

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PLF [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is PLF [REDACTED]. My maiden name was PLF [REDACTED]. I get called PLF [REDACTED] because I like the name PLF [REDACTED]. My mum used to call me PLF [REDACTED] and I just put a [REDACTED] in front of it. I was known as PLF [REDACTED] whenever I was little. That's what I would have been known as when I was in care. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1958. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in the maternity hospital in Aberdeen. My mother's name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Her maiden name was [REDACTED]. My father's name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I stayed with my family in a flat on [REDACTED] in Aberdeen. The area of Aberdeen we lived in wasn't a very nice part of Aberdeen. It was a fairly rundown area. The flat had only two bedrooms so I shared a bedroom with my brothers and sisters.
3. I have two brothers and two sisters. All my siblings are younger than me. I was the oldest of five. My oldest brother's name is [REDACTED]. His date of birth is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1961. My oldest sister is called [REDACTED]. Her date of birth is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] but I don't remember what year she was born. My next oldest brother is called [REDACTED]. His date of birth is [REDACTED] 1967 or 1968. My youngest sister is called [REDACTED]. Her date of birth is [REDACTED] 1959.

4. I went to school whilst I was in Aberdeen. I used to go to a school called Kittybrewster Primary School. I think I maybe started going there when I was about six or seven but I can't really remember my exact age. It wasn't far from home so I used to walk there. My brothers and sisters also went to that school.
5. My Dad worked on the fishing boats so he was away at sea a lot. It was really only our mum who was at home. My mother liked to go out and enjoy herself whilst my dad was away. I think that when she went out she got someone to sit in with us or sent us to a neighbour. I can't really remember getting hit by my parents. I think I only have a memory of my dad hitting me with a belt once. I have no idea why that was or what it was for.
6. I can't really remember much about what happened before I ended up in care. I remember that my mum and dad used to fight a lot. My dad was an alcoholic and he used to drink a lot when he came home. I don't recall there being social workers involved whilst we were at home with our parents. The first time I recall a social worker being involved was when we were taken away.
7. I can't remember the year when we were taken away but I remember that we were all in our auntie's house in Aberdeen. Her house was on [REDACTED] in Aberdeen. I would have been either eight or nine years old when we were there. [REDACTED] was only about two at the time. I remember being in my dad's arms.
8. A social worker called Mrs Bruce then came in and took us all away. We were all crying because we didn't want to go. I remember being told by Mrs Bruce that the reason we were being taken away was because my mum and dad couldn't cope. She took us all in her car that day right down to the children's home in Rhu. It felt like it was quite a long way to go.

Lagarie House Children's Home, Rhu

9. The British Sailors' Society ran the home. It was a seafarers' home for children whose fathers went to sea. I think that's maybe part of why we were put there. I went to Rhu when I was about nine. I think I was there for maybe two or three years. My brothers and sister stayed with me throughout my time there.
10. There were quite a lot of children in Rhu. I'd say there were about thirty or forty boys and girls there. I thought at the time that there were more girls than there were boys. There was quite a range of ages there. My youngest sister was about two. I think the oldest children that were there were maybe fourteen or fifteen.

Layout of Lagarie

11. It was like an old Victorian building. It had a front door but it wasn't like a normal front door. When you went in you saw a big staircase to your right. It was all wooden floors. There was wood everywhere. It was all very old fashioned looking. Downstairs there was a playroom, a dining room with a long table in it and Matron's office with a big desk and a conservatory type thing attached. The dormitories were upstairs. Matron's bedroom was also upstairs. I remember that there was a fire escape between her bedroom and the dormitories.

Staff

12. The person who was in charge of Rhu was called Ann Miller, however, we all just called her Matron. She's the only staff member that I remember the name of. Her name is the only name that stuck. She was quite big and looked quite an old woman to me. At the time she looked about sixty. Matron really was like a matron. She wore a uniform that comprised of a black dress with collar and cuffs and a hat.
13. SNR [REDACTED] in terms of seniority was either KER [REDACTED] or was known as KER [REDACTED]. I think they [REDACTED] who were on that level back then. I don't remember her proper name. I remember her being SNR [REDACTED]

SNR in seniority. She treated us the total opposite to the way that Matron treated us.

