

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FYT

Support person present: No

1. My name is FYT, however, I was previously known as FYT and that was my name when I was in care. My date of birth is 1955. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. Before I went into care I was living with my mum and dad in Granton, Edinburgh. My father was and my mum was. They were never married but she kept his surname, for the rest of her life, after she had children. I have a twin brother, and a younger sister, who was about a year and a half younger than us. I have a sister, who is eleven years older than me but she wasn't in care with us.
3. We were put into care in Edinburgh when I was about four years old and I don't remember much about life before then. I have a vague memory of one Christmas at home when I was given a doll and a pram. At that time all the kids were out in the street playing with their new toys and I do remember that. I don't remember much of my dad because he was away at sea.
4. When we were put into care, my father had my mother sectioned and he gave up the house. My mum was in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for a while and then she had nowhere to take us when she came out of hospital.

5. I was placed in a children's home on Canaan Lane in Edinburgh and I think it was called the Priory. My twin brother, [REDACTED], my sister, [REDACTED], and I were all there together and we were quite happy there.

The Priory, Cannan Lane, Edinburgh

6. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED]

We were there for two years.

7. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
[REDACTED]
8. [REDACTED]
9. [REDACTED]

Lagarie House, Rhu

10. I vaguely remember being moved to Lagarie in Rhu. I have quite a distinct memory of a man who came in a naval uniform and took us to Rhu in a car. I had never met him before and no one had told us that we were moving so it was a bit of a shock. All three of us, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I, went to Lagarie and I think that I was about five or six years old at that time.

11. Lagarie House was a big mansion house within huge grounds. There was a wooded area at the back and there was a vegetable patch and fruit like gooseberries that you could pick. The house had a ground floor, a first floor and a second floor.
12. Ann Millar was the matron and ^{KER} [REDACTED], worked there as well. I think that they both lived in the house. There were four or five other staff there but I don't really remember them.
13. There were about thirty boys and girls in the home but there were sometimes more than that in the summertime. One of the children that I remember being there was called [REDACTED] and he was there with his family.

Routine at Lagarie House, Rhu

First day

14. I remember arriving at this huge house and we hadn't been in the place for five minutes when my sister, [REDACTED], called matron "granny" and, the next thing I knew, [REDACTED] was on the other side of the room because Matron had slapped her so hard that she had thrown her across the room. [REDACTED] was about four years old and tiny. Matron told [REDACTED] that she should never call her granny and that her name was matron. I was horrified and terrified. The man who had dropped us off had left so he wasn't there at that point. I don't remember if I was shown around after that.

Mornings and bedtime

15. The bedrooms were on the first floor and then there were a couple of bedrooms on the second floor. Some bedrooms had four beds and some had six beds. I shared a bedroom on the first floor but I don't remember who I shared with. Boys and girls shared rooms.

16. When you got up in the morning you dressed yourself and then went down for breakfast.
17. When I was a bit older Mrs KER used to get me up early so that I could go down to the kitchen and help get the porridge ready. That was a treat because she gave me a slice of toast. Mrs KER was always really kind but that experience was quite frightening because I was terrified that I would get caught. I worried that Matron might decide to go round the bedrooms early in the morning and I wouldn't be there.
18. Sometimes Matron sent you to bed at 6:00 pm and other times she would keep you up until 11:00 pm. She would send us all to bed at 6:00 pm in the summer if it took her fancy.

Mealtimes/Food

19. There was a dining room at the front of the building on the ground floor. Matron had a grand table in front of the window which she and Mrs KER used to sit at. There were long tables laid out in rows for the children and she could see us all from her table. There was no talking when you had a meal.
20. Breakfast was always porridge and the meals were the same every week so every Sunday we had stew at lunchtime and at teatime we were given black budding and sliced sausage. I couldn't eat it but you were made to so I would try and sneak my food to someone else and sometimes I managed that. Matron would stand over you and sometimes she would force food down your throat. If you choked then she would just keep trying to force the food into your mouth.
21. Matron would sometimes come and take a child's meal away from them and then she would beat the child for no reason. She would beat them in front of the other children by slapping them, kicking them and pulling their hair. It was horrible. Mrs KER was there and she saw what was going on.

22. I remember two small children who might have been brothers. Matron took against one of these boys so much that she would take his food away and give it to the other boy. The poor boy was hardly getting any food and they were only about two years old.

Washing/bathing

23. I vaguely remember getting washed. I remember matron coming to the bathroom and making you brush your teeth with soap or flushing your head down the toilet. That happened to me regularly and I saw it happen to other children. She would pick on you for no reason.
24. There were young women that were about seventeen or eighteen years old and I remember them helping at bath time. I think they were just as frightened of matron as we were.

