

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PJQ

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is PJQ, but I am known as PJQ. PJQ is my married name and the name on my birth certificate is PJQ. My date of birth is 1963. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Background

2. My mum's name was and my father's name was. Both of my parents are dead. My mum died three years ago. My mother had seven children in total and I'm the middle child. The first four children were to my father and I'm the youngest of those four. The next three children all have different fathers. There were a lot of men coming in and out of our lives.
3. is the oldest sibling and he's now 62 or 63. is 61, then there's who's 59, I'm 57, then there's who is 54, who is 51, and who is 45. We grew up at the bottom end of in Glasgow, which is called. We had two rooms, a wee room and a big room. There were three sets of bunk beds in a row. We moved to Possilpark after we came out of Lagarie and we then moved to Maryhill when was a baby.
4. When my mother was pregnant with me, my family have told me that my parents' marriage was more or less over. My dad had an affair while she was pregnant with me. To add salt to the wounds, the affair was with my mum's Aunty who was only a couple years older than her. Aunty was my grandmother's sister.

When my mum was seven months pregnant with me, my dad declared his undying love to Auntie [REDACTED]. He was prepared to give my mum and his kids up. My Auntie [REDACTED] was going to give up my Uncle [REDACTED] and their kids and they were going to go away together. At the last minute, my Auntie [REDACTED] backed out. She stayed with my Uncle [REDACTED], but after that I just remember her being an alcoholic. My Uncle [REDACTED] did everything, went out to work, took care of the house and fed us when we were allowed to stay there.

5. When I was born, my mum didn't want me. In those days, the father would go to register the birth. He registered me as P J Q [REDACTED]. That was just another kick in the teeth to my mum. She wanted to change my name completely, but by law she couldn't. Once it's done, it's done. They told her that the only way it could be changed was if there had been a wrong spelling. They were able to change it from P J Q [REDACTED] to P J Q [REDACTED]. I was a reminder of what had happened when she was pregnant. My mum had a continuous hatred of me that lasted my whole life, even when I was an adult.
6. My family have told me that I was in hospital when I was very young. I have no memories of being there, but apparently my father fractured my skull and pulled my arm out of its socket. They have told me that I lost my memory. There was an African nurse who looked after me. She called me P J Q [REDACTED] and the name stayed with me. I think the name P J Q [REDACTED] suited my mother as well because she didn't have to call me P J Q [REDACTED]. There is nothing about that hospital admission in my medical records. I was born in [REDACTED] and I was put into hospital with gastrointestinal problems in October. I was there for about a month. That's the only letter that's in my medical records from my childhood.
7. I don't have any memories of being at home before going into care. I believe that my mum and dad split up when I was about two. My first memories are of being in the children's home in Rhu, which I now know to be called Lagarie. Apparently, my mother had a breakdown. My father was in the merchant navy so that was why we got into Lagarie.

## **Lagarie House, Torwoodhill Road, Rhu, Argyll**

8. I think I was maybe about three when I went into Lagarie. We called it Rhu because it was in Rhu. I might have been a bit younger. I know I was roundabout that age because my first memory is of wondering why they had put me in a cot. I knew that I shouldn't have been in a cot because I was too big for it. I was in Lagarie with my three older siblings.
9. I can remember going in the door to the home, but I don't know whether it was my first day. You would go in the door and there was a big staircase coming round. To your left, there was a nursery. To your right, there was a dining room, which was a large front room with big windows. I'm a bit confused about the layout because I was kept downstairs for a lot of the time.
10. I can remember the lady in charge. ██████████ remembers the names of staff and she's told me, but I don't know remember any names. The lady in charge was called the matron. She was a big woman. She reminded me of my grandmother, my nanny. She used to wear an old nurse's hat that folded down at the back and sat up at the front. She had a white collar with a brooch on it. She wore a big, blue dress. I can't remember whether there was a belt with it. It had white cuffs. I always remember her being very no-nonsense. You never saw her smile. There was another member of staff at Lagarie. I didn't know it at the time, but she was <sup>KER</sup> ██████████ She was a wee and meek kind of person. I don't remember any other members of staff, other than a man who cut the grass.
11. There were a lot of children in Lagarie, but I don't know how many. I don't remember any of the children being older than my brother. He would have been ten or eleven, maybe younger. I think we were there for about four years over the two spells. I do remember going back. I think that was when I was put upstairs. It may not have been, but that's how I think of it in my child head.