14. There was a gardener at Rhu. I don't remember what he was called. I saw him about the grounds. He was a tall thin man with grey hair. He was about seventy when we were there.

Siblings

15. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I were the ones who were taken into care. [REDACTED] was never taken into care. She was never in a home. She was given to my father's auntie. She really became [REDACTED]'s mum and that is what she called her. I don't know why [REDACTED] was put away to an auntie and not placed into care.

Routine at Lagarie

First day

16. I remember Mrs Bruce took us all into the building and then took us to see Matron. I didn't like the look of Matron when I first saw her. As soon as Mrs Bruce went away we were put into old clothes and made to sit around a big table that they had in the place. Matron then took us into her office one by one and talked to us.

Daily routine

17. It was always Matron that got us up. She would shout that it was time to get up in the mornings. We then got washed before we put on our rag clothes and went down for breakfast. After breakfast we would go to school if it was a school day. I think the days when we weren't at school, or were on school holidays, we just played outside. When we were dropped off back at the home after going to school we would walk up the path through the gardens and go in. We would then be told to get out of our school uniform and into our rag clothes. You then had time to play until it

was time for tea. I think after tea we were told to go to our dormitories and either get ready for bed or, if it was a bath night, had a bath before getting ready to go to bed.

Sleeping arrangements

18. Each dormitory had five or six beds. I can't remember who I shared my dormitory with. The dormitories weren't mixed gender, however, the girls in them were all sorts of ages. It wasn't as if we were grouped together in similar ages. I think the youngest girl in my dorm would have been about three or four. The oldest might have been about twelve. I don't recall us having anything other than just a bed in the dormitory. I don't recall a wardrobe, a side table or anything like that. It was a normal bed with a sheet on it. I remember there being a very thin cover over the bed.

Washing / bathing

19. There was a bathroom with just one bath in it. We normally only had baths in the evenings before school days. However, you could be in the bath more than that because of bed-wetting. The bath water was always cold. There was never any hot water, bubbles or anything like that. All you had was carbolic soap which wasn't very nice.
20. You always had your baths on your own. It was always Matron who supervised bath times. I never saw any of the other people who worked there supervising bath times. Whilst you were in the bath Matron would stand there and say "wash yourself." Once you were finished you were taken into your dormitory and someone else was picked out by Matron to then have their bath. I don't think the bath water was changed between children.

Mealtimes / food

21. We all ate downstairs in the dining room. I think we all sat around the same table. It was boys and girls sitting together. The only thing you got during any mealtime was

cold porridge. It was horrible and grainy. There was nothing with it or on it. I don't even think you got milk in it. It was porridge and that was it.

Chores

22. I don't remember us having any chores to do. I don't remember having to tidy the dorm, make my own bed, clean or anything like that.

Clothing / uniform

23. They provided all of your clothes. What they provided were old clothes. They were essentially old rags. The staff used to call them "play clothes." We wore a sort of school uniform to school. I'm sure it was a dark uniform. We were given that by the home.

Possessions / pocket money

24. We weren't given any pocket money or treats. The only toy that I remember being able to keep was a wee doll that was given to me during a Christmas party we went to in Faslane. I didn't have photos of my mum or anything like that. I don't remember anyone else having anything like that.

School

25. I went to Hermitage Academy. We had to get a bus there and back. School was actually ok. I don't remember any of my teachers' names. I can't remember whether we went back to Rhu for lunch. I don't recall us getting any homework from school.

Leisure time

26. You could play in the playroom or outside. Where you played depended on what Matron decided to do with you that day. It would depend on whether she had decided to pick on you that day. I remember that there was a rocking horse in the

playroom. There were also some large building blocks and a dolly. There were maybe some books as well in the toy room. That's about all there was in the playroom. It was all shared between us. There was no television. They didn't put on any activities.

27. Most of the time was spent running around outside. It got us out of the way of Matron. There were big massive gardens around the home. We were allowed to run around the whole of the gardens. I remember there was a little stone Wendy house which we played in. I don't remember there being anything else in the gardens for us to play on. There were no swings or a roundabout or anything like that.

