Religion*

64. You had to go to Sunday school across the road at St. Annes. You didn't have a choice but I didn't like it and I stopped going when I got to secondary school age. They didn't seem to bother about that at the home.
65. You did have to say your prayers before you went to bed. It was like a habit, we were taught when we were younger and you just got used to doing that every night.

*Visits / Inspections / Review of detention*

66. Dad would visit every second week up until I was about fifteen, then he disappeared from the scene. I've been told, since my dad came back on the scene, that my maternal grandparents did visit us when we were very young. When they passed away it was just my dad and my paternal grandparents.
67. When dad stopped visiting I just thought he'd abandoned us. Nobody ever explained or said anything to us about why he stopped visiting. I hated him for years after that.
68. No one ever came in and visited us in the home. We always went out with them and did things.
69. Every second Sunday me and my brother went out to visit my grandparents. That seemed like a chore, to be honest, as my grandmother wasn't a very nice woman.
70. My dad or my grandfather would pick us up when we were younger but then as we got older we just made our own way. When I was young I did look forward to that, but as I got older I didn't look forward to it. It was something I just had to do though.

71. My grandfather was a lovely shy, timid man but my grandmother was very strict and a bit of a tyrant.
72. Other kids would also go and visit family at weekends and I sometimes took pals with me when I went to visit my grandparents. I remember going with [REDACTED] to go and see his dad as well.
73. I also went with [REDACTED] to visit her grandparents. The [REDACTED] were a big family who were all in Widowers. I remember them all, [REDACTED] was the eldest then there was [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They arrived at Widowers in 1968.
74. There was people that came in to Widowers to visit. They were members of the committee of the home. They would come in and see Mrs <sup>HRF</sup>[REDACTED] but they would also come round and have a look as well. The name was Weatherspoon or Watterson, something like that, they stayed up on the hill.
75. There was also the local bobby, <sup>RDY</sup>[REDACTED], he would come in as well. If you'd been getting up to a bit of mischief he would come in and give you a talking to. I didn't like him, just because he was police and authority.
76. There was a special day, called Pound Day, when local people would come around and donate food. We all had to be on our best behaviour and in our Sunday best clothes. We were just putting on a show for the community, making them think everything was hunky dory and we were being well looked after.
77. I'm not aware if any official inspections. I did have a social worker, a lady, but I can't remember her name. She helped me find somewhere to stay when I was leaving. After that you were on your own.
78. I can't remember any social work visits other than when I was caught for the shoplifting. I really don't think I had any other social work visits at all until I was leaving.

79. I don't remember ever having any opportunity to talk with an adult, even when I my behaviour was a bit unruly, no one ever spoke to me, nothing.

*Healthcare*

80. We had a doctor at the local medical centre, Dr <sup>HRI</sup> [REDACTED], and we went to the local dentist as well. We went regularly to the dentist and only as and when, to the doctor.
81. I remember starting my period, there was a wee room outside <sup>HRF</sup> [REDACTED]'s room and you went there to get what you needed. I didn't have a clue what was going on, nobody told you a thing. I remember thinking what's going on here, am I dying.
82. It was an older girl that helped me out and told me what to do. The staff didn't do anything, there was no help and it was really scary.

*Sibling contact*

83. [REDACTED] was at Widowers with me. He was always a bit up himself, he was very clever and we weren't that close. I think he was a bit embarrassed of his sister because I wasn't as clever.
84. The only time I remember him being nice to me was the time I got knocked down. I was coming back from the shops with a box of lard, and this car came from behind a bus and went over my feet as I was jumping out the way. I hit my head and knocked myself out on the pavement.
85. I went to hospital and stayed in overnight. When I came out of hospital, I remember [REDACTED] was very nice to me then. He let me sit in his sitting room and went to get things for me. I just had concussion, so that didn't last very long.

86. There was a few family groups at Widowers. There was the [REDACTED] kids who I've mentioned, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], the [REDACTED], that was [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], two sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and a [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

*Bedwetting*

87. There were children who wet their beds, I did it when I was younger. You were made to sleep in it and sometimes, the next day, the staff would rub your face in it. I've not a great memory of which staff did that, but in that bad era I was talking about, it was all of them.
88. So if you woke up and the bed was wet, you'd be told to stay in your bed and you just had to sleep in it. In the morning, the staff would come round and rub your face in it. There was never any help or support given.
89. After your face was rubbed in the wet sheets, you'd be made to strip the bed then make it back up as best as you could. That would be in front of all the other children in your dormitory. It was very humiliating.