## **Routine at Lagarie**

### *Mornings/bedtime*

12. I stayed downstairs for much of the time that I was in Lagarie. I was allowed upstairs at some point. I was put into a bed beside my sister, [REDACTED], when I moved upstairs. My older brother and sister might have been up another flight of stairs, but I don't know. I can't remember that. I was the youngest, so I'm assuming that's why I was downstairs initially. I remember wondering why I was in a cot and not a bed.
13. There were rows of beds in the dormitories. I remember being told to get to bed, but I don't remember what time it was. Before bedtime, the matron would stand at the toilets. There were rows of sinks, like in a school. It was dark, I think dark wood. You weren't allowed to talk or laugh. If you laughed or carried on, you would get it. It was very rigid. You had to brush your teeth, do what you had to do and go to bed. We weren't allowed to say good night to each other but we had to say goodnight to the matron.
14. My sister, [REDACTED], was a bed wetter right up until the age of sixteen, seventeen. I think it was when we went back to Lagarie the second time that I was in the same bedroom as [REDACTED]. Because she kept wetting the bed, the matron wouldn't allow her to have any blankets or sheets. She had to lie on the rubber mat. I always remember the red rubber mat. You can't forget it. My sister was lying there with nothing on. She was just lying there in her pyjamas on the red rubber mat. I had one blanket and a sheet and I remember giving her either my blanket or my sheet. One time, I got caught sharing my blankets with [REDACTED]. I was pulled out onto the landing and then made to sleep with no blankets and sheets.
15. We had to make our beds, but I don't remember doing any other chores.

*Mealtimes/food*

16. I remember that the food wasn't good. I wouldn't eat the porridge. I don't remember being given anything else to eat at breakfast and the porridge was disgusting. I would be forced to sit in the dining room for the whole day because I wouldn't eat it. KER  
KER would sit with me. Everybody else would be away from the dining room and I would need to sit there. I would stare out of the big windows.
17. KER would sit in a big chair or a desk, doing stuff in big books. She would be made to sit with me until I ate it. I never ate it. I would sit there in the dark. I was there for the whole day. I think I probably did eat it at some point, but I can't remember eating it. I wouldn't get my lunch or dinner until I ate my breakfast. I think other children would come in for their meals and look at me. I was the bad one.
18. KER was the nicer one of the two. She used to beg me to eat my breakfast. She would say, "Please just eat it. Come on, you'll be able to get out of here." I remember her begging me a lot.
19. I don't really remember getting lunch or dinner at Lagarie. I don't remember eating any food that I enjoyed.

*Washing and bathing*

20. I have no memory of bath time. I just remember standing at the row of sinks, brushing our teeth at bed time.

*Clothing*

21. I remember at the top of the stairs, there was a double door. You opened the top half of the door but the bottom half stayed shut. It opened into a cupboard. It was like a linen cupboard and it had loads of shelves with clothes and underwear in it. We had to stand there and hand in our dirty clothes. KER would take bits and pieces off the shelves and give us our clean clothes. The matron would check our dirty

clothes. If we had soiled our underwear, it wasn't good. We would be punished for that. We would be pulled aside in front of everybody.

22. We just wore random clothes. We didn't have a uniform. I don't think I had any clothes of my own. I remember all the clothes that they gave me didn't fit. They were too big.

### *Schooling*

23. I never went to school at Lagarie. I was the only one who didn't go to school. My siblings went. I remember thinking that I was big enough for school, but I just didn't get sent.

### *Leisure time*

24. I would meet my siblings in the corridors, but we weren't allowed to talk to each other or anything. It was really quite strict. The time was very set. I don't remember play time. I remember being allowed out onto the grounds. It was all grass. There was a brick house, like a doll's house. We would go in and out of that. I don't remember anything else, like toys. I do have a photograph of me standing on top of the doll's house. I'm holding a peg doll, which is literally made of pegs. I can't remember a playroom or anything inside the home.

### *Personal possessions*

25. I remember that I had that peg doll. My sister told me that my Uncle [REDACTED] and Aunty [REDACTED] gave it to me when they came to visit. I think we had wee boxes where we put all our stuff. It wasn't in the bedroom or anything like that. I remember it being very impersonal. It wasn't a warm place. I remember the feeling of being cold. Everything was cold at Lagarie.

### *Healthcare*

26. I had a prolapse in my back passage when I was very young. It happened again when I was in Rhu. I remember that I was still in the cot. I was taken to the hospital, but I don't remember much else. I remember being taken back to the home when I was better.

### *Religious instruction*

27. We definitely said our prayers before our dinner. I don't think it was a particularly religious place. I don't remember going to chapel or anything like that.

### *Christmas and birthdays*

28. I have no memories of birthdays at Lagarie. I remember Santa would come and it was a big deal. The tables would all be set up. We were allowed to make a noise, talk and laugh. We had everything to eat in abundance. We ate in the big dining room and the tables were put together. I think it was the first time that I had ever seen or eaten jelly. The home was decorated. We did get a present for Christmas, but I can't remember what I got. I remember it was stuff that we never usually got and we were allowed to be happy.