Religious instruction

28. We used to go to Sunday school. We went there and back on a bus. I'm not sure if it was a minibus that took us. I think the Sunday school was held in a church that wasn't very far away from the home. You were all prettied up when you went there. There weren't prayers or anything like that when we were in Rhu itself.

Trips / holidays

29. We weren't taken on any holidays or taken out swimming or anything like that. There was one time when we had to go and sing for Princess Alexandra in Glasgow. We took the bus there and back. We were all prettied up that day. I presented Princess Alexandra with a bouquet of flowers. I was told by Matron I had to curtsy.

Birthdays / Christmas

30. I don't recall my birthday being celebrated whilst I was in the home. I can't remember there being any parties or anything like that when people had birthdays. I can't remember anything like that.
31. I don't recall there being a tree in the home during Christmas time. I recall it being awful bare in the home at Christmas. I don't remember the home giving us presents

on Christmas Day. I don't remember there being any parties in the home around Christmas time.

32. I remember one Christmas that an actor called Barbara Mullen came to visit. I remember another Christmas when we went to a Christmas party at a navy base in Faslane. There were sailors there. That was a good day out. We got given presents that we were allowed to keep. I was given a little doll type of thing.

Visits / Inspections

33. I remember that we were told by Matron that we weren't to say anything when we had visitors. We didn't say anything because we knew what would happen if we said something. We were all prettied up in nice clothes just before we had any visitors. When I had visitors I was seen alongside my brothers and sister. We would go out into the garden all together.
34. My mum came to visit us in the home. My dad would sometimes come with her. One time my mum came with a man who she described as our uncle. He was called Uncle [REDACTED]. I knew that he wasn't our biological uncle and that he was the new man in her life. He went on to become our stepfather. We didn't get visits very often. I think my mum, and whoever was with her, visited us every three or four months or something like that.
35. I don't remember anyone official coming to visit me. The only time I saw any social worker was when Mrs Bruce dropped us off at the start of our stay in the home and when she took us back.
36. I do remember some important people coming in but I don't remember who they were. They came in to look at the home. We weren't allowed anywhere near those people. We weren't introduced to them. We were prettied up, made to go into the garden and kept out of their way. The people mostly stayed inside and looked around the home. I think at one point they came outside and looked about. They didn't speak to us. They just had a look at us.

37. I remember that one Christmas Barbara Mullen from Dr Findlay's Casebook came to visit the home. We were all prettied up for her visit. I remember that she brought toys with her. After she left we never saw the toys again. We were put back into our rags after she left.

Letters / telephone

38. The only contact we had with our mother was when she visited. There were no phone calls, letters or anything like that.

Healthcare

39. I can't remember being ill when I was there. I don't think I went to see a doctor or a dentist. The only time I remember anything being wrong is when I was bruised and injured from the things Matron was doing. She would just cover all of that up.

Bed-wetting

40. I remember that I was really scared so I would wet the bed. Matron used to get up during the night and come over to my bed to check. If I had wet the bed she would grab me by my hair, wake me up then rub my face in the wet sheets. She would then take me into the bathroom, run a cold bath and make me stand in it. It felt as if I was standing in the cold water for hours but it probably wasn't as long as that. It was a long time though. I remember standing there shivering. After that I would be made to get out, get dried then made to put my nightie on. I was then made to get back into my bed. The bed was still wet and I was made to lie in it. I don't remember anyone else wetting the bed but there probably were others who did.

Running away

41. I never tried to run away but I know my brother, [REDACTED], did. He escaped down the fire escape. He would have only been about seven or eight at the time. He was

bare naked when he ran away. He ended up running along what I thought at the time was a railway line. He got caught by the police and taken back to the home. He got punished for making such a nonsense. I presume it was Matron who punished him. I don't know what happened in terms of the punishment because he has never said to me what happened. I didn't see anyone else run away other than [REDACTED].