Clothing/uniform

25. My mum brought us red, green and blue woolly tights in the winter and Matron was furious. She hated my mum. She made [REDACTED] and I wear our tights without a skirt and she sent us outside like that but not to school.
26. One of the teachers sent a letter to matron asking for us to get cardigans because it was the end of the summer and we were still in cotton dresses with no cardigans. We were given cardigans after that but I don't think matron would have been happy about it.
27. Shoes were a nightmare. You daren't let matron know that there was a hole in the bottom of your shoe because she would go mad and beat you up as if it was your fault that you had a hole in your shoe. I do remember that there was a big box of shoes and all of the kids were trying to get shoes out of the box. We needed new shoes and we

had to find ones that fitted but we were all trying to get shoes at the same time so it was mayhem.

28. My mum used to buy us shoes which would infuriate matron so we could only wear them when my mum was visiting.

Leisure time

29. In the evening you would be in the sitting room until you were told to go to bed. There was no real bed time because bed time was when matron said it was so that could be at 6:00 pm, 9:00 pm or 10:00 pm.
30. Sometimes she would send you outside to play and it could be really cold but you didn't have a coat on.
31. I went to Brownies in the village but not very often.
32. Sometimes on a Saturday she would send me and [REDACTED] to the shop in Helensburgh to get whatever she wanted for herself. [REDACTED] used to steal a packet of biscuits and I was terrified of being caught because if we were taken back to the home by the police then our lives wouldn't have been worth living. After he stole the biscuits we would sit and stuff our faces because we were always hungry.

Trips and holidays

33. One of the girls from school and her family took me away to Largs for a day at the beach and that was nice.
34. One time the sailors came and took us to the funfair and then to the cinema and we got a box of chocolates. It was wonderful but that didn't happen very often. I only remember going once, round about Christmas time.

35. I remember being in a place near Coldstream. I think there were about four of us who went there and the woman that we stayed with had horses. I had never ridden a bicycle before in my life and I tried to ride one. We all went out one day and the kids were on their bicycles and she was on her horse. I remember falling off and I refused to get back on. The heavens opened and they all went on home. That was a nice place. I don't know where she was but Matron wasn't there.
36. Another time [REDACTED] and I went to a foster home near the borders for a break. The woman had two small children and she was really kind. We used to do baking and different things.
37. My dad took us on holiday for a week once and the second week my mum took us to a holiday camp in Rothesay. On the way back, on the ferry, I couldn't stop crying. I think that my mum should have realised that something was wrong. I didn't feel that I could tell my mum what was happening but I shouldn't have had to say, she should have realised why I was so upset. She used to say to me as an adult that if she had known then she would have done something about it. I have since learnt from my sister, [REDACTED], that Mrs KER [REDACTED] warned my mum that she needed to get her children out of Lagarie. [REDACTED] told me that in 2020. I don't know how my mum reacted to that advice but my mum never took responsibility for anything and everything was always my dad's fault.

School

38. We went to Rhu Primary School and I was ready to go to Secondary School when we went to live with my mum. I liked my teacher at Primary School, Mrs Burt. She was kind. A staff member from the home would walk us to a school and we walked back at lunch times. I can't remember if someone came to get us but I think we walked back by ourselves.

Healthcare

39. I had to go to the dentist on one occasion. A member of staff brought me and she bought me an ice-cream. I would have been at the dentist in Helensburgh.
40. The doctor used to come to the home one day a week. He would come into the dining room where there was complete silence, because Matron was there, and he would ask if everyone was alright. No one would say anything because if you did then Matron might send you to your bed without food for three or four days. That happened on a regular basis. The doctor never carried out routine health checks or weighed us.
41. I developed stomach ulcers whilst I was there and it wasn't until my late teens that it was diagnosed and I was told that I have scarring from it. I didn't tell anyone about the pains in my stomach when I was at Lagarie and I never told the doctor. However, when I was later in foster care the woman did call the doctor.
42. I have a funny nail because my nail became infected and I didn't tell anyone about it until my finger turned yellow and then I had to tell the doctor. I had been sewing and a needle went into my nail. The doctor lanced my finger and bandaged it. It was septic but I wasn't given any painkillers that I can remember.
43. One day, on the way back from school, I was knocked down while crossing the road and I fractured my pelvis. Matron came to see me in Accident and Emergencies and I remember her saying that I didn't have to call her Matron all the time. Her tone of voice was different when she was speaking to me in front of the hospital staff. The night that it happened all I wanted was my mum and I remember asking for her but I did have a nurse with me the whole time. I was in a lot of pain.
44. I was in Vale of Leven Hospital for six weeks and my mum wasn't told that I was there for the first two weeks until someone from the Sailors' Society eventually went and informed her. She phoned the home and asked if she could bring my brother and sister to visit me in hospital and she was told that she couldn't because it wasn't a visiting day so she was allowed to visit me but she couldn't bring my siblings. My mum came to visit twice but the Matron never came back after the day that it happened.