### *Visits/inspections*

29. I can't remember any social work visits. Lots of time would go by between visits. My mum came to visit us twice. I remember she had her hair in a beehive hair-do. She had a leopard print fur coat on. She had a new man by then called [REDACTED]. He came with her when she visited. He's the father of my sister [REDACTED]. I remember not liking it when my mum came to see us. Although I was unhappy in Rhu, I would rather have been there than at home with my mum.
30. My Uncle [REDACTED] is 21 in the photograph of me with the peg doll. He was holding onto me, making sure I didn't fall from the roof of the doll's house. I'm really wee in the

picture. It was the day he got engaged to my Aunty [REDACTED], who is my mum's sister. They had come up to visit us. They came to visit us more than my mum did. I think they saw it as a wee day out. I remember being out on the grass, but I don't remember them taking us out anywhere.

31. I remember that we weren't allowed to talk and laugh unless somebody was coming in to the home. We would be putting on a show. Seamen would come over from the submarines. I remember they would visit, but I don't remember much more. I don't know where we went or whether we were taken out of the home, I just remember them being involved.
32. I remember a princess came to visit. I always thought it was Princess Anne, but my sister thinks it was Princess Margaret. It was one of them anyway. We were in the [REDACTED]. My mum had the [REDACTED] and it was on the [REDACTED]. My brother was handing the princess a bouquet of flowers. I gave flowers to her lady in waiting. The only reason that I remember her name is because she was called Miss Tit.

#### *Running away*

33. One night, my brother woke us all up. I was wee, but I don't know how old I was. He took us down the stairs. He said that if he smashed something near the front door, the door would open and we could run away. I remember asking where we were going to go. We were all holding hands. [REDACTED] smashed something and then there was chaos afterwards. I remember the doors did open, but we never got the chance to run away. I don't know whether somebody opened the doors, but in my brother's mind they would open automatically. It was pandemonium. We were punished for trying to run away. The matron put her fingers down our throat and threatened that she would drop us over the stairs. I don't think we tried to run away again.
34. There were boys and girls running away all the time. They were caught on the motorway. They were brought back. I remember a boy running away, naked, and being brought back. I can't remember his name. Children were brought back to the home by the police. I think the police must have known what was going on at Lagarie.

## **Abuse at Lagarie**

35. The matron used to do things like pull you by the scruff of your neck, like a puppy. She would hold you like that over the stairs and tell you that she was going to let you go. She did something like that when I was caught sharing my blankets with [REDACTED]. She held me over the stairs and told me not to ever do it again. [REDACTED] remembers that happening as well. She remembers a lot more than me.
36. If your clothes were soiled when she checked them, the matron would stick her fingers down your throat. I remember gagging constantly when she did that. It was almost as if she liked it. Sometimes, the matron would stick your toothbrush down your throat or brush your teeth really hard. Sometimes, she would punish us by skipping one of our meals.
37. I saw the matron punish other children in the same way. It happened all the time. It was every ten minutes. Somebody was always getting something wrong or doing something that she didn't like. It never stopped.
38. My brother, [REDACTED], was abused at Lagarie. He doesn't want to be involved in reporting what happened at all so I don't want to go into detail about what happened to him. That hurts me more than anything that's happened to me throughout all the times in the children's homes. It kills me the most. My brother is such a gentle person. He would never hurt anybody. He took care of us as much as he could. It must have been hard for him. He just can't even talk about it. It just hurts me so much about [REDACTED].

## **Reporting of abuse whilst at Lagarie**

39. I remember telling Mrs Hillhouse, our social worker, that we weren't happy at Lagarie and that they were bad to us. I think I was older so it might have been the second time that I was in Lagarie. She didn't ask me anything else. I think I was just seen as a child. I don't remember telling anybody else what had happened there.

## **Leaving Lagarie**

40. We were in Lagarie for about two years. Apparently, we got home for about six months and then we were put back in again. I don't have any memories of those months at home. I've been told that we went back to Lagarie for the second time because my mum wasn't coping. The matron and <sup>KER</sup> were still there. I don't have a sense of length of time or ages when I was at Lagarie.
41. I don't remember leaving Lagarie for the first or second time. I do remember moving to the house in Possilpark and it was after we had come out of the home for the last time. When we all got home, I made my first communion. I don't think we'd been home for very long so I must have been about seven when we left Lagarie.