Abuse at Lagarie

Ann Miller

42. It was just Matron who was bad. She was an evil bad woman. As far as I remember she was the only one that was bad to me. The other staff didn't do anything to us. In fact, all the other workers or house parents were really nice. I remember people saying that they thought I was quite fond of Matron. I don't know why they thought that. The only reason I was the way I was around her was so that she wouldn't pick on me. Even though I was only eight or nine I wasn't a silly girl.
43. I think we were there to be seen and not heard. You weren't really aware of these sort of things when you were a child. I tried to be as best as I could. I would try to be good and do what she told me to do but it wasn't enough. There was no rhyme or reason to why she picked on me. She would just do that. We didn't deserve to be treated the way she treated us.
44. You were always on your own when Matron did things to you. There was never an occasion when she did something and there were four or five of us there or another staff member present. She would do whatever she would do one at a time. She would pick on one person and systematically abuse them.
45. When I went into Matron's office on the first day she told me that the reason I was at the home was because my parents didn't want me. She told me that I was never going to leave. She also told me that nobody would ever want me and that nobody

would ever love me. I was then told to do as I was told and not to talk back. I was told that I shouldn't speak to anybody who came to the home from the authorities and had to behave myself. She then told me to go away and play with the other children outside. I think she then took in my brother and sister one at a time. I don't know what she said to them. I presume that she told them the same sort of thing as she told me.

46. Matron was a drinker. I think she drank gin. She used to keep the bottle down the side of her chair. I remember the awful smell of it in her office and on her breath. It stank like cleaning fluid. I remember her sitting in her office smoking, drinking and listening to a song called "Six White Horses." She would play that song over and over again when she was smoking and drinking. I hate that song now. Whatever time it was she would be doing that she would call me into her office. She would stub her cigarettes out on my arms in her office. She'd do that for no reason. I hadn't done anything wrong. Afterwards she would make me wear long sleeve shirts so nobody could see what she had done. I remember picking the scabs because they were so sore.
47. I remember Matron taking me into her office or her bedroom where nobody else would see her. Sometimes she would take me on my own into one of the dormitories. She would make up some sort of story as to why I was being taken to wherever she took me. I remember telling her, when she took me aside, that I hadn't done anything. She would say in a very strong voice "yes you did." She would then call me names, hit me, slap me and pull my hair. She would use her hand, fist, rods and rulers to hit me. Whatever was in her road she would pick up and use it to hit me with. She would hit me anywhere. The only place she wouldn't hit me was my face or my hands. She did that so she could deny what was happening. There would be no reason why she would treat me the way that she did. It wasn't as if it was as a punishment or anything because I hadn't done what she said I had done.
48. I remember wetting myself when she took me into rooms. I would do that because I was scared and knew that she would be hitting me. When that happened she would

ask me why I was wetting myself. I would say that it was because I was scared. She would then say that I deserved it. She would say bad things to me.

49. If you didn't eat your porridge at a mealtime then you got given it cold the next mealtime. If you didn't eat it at that mealtime then you were force-fed it by Matron. She would take a spoonful, force it into my mouth and make me swallow it even though I didn't want it. I remember choking and being sick. I would be throwing up the porridge. She wouldn't make you eat it if you were sick but she did call you names. She would say you were a bad person for not eating your dinner or tea or whatever. She was always on her own when she did that. There was never anybody else around. I'm sure she did the same thing with the other children.
50. Matron had an upstairs food cupboard which was located just past her bedroom and near the fire escape door. She was the only one who had a key to the cupboard. She had lots of food and sweets in that cupboard. I remember that Matron would go into that cupboard and eat some of the stuff. She would later pick me to go and get the same item she had eaten. She would tell me to go and bring it to her knowing that it wasn't there because she had eaten it. I would then get blamed for taking whatever it was. She would then stick her fingers down my throat, tell me I had taken whatever it was and hit me. I didn't see that happening to anyone else but that happened to me. It was always done on my own.
51. I would see Matron taking other children away by the wrist whilst we were playing. She'd grab them and pull them away. You would know from your own experiences that she was taking them away to do something like she did to me. I knew myself what was going on. When the child came back they would have a sad face. You wouldn't ask what had happened because they wouldn't tell you anyway.
52. I remember my younger sister getting a cracked skull from Matron. I can't really remember what happened. I think she just went up to Matron. I don't know why [REDACTED] approached Matron. Matron then threw [REDACTED] across a wooden floor. She flew across the floor like a rag doll. I think my sister hit her head on the bottom stair. I never saw an ambulance or anything after Matron did that to [REDACTED]. I have

spoken to [REDACTED] about the incident. She says that she remembers getting a cracked skull but she doesn't think it happened in the home. I told her that I saw that happening to her and that is what happened.