*Running away*

90. [REDACTED] and I were always running away. We were really close in age and we were always doing things together. We would collect food, like cooking apples and things like that, then jump out the window at night. We would run off but we always came back that night. We'd think what are we doing and come back before anyone knew we were gone.
91. You could do that, there was quite a lot of freedom to do what you wanted. We would jump out the windows at night all the time. No one knew, I doubt they cared. No one ever caught us and brought us back, I never saw anyone else doing that, but they probably did.

**Abuse at Widowers**

92. I had a friend at school, [REDACTED], we got caught shoplifting once and she pretended she was also from Widowers. The police got involved and she got found out for giving a wrong name and address. Her parents stopped us hanging about together because they thought I was a bad influence on her.
93. I was about thirteen when that happened and I was taken back to the home by the police. I can't remember, but I think I went in front of a Children's Panel. I was punished at the home though, that wasn't nice.
94. HRF [REDACTED] slapped me about the head and slapped my backside and the backs of my legs. That went on for a few minutes, and she said I was an embarrassment bringing the police to the door. I didn't get anything to eat that night either.
95. I didn't cry, I never cried in there. I would get beatings from the staff but I would never cry. It was because I didn't cry that they would beat me even more, but I didn't cry, I just zoned out.
96. I just blanked everything out, that's maybe why I can't remember so much now. Other girls, like [REDACTED], used to shout at me to cry and they would stop, but I didn't.
97. I would say that I started getting beatings from staff, mostly HRF [REDACTED] and RHJ [REDACTED] RHJ [REDACTED], from about the age of six or seven.
98. RHJ [REDACTED] was a big woman, with big feet and she wore these wooden Scholl's. She would hit you, for no reason at all, with her wooden Scholl's. She would slap you over the back of your head with them or with her hands.
99. That would be in front of other children and other members of staff. That happened quite a lot. It happened to other kids as well, but more to me because I didn't cry. I think I was singled out just because I didn't cry.

100. I did suffer bruises and my pride was hurt, but I didn't suffer any broken bones or anything like that. Bruises on my legs mostly.
101. RHJ [REDACTED] was the worst and it went on all the time she was there. She did leave when I was there and then wanted to come back, back she wasn't allowed. I don't know why she left.
102. There was other punishments, or forms of abuse, as well. You could get sent to HRF [REDACTED] in her wee sitting room and she would make you stand with books in your hands, with your arms held out straight. If you dropped the books you got your legs slapped.
103. You got the belt as well. That would just be for normal day messing up, nothing serious. There probably was disciplinary rules but I can't remember.
104. HRF [REDACTED] would give the belt, outside her office, it was on your hands and it was painful, it would leave a mark. I got that, it happened all the time and to quite a lot of us. There was always a row of kids with their hands out, standing outside her office.
105. It was just for mucking up, I never behaved myself, I was always getting into trouble. I think I just did it out of sheer wickedness because of what I was going through.
106. I remember I once got a beating from RHJ [REDACTED], when I was about six or seven. I'm not sure what it was for, but I went up to the dormitory and upturned all the beds. I was quite volatile and had a quick temper. Then I got another beating for doing that.
107. One of the ways the staff tried to calm me down was to submerge me in a bath of cold water. They would run a bath of cold water, lift me up and put me in the bath. They would then push me completely under the water. I would be kicking and screaming. There would be two or three people involved.

108. This is horrible to talk about, because my brother was involved in that as well. He would sometimes be one of the other persons. He would do that of his own free will.
109. Personally, I think my brother may have been sexually abused in Widowers. I think, as a result of that, he then went on to sexually abuse quite a few people in the home. I wasn't aware of that at the time, but I've since reconnected with people, from the home, and I found that out.
110. ██████████ came round to the house and told me. She said it was going to come out and that she'd rather I knew about it before it did. That was about three years ago. It's awful to think my brother has been through that and done that. I feel guilty as hell.
111. ██████ isn't with us anymore, so he can't be held accountable for whatever it was. He was killed in a car crash in 1986.
112. I was also told by ██████████ that she had seen my brother in ██████████ SNR ██████████, HRF ██████████ HRF ██████████'s, bedroom. Her bedroom door was open and ██████████ was lying naked on her bed. As I say, this is not my memory, it's what ██████████ has since told me.
113. There was a bit on the end of the gardener's cottage, like a storage area, and ██████████ told me that she once saw me and a few other girls come out of there with ██████████ HRF ██████████, the gardener, and none of us girls had any bottom halves on. I don't remember any of that and I don't remember any sexual abuse on me. I've blocked out so much.
114. I do remember ██████████ had a younger sister, ██████████, we were all about the same age and we usually got on with each other. This one day I was beating ██████████ in the boys' sitting room, and I remember being surrounded by people encouraging me. I was sitting on top of her, hitting her head off the floor and ██████████ was one of the girls encouraging me.