## **Life at home in Possilpark, Glasgow**

42. My mum had another child after me, who we called . Nobody knew who her father was, but we now know his name. We didn't meet him and I don't remember him. I remember 's father, . He was there for ages and then he was away for ages. He was there when we came out of Lagarie and he was there when we moved to Possilpark. I remember my mum being pregnant with . I remember her sitting by the fire, knitting cardigans.
43. I remember we had a social worker called Mrs Hillhouse. She was always in the house. I hated her. She knew my mum was abusing me and she didn't do anything. She ended up being my mum's pal and I hated her because of that. In my mind, she was there to help us. I don't know whether anybody told me that. She wasn't helping us. She would sit with my mum, drinking cups of tea and having a laugh and a joke. She didn't know that my mum had given me a doing an hour before she came or I'd be upstairs, having been told not to come out of my room because I had a black eye. I couldn't understand how everyone that I thought would take care of me never did, Mrs Hillhouse being one of them.

44. For as long as I can remember, my mum abused me. My mum most definitely had mental health problems. I didn't know that at the time, but looking back as an adult I can see that she definitely did. She didn't abuse my siblings, just me. I was the 'PJQ [REDACTED] bastard'. That was how she'd address me in the house. She would say things to my siblings like, "Go and tell that PJQ [REDACTED] bastard to get down here." I didn't have a good upbringing.
45. I don't think I was at home for very long before [REDACTED] and I were taken to the next children's home. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] didn't go into that home. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went together to foster parents. I don't know why we separated from our siblings, but I think we went into care because my mum wasn't well again.

#### **Unknown children's home, Glasgow**

46. I was probably about seven, coming up for eight when [REDACTED] and I went into another children's home. I called it Hamilton home so I presumed it was in Hamilton. [REDACTED] has told me it was down the banks of the River Clyde, off Maryhill Road. She says it was called Dawsholm. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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48. I don't remember being told that we were going somewhere. I just remember being in Mrs Hillhouse's car, going to that home. We were taken there by our social worker, Mrs Hillhouse. It was a nice, sunny day. I remember the driveway. When we arrived, the dog, Polo, ran out. I can remember that clearly. I don't think I had any personal possessions at that home. I don't remember having a bag when I went into that house. I don't even know if I was aware that we were going into the home.

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### **Leaving the children's home in Glasgow**

60. I think we were in that children's home for nearly a year. I remember the woman in the home telling us in the playroom that somebody was coming to get us. She said somebody was coming to get us that day and that we were going home to our mum. I remember that I didn't want to go home. [REDACTED] was saying, "We're going home." I was crying and saying that I didn't want to. Mrs Hillhouse came to take us back.

## Life after leaving care

61. I went to St. Cuthbert's Primary School in Possilpark. I didn't start school until primary two or three. I think I went straight into primary three because I definitely went in with the older children. I remember getting swimming lessons in the big pool on the grounds. I didn't get into trouble at school, but I wasn't successful there. I went to St. Columba Secondary School. I was always a people pleaser, which formed the type of person I am today. Even when I started school, my mum would keep me off a lot of the time because I had injuries. It wasn't until later in life that I got myself educated.
62. When we came home from the second children's home, the abuse from my mother got worse. It continued my whole life. We didn't go into any other children's homes. The abuse at Rhu was less frightening than the abuse I got from my mum at home. I knew the matron would only stick her fingers down my throat for so long, whereas I never knew what was going to happen at home with my mum. She was very calculated. She wouldn't go into frenzies or anything. She knew every step she was going to take. I could read her very well because I probably had to.
63. Mrs Hillhouse our Social Worker came to the house right up until I left home. She was my mum's pal. She was the head of Glasgow City Council social work, so she was really high up. She would come up the stairs, carrying black bags. I would be thinking, "Oh, shit. Here she comes." They would be full of second-hand clothes. I would walk about in some mess. I would have a tartan kilt. In second year, I had trainers that had left and right on them. My mum made me wear them. They didn't even fit me because I had to put toilet roll in the front. I always wanted to sue Mrs Hillhouse and Glasgow City Council, but she's dead now. Mrs Hillhouse was at my wedding. My mum invited her. I had never looked at her or spoken to her. I said, "What the fuck is she doing here?"
64. My brother, [REDACTED], was born when I was about eleven or twelve years old. We moved to Maryhill when he was a baby. His father was called [REDACTED]. He was in the Territorial Army part-time and he had another job as well. He was in our lives quite a lot. My mum's boyfriends didn't really pay attention to me. None of them tried to stop

my mum doing what she did to me. I remember if [REDACTED] was there, she didn't do it as much. [REDACTED] would get a fish supper for his tea on a Friday. He would come home with a carrier bag full of sweets and empty it all over the floor. He was good like that, but he was allowed to hit us with the belt if we were getting chastised. He hit us all with the belt for going up the canal, which we weren't allowed to do. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went swimming in the canal, so that was even worse. We all got the belt for that.