The gardener (name unknown)

53. I wasn't sexually abused whilst I was in Rhu. However, I was told by my brother, [REDACTED], that the gardener used to sexually abuse the boys. My brother was one of those boys. He told me that Matron would take him into a shed that was in the garden and the gardener would sexually abuse him. That never happened to me.

Reporting of abuse whilst at Lagarie

54. I did try to tell my mum about it when I was in care. I think I said something like "that lady is hurting us." I think my mum asked me how she was hurting me. All I said was that she was hitting us. I never went into the details of what was happening.
55. As far as I was led to believe by my mum she then reported Matron. For some reason I always thought that my mum reported it to a social worker. My mum led me to believe that as a result of that Matron got the sack. I found out later on from my brother that Matron wasn't sacked. She was allowed to stay on at Rhu and look after children. I discovered from my brother that my mother had attacked Matron after hearing what had happened. I didn't know that at the time and didn't see that happening however that is what he said happened.

Leaving Lagarie

56. It was shortly after reporting what happened to my mum that we were all removed from the home. We were put into the clothes that we had arrived in then Mrs Bruce came down and took us out of Rhu in her car. Matron didn't say anything to us the day we were taken away. I don't know what was said between Matron and Mrs

Bruce. At the time I just thought we were getting moved to be nearer to our mum and dad. Mrs Bruce then took us to a children's home in Aberdeen.

57. Neither Mrs Bruce or any social worker told us why we were getting moved. There was never a conversation with me as to what had happened or, as far as I can recall, any investigation to look into what happened. Ultimately, I didn't get to speak to anybody about what happened in my childhood about what had happened at Rhu. I didn't speak to any outside person about what had happened.

21 Rubislaw Den North, Aberdeen

58. I don't know for sure but I think the home might have been run by Quarriers. I'm not sure whether I'm right about that. I went there when I was about nine. I was there for about two years. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

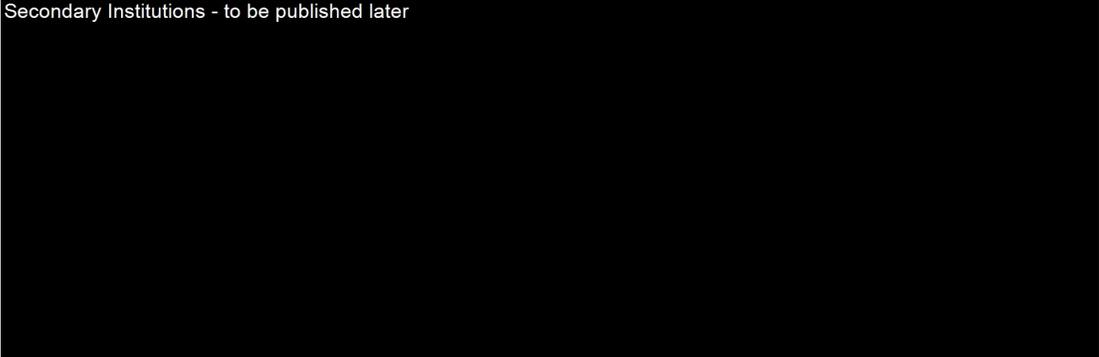
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

59. I initially went to Harlaw Academy for Girls in Aberdeen. I later on went to Hazelhead Academy. I can't remember what year the home closed down. When it closed down my brother, sister and I were moved to a place called Craigielea. That place was also in Aberdeen. I think I must have been about eleven years old when I went there.