115. ██████ can remember that as well. There was no staff there. I would have been about thirteen or fourteen when that happened.
116. This is all hearsay but another friend, ██████, who I knew from school and have since been back in contact with, has told me of another incident. She told me she remembered coming round to visit me at Widowers and that I had told her we couldn't go in to HRF ██████'s sitting room because that was where she measured all the boys willy's. ██████ is her married name, she was ██████ back then.

### Reporting of abuse at Widowers

117. I did report the beatings, to HRF ██████, but nothing was ever done about it. I would tell her I was getting hit by members of staff, probably RHJ ██████. She just made out as if she didn't believe me, and nothing ever got done about it.
118. I just gave up in the end. I knew other people had also reported things, even to the police, and nothing happened. That is just hearsay, from ██████, who told me she had reported things to the police and nothing happened. She actually thought the local policeman, RDY ██████, was involved in it. She told me that, she was of the opinion RDY ██████ had sexually abused her brother, ██████. She also told me ██████ wants nothing whatsoever to do with that now.
119. I didn't report anything else to anyone. Not to a teacher and not to my father or my grandparents. ██████ and ██████ have told me that my brother's behaviour got worse after he had been away visiting my grandparents, but personally I don't know that. I can't speculate about any of that, I don't think anything happened to him at our grandparents, nothing happened to me.

### Leaving Widowers

120. When it came to leaving, there was a social worker who got involved in finding me a place to stay. I went to see it, it was just a room that was let out to students, I spoke to the lady, Mrs Cormack, who owned the house, and that was it.
121. Once I left the home there was no follow up, I was out. There was no preparation whatsoever, we were told nothing. We were just left to fend for ourselves.
122. I was sixteen when I left, my brother was eighteen. He stayed on at school but still left Widowers before me.

### **Life after being in care**

123. I mentioned that my father disappeared from my life when I was about fifteen and was still at Widowers. He didn't come back on the scene until I was about forty five. That was weird at first and if I had been any younger I would have told him where to go, but it was probably the right time for me.
124. If I wanted him in my life I had to see past what he'd done and he did tell me everything that had gone on and about the letters he'd left for me. I tried to tell him about his mother but he just saw her as a wonderful mother, he never saw that she wasn't a wonderful grandmother, he never saw that.
125. Dad told me that he had a big row with his parents when I was about fifteen and that he had to move to London. He told me he'd left a letter with his parents, my grandparents, to explain things, but they never gave it to me.
126. So, I was sixteen and living in this bedroom in a flat at Jock's Lodge in Portobello. I didn't have any support, nothing like that. I went to college and got myself a part-time job as a waitress in a hotel to help get me through college.

127. I think I might have had some financial help for the rent, but I also got a grant from the college and I worked in the evenings. I did catering at college and just kept myself to myself. I had no contact with anybody. That went well and I did well.
128. I spent two years at college, and eventually I got job working in hotels and schools and hospitals, things like that. It was always in the Edinburgh area.
129. In 1986, my brother passed away, and I got his place. It was after that, I met my first husband. I was getting closer to [REDACTED] before he died. I would visit him and things were getting better but then he had the accident.

### Reunions

130. After the home shut down, in about 1980, they held annual reunions and I've been to most of them. They were good and it was nice to see everybody. It was just about seeing folk at the reunions, there was never any discussions about abuse.
131. They stopped because the committee changed and none of the people on the new committee knew us. They said they felt there was no need for it.
132. HRF [REDACTED] kept in contact with us after we left Widowers. She wrote to me now and again and we saw her at the reunion every year. She died in approximately 2009.
133. We kept things going though, and we maintained contact through [REDACTED] and continued to meet up. It was only from about 2014, when [REDACTED] started coming along, that we have been discussing abuse.
134. As well as [REDACTED] and myself, other attendees are [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], her two brothers come on the odd occasion, that's [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], that was HRF [REDACTED]

HRK, the gardeners girl, although I think he was her stepdad. [REDACTED] came along to one as well.