65. When I was about thirteen, we all came home from school and my mum announced that she had got married that day. The wedding picture was up on top of the telly. That was the last man that my mum was with when I was growing up, [REDACTED]. He didn't give a shit. He was quite happy as long as he was getting his cans and fags in every night.
66. You would never know what kind of mood my mum would be in. She'd be behind the door and you would suddenly get a massive slap or get kicked down the stairs. I never answered her back. I never said no to her. I would admit to things that I hadn't even done. She would batter me until I admitted them. I knew that if I admitted things, it would stop her battering me. I think she knew that I hadn't done those things. One of the major things my mum would do was stop me from washing. My mum wouldn't let me get washed so I wouldn't go to school. If she did let me go to school, she wouldn't let me get washed. I couldn't wash my hair. I would get ridiculed in school for having greasy hair. It was almost as if she wanted to ridicule me to every person.
67. I think my sister [REDACTED] saved my life one day when I was fifteen. I was good at badminton at school. Our neighbours, Betty and Arthur, were kind to me. Arthur bought me a badminton racquet. We were competing against the Protestant school, which was what we called it then. I was supposed to be home at 8:00 pm and I got home at 8:10 pm. I got the biggest hiding of my life. I was lying on the floor and I couldn't understand why I was all wet, up my back. I didn't realise that I was actually peeing myself. There were split second breaks when I would see my mum stop. She would turn the racquet around so she was hitting me with the metal edge rather than the flat part. I've always wanted to get a badminton racquet and see how hard I would need

to hit it to break it into three pieces. It was in three pieces. I was supposed to be using it for the competition.

68. My sister had a toy telephone with a cord that you pulled to make the eyes go up and down. I remember my mother lifting that and putting it round my neck. She was not letting go of it. I knew at that point that I was going to die. She grabbed me by the neck and ran towards the balcony door. She was ready to put me through it. [REDACTED] ran in, screaming, "That's enough! Stop it." It was probably the last big doing that my mum gave me. It was about four months before my sixteenth birthday. I thought she was going to kill me that night.
69. I couldn't even lift my arm. I couldn't get dressed. I was covered. I was sore and I was in pain. I had big marks down my face and marks on my arms and my back, but I was more upset about the badminton racquet. The next morning, my sister helped me to get dressed because I couldn't lift my arm. Every morning, our mother would stay in bed and we needed to take her up tea and toast. If there was something wrong with it, we would be sent back down to make another tea and toast until she was happy with it. We were all ready for school and she shouted, "Where's the PJO [REDACTED] bastard?" She shouted, "Get fucking up here." [REDACTED] was lying in the bed, not moving. She asked me where I was going and I told her that I was going to school. She said, "You're not going to fucking school to get me the fucking jail. Get those clothes off, you're going nowhere."
70. As soon as she said that to me, it was like a penny dropping. I didn't know until that day that she wasn't allowed to hit me like that. I realised that she wasn't allowed to do that to me. I had thought my whole life that she was allowed to do that to me. That was the very last time that she hit me. Just before I left home, she tried to do it again. She flicked a spoon and the mashed potato hit the door. It was sliding down the door and I laughed. It was probably nerves. She said, "And it was you who done it." I knew what had happened and whatever it was, it was my sister who had done it. I wasn't going to tell her that.

71. She came at me. I flipped the whole kitchen table up and jumped off the bench. I bolted up the stairs. I could hear her coming up the stairs. I thought she was going to kill me. I swear that to this day, I felt someone putting their hand behind me and standing me up. I told her that I was going to let her hit me for the last time, but I was going to hit her back afterwards. She didn't hit me. I could hear her walking down the stairs, saying, "That fucking bastard says she's going to hit me. Who does she think she's talking to?" She never hit me again. It was the very first time that I'd ever stood up to her. I left home a week later.
72. I always wanted to be a nurse, but I didn't have the education. When I was fifteen, I went to the Job Centre in Bath Street by myself. I remember the woman in the job centre asking me if I'd ever thought about seasonal work. I asked her what it was and she said you go to hotels and work there for the summer. She said that I'd make the beds or serve people their dinner. I said I'd do it. She then told me that I'd stay there and asked if I had a problem leaving home. I told her that wasn't a problem. She told me they were actually doing interviews that day. I waited at the end of the queue.
73. That same day, I got a job doing seasonal work at the [REDACTED] Hotel in Aviemore. The woman doing the interview was called Mrs Scrymgeour. She told me that she wanted me to take two weeks to think about it because it was a big move and I was young. I told her that I didn't need to think about it. She told me that she'd phone me in two weeks. She gave me all the leaflets.
74. I went home and my Aunty [REDACTED] was there with my mum. I hated her as well because she knew what was going on. If it was me and I knew, I would have gone through my mum. My Aunty [REDACTED] thought she was all posh because she came from Cumbernauld. She was sitting there and I told them that I was going to Aviemore. I remember my mum saying, "She doesnae know where Aviemore even fucking is." She was right because I didn't know where Aviemore was. I didn't care. It could have been up the Himalayas for all I knew.
75. Mrs Scrymgeour phoned after a week and asked if I needed more time to think about it. She asked whether I'd changed my mind. I said I could go. Days later, I was away.