Craigielea Children's Centre, Crighton Road, Aberdeen

60. I stayed with my brothers and sister in Craigielea between the ages of about eleven and sixteen. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



61. Craigielea was the last place I was in care. I left Craigielea at the age of sixteen to become a nanny for a family in a place called Torphins in Aberdeenshire. My brothers and sisters stayed on at Craigielea after I left.

Life after leaving care

62. I ended up becoming a nanny. The family I nannied for was made up of a father, his wife and two children. The father of the family worked in the fisheries. He was a doctor as in an academic doctor, rather than a GP or something like that. I lived in their home. I didn't like being a nanny in Torphins because it was too far away. I only lasted a week.
63. By that time my parents had separated and my mother was with Mr [REDACTED], who was the Uncle [REDACTED] that had visited me in Rhu. My father lived with his mother and was continuing to go to sea with his work. I went to stay with my mother and Mr [REDACTED] in their flat in Torry in Aberdeen. It was the only place I could go and stay. I then got a job as a waitress in Aberdeen.
64. When my mother and stepfather moved to Montrose I moved with them. Mr [REDACTED] got a job down there in the oil industry. My mother and Mr [REDACTED] then got married. They then took [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] out of Craigielea and moved to Spain. They didn't take [REDACTED]. I think he was older and in a relationship by that time. I went to stay with my paternal auntie.

65. When my mother and stepfather moved back to Montrose I moved back in with them. I then met my husband. His name was [REDACTED]. I was married by the age of about eighteen. It was a quick relationship because I wanted out of my mum's road. I had twin daughters by the age of twenty. Six or seven years into the marriage it got abusive.
66. My husband used to beat me up. He controlled everything. He'd have his sisters spy on me. It ended up with him coming in one night, beating me up and raping me. I told a friend what happened the following day. She ran out the door and got a policeman in to ask me about what had happened. My husband was then arrested. By that time I had four children.
67. I stayed on in the house after [REDACTED] was arrested. Unknown to me he hadn't been paying the mortgage so the house became repossessed. I had to go to a woman's refuge in Arbroath before ending up in a rundown council house back in Montrose. I then met a man called [REDACTED]. He used to work on the boats out of Montrose but he was also a part-time referee. We had a relationship together. He lived in another house in another part of the town. I was very reluctant but I ended up moving in with him.
68. One day [REDACTED] didn't come home. A friend told me she had seen him with another woman. I asked him about it and he denied it. I found out that he was with another woman later on. He denied it again. He then told me to leave his house. I then had to move into a B&B with my four children. I confronted [REDACTED] again when I saw him with another woman. He then called the police who told me to stay away from him. Later on we calmly sat down together and he told me it was over.
69. My ex-husband ended up bringing me up to Tain in Ross-shire to live. That was about thirty years ago. By that time my mother and stepfather had moved up there and opened a shop. We moved in with them. I think my mum thought that I might get back together with my ex-husband but there was no way that was happening.

70. [REDACTED] then started calling me. Stupidly I gave him another chance. I didn't know at that time but the only reason he came up to Tain was because he was running away from his debts. He started having affairs again. He then got married to one of my friends. He did that whilst I was recovering from alcoholism.

Impact

71. The way I was treated by Matron has totally messed up the brain I have in my head. If I had known what I know now about bleach then I would have exchanged her gin for bleach. I would have poisoned her. That's how strongly I felt at the time about how she was treating us. I remember everything as if it was yesterday. It is embedded in my head. It's been there in my head for thirty one years. What happened in Rhu has totally messed my life up.
72. I get emotional all the time about it. It doesn't matter who I am talking to. I know that some people can hold in their emotions but it is something I can't do. I have to explain that to people. It's not to get sympathy and it's not to get attention, it's just because I can't hide them. I don't know why I keep on saying sorry about it. I seem to just not like myself. I think that's because of my childhood. I feel that I am no good at anything and that nobody wants or loves me.
73. It's ruined every relationship I've ever had. All I've ever wanted is to be loved. I don't want to be who I am. Every relationship I have been in has been destroyed and I can't but think that I have done that. I think all of that is an impact of what Matron said in Rhu.
74. I still have the scars from Matron stubbing out her cigarettes on my arms. I hate porridge to this day because of my experience with porridge when I was in Rhu.
75. I have had issues with alcohol. That all really started in about 1995 when my dad passed away. None of my other siblings had anything to do with him but I tried to maintain a relationship. I think my drinking started because I had lost all affection in

my life. My weight then increased. I'd say I have had issues with alcohol for about six years.