135. Then there's some of the older ones, [REDACTED], who was older than me, [REDACTED], who doesn't come anymore and just refused point blank to admit that anything happened. She says she had a happy childhood and that we got disciplined when we needed to get disciplined.
136. [REDACTED] was another who said it was a happy place, but he might have been involved with the abuse, so he's maybe saying that because he doesn't want it coming out.
137. [REDACTED] is another who stayed at Widowers, he was there with his brother [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was a minister, he's in his seventies now, he's been in touch with us, but hasn't come to any reunions. He has loads of information and has reported many things to the police.
138. The reunions are nice but it does rake up some not so nice memories. I was told about my brother being abused and abusing others. I didn't know that and that's what's caused most of the upset for me. I feel so guilty.
139. I think he went on to abuse after he left the home as well. He was abused as a child so maybe you can see why he might abuse, when he was younger, but when he was older, he should have known better.

### **Impact**

140. I'm quite upset to think that I was put into care to be looked after, and that my father had to pay for that. He thought I was being looked after and we weren't. I just feel let down by the system.

141. With relationships I was alright. My trust isn't too bad but emotionally I am quite hard. I have difficulty expressing my emotions, I put up walls to protect myself. I don't cry a lot, even now. I link that to those experiences at Widowers, the beatings to try and make me cry.
142. I've been described by people close to me as hard on the exterior but soft in the centre. I can be quite heartless and cruel and I think that goes back to being in the home.
143. I think being in Widowers affected my attitude towards authority. It made me rebellious up to about the age of fourteen. I was a model teenager after that but it did affect me.
144. Even now, since things have come out, I have been quite aggressive and physical. I'm now seeing a counsellor, Jackie Hamilton, on a weekly basis and I'm on my second twelve week batch at the moment. I find that very beneficial, she's a lovely woman. I did that off my own back because I just thought my temper was getting the better of me.
145. My husband, [REDACTED], says I frequently wake up in the night crying. I shout out things like '*leave me alone*' and '*don't touch me*'. I'm not always aware of that, I know I've woken up crying but I wasn't aware of the shouting, not until [REDACTED] told me.
146. My father told me that when my maternal grandparents died they left [REDACTED] and myself money. We were in Widowers then and we never got it, I have no idea what happened to that money.
147. I spoke to <sup>HRF</sup>[REDACTED] about that before she passed away. She said she had a recollection but I would need to speak to the committee or treasurer that now deals with all that. I spoke to them and they must have spoken to her because the next thing was she denied having said anything to me.

148. My mum was an only child so I've never had any contact with any family on her side. I don't even have a photograph of my mum, I have nothing, no photographs from my childhood.
149. I suppose being in the home affected my education because we weren't really encouraged. No one encouraged anyone to do anything to further your career or make things better for yourself. Compared to some of them though, I feel I've done well.
150. From the reunions, I have seen the impact being in the home has had on some of the others. There's been a lot of self-harming and there's a lot of drug and alcohol dependency.
151. [REDACTED]'s brother took his own life and we reckon that was due to the things that happened to him in the home and [REDACTED]'s sister [REDACTED] died of a brain haemorrhage and she thinks that's from the beatings about the head.
152. So, I have witnessed the impact being brought up in care at Widowers had on everybody else as well. I feel I've got off lightly, I'm not alcohol dependent, I'm not drug dependent and I've never self-harmed yet [REDACTED] tells me I had the worst physical abuse of them all.

### **Reporting of abuse**

153. I did report things to the police, in about 2016. I gave a full statement about what I could remember. The police were very nice and very supportive. They got back in touch and told me the people I had named, which included [REDACTED] RHJ and [REDACTED] HRF [REDACTED] HRF, had died or couldn't be found so there was nothing more could be done about it.

### **Records**

154. I went to Open Secrets, I think it was, in Queen Street, Edinburgh, it was a Mick Armstrong who was the guy we saw and he tried to get my records from the home. He came back and said there were no records of me ever having been in the home.

### **Lessons to be learned**

155. You must listen to what the children say, don't think they're lying or making up stories. It can't happen again.
156. It would have been better to have some support, but in my time it was probably just the era, children weren't heard, they weren't believed, people only believed an adult.
157. At sixteen you shouldn't just be turned out on the street by yourself with no support. Some of my friends still had family, but I had no one, it was just [REDACTED] and me. I was out and that was it.
158. There was no one for us to speak to, there was no support. We even thought the policeman was involved. That's probably why some people rebel against authority because the ones that you did tell were probably involved in it.
159. The attitude was that the kids were being looked after, they had a roof over their heads so what more do you want.
160. Things must change, that must never happen again. It can't happen, children must be looked after. I don't think they will learn from it, well they might learn a bit, but I still think abuse will happen, they won't put a stop to it.

### **Other information**

161. 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.

PJA  
[Redacted Signature]

Signed.....

Dated..... 22/8/19.