I didn't have a bag or a case. The lady next door gave me a loan of her case. It was the biggest case you've ever seen and it was red and white tartan. The case was about the same size as me. My stuff would rattle around inside it. I never had a wardrobe or a drawer in the house. Every single thing of mine had to be kept at the very bottom of the linen cupboard. If something was out of that cupboard, it would be put in the bin. If one shoe was sticking out, it would be binned and I'd never see it again, "You left it out and you've been warned." I left Glasgow two days after my sixteenth birthday and I never stayed there again. I thought my mum was going to kill me. I think she would have killed me if I'd stayed there any longer.

76. I still had bruises the last time I saw Mrs Hillhouse before I left home. I walked down the street when she was leaving. I asked her why she had never helped me. She said things like my mum had done her best and we were lucky that we were even with her.
77. At first, I made beds in the hotel. I then worked in the bar. I couldn't understand it because I wasn't old enough to drink. I didn't do anything like that when I was growing up. I didn't do anything wrong. It was just a no no because I couldn't afford to get into any trouble. I was able to work there because it was residents' only. I stayed in Aviemore for about six years and then I moved to Inverness. I would learn another job, get bored and move on. I was always moving.
78. There was a big gap when I didn't see my family for a long, long time. For big chunks of my children's lives, they only occasionally saw any of my family. I've only really been in touch with my siblings in the last six or seven years. I just couldn't cope with seeing my mum. If there was a wedding or a party and my mum was there, she could be at the opposite end of a room full of a thousand people. I would still be sitting there, so uncomfortable, knowing that she was there. I wouldn't be able to relax and I couldn't cope. I would come back home to Greenock and I would be a mess for a few weeks. It would take me a while to get back to feeling okay again.
79. I found it hard to be in my sisters' company and have them be positive about our mother. They would admit and say that they knew what she had done to me, but they would say that she was an old woman now. They would say it was the past and we

were all grown up. They would tell me to look at what she had gone through and that she had brought the seven of us up when she could have got rid of us. I just don't have the empathy they have for our mum. I would then feel guilty and that there was something wrong with me. It was just me that she hurt. It became easier not to see my siblings.

80. When I met my husband, we travelled and lived abroad. I met him when I was seventeen and everything was great. We lived in Italy and Greece for a number of years. We had itchy feet and I never really settled anywhere. When I was pregnant with our oldest child, we got married and settled in Greenock.
81. I had three children under the age of five at one point. It was one right after the other. It wasn't really planned. It was just the way it happened. It wasn't easy and my husband struggled. I had to cope with it, but my husband couldn't. When my youngest daughter was three months old, my husband packed and left. I was 27. My son was two and my oldest daughter was coming up to four. I didn't come from Greenock. I didn't feel that I came from Glasgow either. My husband offered me £20,000 to leave town. My oldest child was just starting school and my son had just got into nursery. I didn't feel it was an option to go back to Glasgow because of what happened to me growing up. Where else was I going to go? I couldn't take my three kids and go abroad.
82. I probably went crazy for about eight months. I was partying, drinking and going with men. I was 28. One day, I got up and realised that I could waste my children's heads the way mine had been wasted. I decided that I was going to have to bring them up and focus on them. I could never see me integrating a man into their lives. I just brought my children up. I couldn't have lived with myself if I'd thought that my kids felt anything like I had felt growing up. I need to be there for them.
83. My three kids were all in primary school together and then they were all in secondary school together. I couldn't work until my youngest child started school. When [REDACTED] started primary one, I got myself back into education and work. Initially, I went to Women's Initiative courses. Someone would come in and teach keyboard skills and different things. I would do things like that and go to sewing classes at the community

centre. I made extra money sewing, over and above the £69 per week I received from the social. I volunteered with special needs adults, but I didn't feel I had the special something that you need to work with special needs. I felt that I needed to be true to myself and the people that were letting me take care of them, so I told the boss I could no longer do it. I was also in the WRVS and did Meals on Wheels. I couldn't have got a job at that point because I had to leave to get my kids at 3:00 pm.