76. I suffer from panic attacks. Because of that I don't go out very often. I have suffered from a lot of depression over the years. While receiving some treatment in Newcraigs I told a counsellor what had happened during my childhood. I ended up having a breakdown following that. That was about two years ago. It wasn't the first time I had spoken about it but that happened. It was all so fresh and it all came back. If you let these things fester then they will. That is what happened with me.
77. I think I've mellowed a bit over the last thirty years. I try to get on with my life but it is still there. It's not something that I think about every day but it is something that I live with every day. I try to not let it get to me. I've got to get on with my life and show that I am a survivor not a victim. I have to do that for the sake of my own children and my own sanity.

Treatment and support

78. I have received help from my GP and have taken medication for my mental health issues. I am currently on Mirtazapine. I have had and continue to see Community Psychiatric Nurses. They come to visit me in my house. They are very good and have helped me through a lot. They've been lovely. I don't know where I would have been without them. I am seeing them less and less because my panic attacks aren't coming as often as they used to. I attend counselling with a psychiatrist called Dr Dawson. She works for a doctor who works in Newcraigs.
79. I ended up getting treatment for my alcoholism. I went to a place called Beechwood House for help. I went to another rehab place called Osprey House. I also went to a place called Newcraigs. I have either attended meetings in those places or have stayed in them for a while. The treatment they provided has been very successful. I drink very little now.

Reporting of abuse after leaving care

80. It was my brother, [REDACTED], who brought it all back to my attention. It all came about a few years after my mother passed away. It would have been about either 2005 or 2006. He told me that there was lady called [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] newspaper who would like to interview me. He told me that she would come to my home, [REDACTED] interview me and then they would [REDACTED]. I asked [REDACTED] whether we really had to go down the road of speaking about what had happened because I realised that it was going to be a long process. I was aware of what his experiences had been and realised that for him it wasn't just a little story that he had to tell.
81. [REDACTED] sent me a picture of a woman and a man standing with some children. I remember that the hairs on the back of my neck stood up when I opened that envelope. [REDACTED] then gave me a phone call in advance of her coming up to interview me. She asked me who it was in the photograph. I told her right away that the lady in the photograph was Ann Miller. [REDACTED] then told me that Ann Miller had died sometime around 1970. [REDACTED] then came up to my house in Tain and I told them my story. They told me that the police would have to become involved and then they left. What I told her ended up in the papers [REDACTED].
82. After [REDACTED] and I spoke to [REDACTED] we went to a solicitor. The solicitor's name was Cameron Fyfe. He was a solicitor at the time who dealt with a lot of abuse cases. I don't really remember how we were put on to him. It could have been [REDACTED] who pointed us in his direction. We received a letter from him and [REDACTED] and I decided to go down to Glasgow to see him. We met with Cameron Fyfe and he told us what would be happening next. He said that the police would get involved and I would be interviewed by two psychologists. I then told him what had happened to me in Rhu. [REDACTED] was with me when I did that. Cameron Fyfe then told us that he would take our cases to the highest court possible in order to get us compensation and justice. I wasn't looking for money but that is what he said.