84. I then went to college to study medical terminology and become a medical secretary. I finished that after two years and then worked part-time for a GP for almost ten years. Going to college was a massive thing for me. I don't even think I knew how to write a proper sentence. As they got older, my kids were involved in different things, like choir and scouts. They would go on trips abroad. I needed to get more money so I needed to work somewhere full-time. I ended up going to work as a legal secretary in Glasgow. I remained there until about three years ago, when I took my redundancy.
85. I had cancer on my face about seventeen years ago. It was cut away, but three and a half years ago it came back more aggressively. They had to cut it away from my nose and take away part of my septum. I've been clear of that for three and a half years. I'm looking to go back to work now, but I don't quite know what to do.
86. When [REDACTED] turned fifty, she got in touch with my oldest daughter on Facebook. My sisters didn't have contact details for me. She said she'd like me to be at her fiftieth. I started to reconnect with my siblings. It wasn't straight away. It was a very gradual process of getting more contact with my siblings. Every time I was with them it just brought up everything. It's slowly eased, but it's still there and I still struggle. In some ways, it's a bit easier since my mum passed away three years ago. It's still very slow and it's not deep. Our relationship is very much on the surface.
87. After the fiftieth, my three sisters acknowledged what my mum had done to me in the past. It was the first time they had ever done that. It gave me something. Now that my mum's died, she's up on this pedestal. I can't do it. For the past three years, we've met on the day that we scattered her ashes. We decided to have a day out in Edinburgh this year. I'm still very much out of the conversation at times. I still feel like

an oddity sometimes. When my kids were growing up, it was just easier to be me, in Greenock with my kids and not to have that outside influence. I would come back and feel that it was me and there was something wrong with me because my siblings could be normal with my mother.

88. It's as if I'm frozen inside. It was a struggle because I was a mother and an adult and I knew myself, but I would still go back to being that child every time I saw my family. My youngest daughter doesn't like me going to her Aunt [REDACTED]'s. She knows that it puts me back and messes with my head. My confidence goes away. My siblings will make a joke out of things and be flippant. I can make it flippant, but nobody else can. They'll say things like I was daft and I didn't know how to lie or I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. I have a hard time accepting that.
89. I've been on medication for depression for thirty years. I've probably had every anti-depressant out there. I've had a two and a half year stretch of psychology. The psychologist had no intentions of it ending, but I wanted to try things on my own. That was when I started college and went to work. I got a good few years break, although I was on and off medication. I struggled with the fact that you can't see depression the way you can see a lump in your arm or something. I would say that I didn't have depression, I was just lazy, selfish. I just wanted to sleep and I didn't care that my kids were just sitting watching the TV. I would think it was me and that I was horrible and a bad person. I wouldn't get washed, which was one of the major things my mum used to do to me.
90. My life's not been easy. I managed to bring my kids up, but I had a support worker, a home help and a flexi-helper. When my depression was really bad, I wouldn't go out for weeks on end. I couldn't go over the door. I wouldn't get washed. I couldn't eat. The crazy thing was, I always had the kids ready. They had their uniforms done, they had their breakfast, lunch and tea, they had clean beds and they were safe. I think they were happy. They've all done really well.

## Reporting of abuse

91. Six or seven years ago, my sister and I found a website. It was about people getting together from the past. We phoned a woman who ran the website. [REDACTED] and I spoke to her for hours. She worked in Lagarie and left. She said that she didn't remember us, but I don't know whether she just said that. She said that she was there for about eight months. She said that she had to leave because she couldn't cope with the abuse that was going on in Lagarie. She moved to another children's home to work. She still lives in the Rhu area.
92. There was a BBC Disclosure programme about Lagarie in 2018. I can't remember how it all started, but after that I got in contact with the Sailors' Society. I think my sister, [REDACTED], made the move and got in touch with them. [REDACTED] wants to do it but hasn't got into it. [REDACTED] absolutely doesn't want to do it. [REDACTED] was emailing and phoning and getting contacts. She gave me the number for the Sailors' Society. I phoned them and that's how it started. They never asked for any details of my experiences in Lagarie. They asked for my details and then they sent my daughter an email, confirming that they could see that I'd been there. I had to send them ID and confirmation of who I am. They offered to provide therapy.
93. I've never reported the abuse that I experienced as a child. I've told my doctor a bit about it and I've told my psychologist. Although I spoke to the Sailors' Society, I didn't report the abuse at Lagarie to them. Throughout our lives, my siblings and I always said that we wanted someone to tell us why it happened. We'll never get justice for it now because they're all dead. Just telling someone and having them believe us is important.
94. When the Sailors' Society offered to pay for therapy, I thought they might have been accepting responsibility for what happened. I don't think they have. Recently, a friend told me that a case had been flung out because the Sailors' Society were accepting no responsibility whatsoever. The Sailors' Society must have known what was going on in the home. They must have thought that they'd throw money at the home and give the children a good Christmas and whatever else. The police knew. There were

boys and girls running away all the time and the police brought them back. There are a multitude of people to blame, Sailors' Society, social workers and police.

### Impact

95. I think my older siblings have it worse because they remember more about Lagarie than me. We all looked after each other. I know how much Lagarie has affected my brother. My relationship with him is really good. I am closest to him of all my siblings. I don't know how much being in the home has affected me. I had such a terrible upbringing anyway so I just went from one terrible place to another terrible place to another terrible place. Because of that, it's hard for me to say how much Lagarie affected me.
96. I always asked why I didn't go to school in the homes. [REDACTED] used to say that it was because I was too wee, as in my height. I just remember that I wanted to go to school. It's sad because I missed those first years at school. I was never in trouble at school, but I didn't do brilliantly. When my three kids were at school, I went to college and educated myself.
97. When the BBC Disclosure programme about Lagarie was on in 2018, my sister, [REDACTED], was at her work in the [REDACTED] Hotel in Troon. The staff go to eat their dinner together. The TV programme about abuse at Lagarie was on the TV. She phoned me, breaking her heart, crying. I looked at the programme and what came up was a picture [REDACTED] All my life, I've been terrified of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Then this picture came up [REDACTED] with the matron. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The matron is smiling in the picture as if she's like Mother Theresa. [REDACTED]  
Something must have happened on that day for me to have such a fear of [REDACTED].

98. I've been going to a therapist and the Sailors' Society has been paying for it. When it all came out about the abuse at Lagarie, they said they would offer support. At that point, I was still waiting on psychology from the NHS. I'd been waiting for two years. I had been back to the GP to tell her I was struggling and that I knew it was coming back. I would go to work from Monday to Friday. I would get home on a Friday night and I wouldn't leave the house until I went to work again on the Monday morning. I was existing. I was literally dragging myself out of bed to go to work. The Sailors' Society allowed me to choose a therapist. She was lovely, but something wasn't quite right. The psychologist from the NHS came up and I decided to give that a chance. I had a good psychologist for a couple of years, but then he left. I had an eight month wait before starting with a new psychologist. I've been seeing her remotely for about six months.
99. I don't get anything out of psychology. I can sit and tell someone everything that's happened and it doesn't make me feel any better. It doesn't make me feel any worse either. It's still always going to be there. I need to learn how to cope with it when I start doubting myself and when I'm depressed. That's when it all comes back up. I've had a few different diagnoses. They do say that I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder relating to my childhood. I don't know which part of my childhood it's from. All I can remember from the age of 0 to 16 is trauma. The Sailors' Society said that I could find a different kind of therapist. My daughter and I have looked into Eye Movement Desensitisation Reprogramming (EMDR) and I'd like to try that.
100. I have nightmares and flashbacks. I can have the same nightmare three nights in a row. When I have nightmares, that's when my sleep starts to go. I still take anti-depressants and sleeping tablets at night. I either don't sleep or I sleep for hours on end. I go from one extreme to the other. There's so much self-hatred and doubt there. I've had suicidal thoughts. I went into the psychiatric unit at Langhill on a voluntary basis three and a half years ago. I was frightened because I can get very close to suicide. I think I was getting really close at that time.
101. I don't trust a lot of people. I keep my circle very small. The friends I've got I've had since my oldest child was born. If I don't, I could risk them hurting me again. I still hate

social workers. When they appointed a support worker to help me, I just didn't trust her. I didn't want to tell her anything. I don't believe social workers will be able to help me. I think that's because of my experiences of Mrs Hillhouse.

102. I accept what's happened in my life because it's made me the person that I am. I was overly cautious with my children and they weren't allowed to go anywhere out of my sight. What happened to me as a child made me the parent that I am. Would I have been such a good parent if I hadn't experienced what I did? Who knows?

### **Records**

103. I've applied to get my records back. I was put in touch with Birthlink by Future Pathways. I've not received any records yet. Future Pathways have told me that the records at Lagarie were very minimal. The register just used first names, so even that was hard to find. They did call me to tell me they had found my name on the register. I didn't really know what that meant. I didn't need confirmation that I was there. I know that I was there.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

104. I think the whole system needs more monitoring, from wherever it starts. Everything should be checked. There are children who have died under social work care. I'm not saying that it's the social worker's fault, but they've got to be more thorough. They can't just believe what the parents are telling them. There was nobody I could tell. Mrs Hillhouse was my mum's friend.
105. I feel that speaking to the Inquiry is giving it away in a sense. I'm passing it over. My hope would be that they don't build children's homes anymore. I don't know whether that's realistic. I don't know how many children there are out there who still need to go into a children's home. I would like someone to say that they believe me and that they're sorry. I'd like it to be recognised and for it never to happen again. I don't want

another child walking about like [REDACTED] P J Q . That would be sad. That could have been my daughter.

106. 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.

[REDACTED] P J Q  
Signed [REDACTED] .....

Dated 26/8/21 .....