83. The next thing I knew I was getting interviewed by the police. That would have been at some point between 2006 and 2008. I'm not sure how the police became involved. I think it might have been [REDACTED] who contacted them. That is what I presume happened. It was a policeman and a police lady who came to my house in Tain to see me. I'm not sure but I think that they had come from Inverness. I told them what had happened in Rhu. I told them all the same things that I have said in this statement. I then had to sign a statement that they had prepared. That was the last I heard from the police. I just presumed that they went away and investigated things. I never received an update from them to say what had happened. There has been no letters or phone calls from them since I met with them.
84. I was then interviewed by two psychologists. The first was a psychologist instructed on behalf of the Sailors' Society. The second was a psychologist who was instructed by Cameron Fyfe. I remember that the psychologist instructed by the Sailors' Society wasn't very nice. I remember that in his report he blamed my parents, not Matron, for the way I was. He made out that my mother was nothing but a whore and a prostitute. I remember saying to him in the interview that my parents may be to blame but they certainly weren't the ones who abused me. There was no need to tell me what my mother was like. I didn't need them to tell me that.
85. The next minute Cameron Fyfe sent me a cheque for £1,500 from The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. It wasn't from the Sailors' Society. I can't remember when that was. Cameron Fyfe basically said "oh by the way you will have to take this." I didn't know much about the legal system so I just took it. He ended up taking £300 legal fees off of me. I thought it had all been legally aided but that is what he did. As far as I know my brother, [REDACTED], also received a cheque from The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.
86. I remember asking Cameron Fyfe about what had happened to going to the highest court possible. He told me that that wasn't possible because it would cost a lot of money. I didn't know anything so I just went with what he told me. As far as I am aware the courts weren't involved in anything to do with what happened in Rhu. The Sailors' Society have never come forward to me to speak to me. They haven't

written to me, apologised or compensated me for what happened at Rhu. Not once have they done any of those things.

87. More recently I spoke to a reporter from [REDACTED] called [REDACTED] It was [REDACTED] [REDACTED], who told me that [REDACTED] would be contacting me. He came up to see me to talk about what had happened. He explained that there was going to be a [REDACTED] exposing what had happened in Rhu. He told me that there were a few people who had been at the home who would be speaking on [REDACTED] He said that [REDACTED]. He never mentioned the names of the other people who were going to be in [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I watched [REDACTED] and that was the last I was involved with that.

Records

88. I obtained my social work records this year from the social work department in Aberdeen. I made a subject access request after speaking with my brother. It took them a long time to send me my records. I think it took them over a year. I haven't really read what they sent me because I decided to put them in an envelope and put them away. The only thing I remember seeing in those records after receiving them is that someone wrote something like [REDACTED] "PLF was very fond of the Matron."
89. I did used to have reports that I received following speaking to Cameron Fyfe. However, I destroyed them thinking it was all over and done with. I have never applied for my records from the homes I was in or directly from The Sailors' Society. I'm not really interested in obtaining them. I know what happened to me. I don't need records to confirm that.

Lessons to be Learned

90. As far as I know the Sailors' Society were never there whilst I was there. There should have been more visitations from higher up people. There were people who came into the home but they didn't know what was happening with the children. They were just standing there looking at us. We were there and we were to be seen and not heard. We never had the opportunity to speak to any of them. Nobody asked us how we were getting on or anything like that.
91. If a social worker had come in to speak to me whilst I was there then I might have spoken to them about what happened. There should have been people looking into the backgrounds of the people who looked after us to see whether they were suitable. There should have been proper vetting. They maybe should have supervised the people who were looking after us, whilst they were looking after us, to see whether they were able enough for the job that they were supposed to be doing.
92. Ann Miller was not a suitable person to be looking after us. She looked like an old woman to me. There shouldn't have been such an old woman in her role looking after so many children. I don't know how she was allowed to do the things she did.
93. As far as I know, from reading and hearing about Rhu, there were already discrepancies in the home before I went there. My brother has also told me that. I don't know where he got that information from, however, he said there were already concerns for the children in that home before we arrived. He might have got hold of a report or something but I just don't know. Where were the people who were looking into that? Why were the people not getting vetted before we arrived? Nobody did anything about it. Had Ann Miller been vetted and removed then it might not have been that bad to go to Rhu. We maybe would have never been abused.

Hopes for the Inquiry

94. To me abuse is abuse. It's abuse whether it's sexual, physical or whatever. Nobody should go through what I went through. It still goes on today though. The scars are still there. I hope the Inquiry makes a difference and helps to stop what happened to me happening to other children in the future.
95. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..... 

Dated..... *27 / 8 / 2019*