45. I was about nine years old but I wasn't in a children's ward, it was a ladies ward. My time in hospital was one of the happiest times in my life. When I woke up on Easter Sunday I had a mountain of chocolate eggs from all of the patients, doctors and nurses.

Religious instruction

46. You had to attend church in Rhu once a week. It was a minister but I can't remember if he ever spoke to the children.

Work

47. The kids shoes would all be lined up and I would polish them every night after tea. I don't know if other children had chores to do.

Birthdays and Christmas

48. One Christmas morning matron went absolutely mad because I had been given two gifts that were the same. Matron took me into her office with my gifts and she destroyed every single one of them and then beat the hell out of me. She punched me, kicked me and pulled my hair. I was between seven and nine years old.

49. I was given gifts from my mum and you used to be given gifts from the sailors at Gairloch. I think the Sailors' Society might have had a fund for gifts. I remember getting gifts that were toys but I can't remember playing with them. Matron had a cupboard in the hallway between the kitchen and the dining room that was full of toys that she had taken from kids.

50. I never saw a birthday cake the whole time I was there either for me or for anyone else.

Visits/Inspections

51. My mum was allowed to visit us every fourth Sunday but she was never allowed into the home. She was allowed into the hallway just past the front door where she sat on a bench to wait for us and then we had the whole afternoon together. My mum always took us out and we did things like go to a café for a hot chocolate. In the winter time there wasn't much to do so we would sit in the waiting room at the train station in Helensburgh because there was a big fire in there. My mum used to give us sweets which we would hide in our pockets and then later we would share them with other kids which I didn't mind because some children had no visitors. We were lucky, my mum came every fourth Sunday and only missed one visit when she had the flu.
52. My dad used to visit sometimes and he would be allowed into the Matron's private sitting room on the ground floor where he was given tea and cakes but my mum got nothing. Matron hated my mum and would call her a prostitute to me.
53. My older sister, [REDACTED], came to visit us once with her first baby who was in a pushchair. She took us out for a walk. She didn't really know what was going on and I have never spoken to her in depth about it so she just knows it was horrible. She married and had three kids but her husband was abusive. After I had left Lagarie, I used to visit her in Leith and that got me away from my mum.
54. An actress from "Doctor Finlay's Casebook" visited and I have a photo of that but that was a one off.

Siblings

55. [REDACTED] and I were always kept separate. We weren't allowed to share a bedroom or sit at the same dining table. I wasn't allowed to be near [REDACTED] either. Sometimes we did speak when we were on our way to school but around matron we never spoke. When matron was there nobody spoke so there would be complete silence around her. I still think to this day that that wasn't normal.

Family contact

56. My mum used to send us comics but I told her not to send them anymore because it wasn't worth matron going mad. She didn't like my mum giving us stuff.

Running away

57. My brother tried to run away in a rowing boat but he didn't get too far and the gardener caught him. On the other side of the road was the shoreline. When [REDACTED] came back he had been beaten up.
58. The gardener raped my brother. [REDACTED] never spoke to me about being raped but his wife told me that he had been raped on more than one occasion by the gardener. I was an adult when I found out and I was completely shocked and upset for him.
59. The gardener lived alone in a gatehouse and I remember him but not his name. He was mostly just in the gardens and I remember seeing him in the grounds. He talked to the children but he never spoke to me. I was quite afraid of him but I don't know why. He was there the whole time I was there.

Bed Wetting

60. If you wet the bed then you would be moved into a bedroom next to the bathroom which the children called the wet room. The children knew that you were sent there because you wet the bed and that's why it was called the wet room. You had to sleep on a rubber sheet with no pyjamas on and just a sheet and a blanket over you. There were about six or seven beds in the wet room.
61. When you got up in the morning I think the staff that changed the bed would report back to Matron and if your bed was wet then you had to go to the wet room the next night. I didn't wet the bed all the time but when I did I would be put into the wet room. I think that happened to me about a dozen times over the years and it happened to

other children as well. Matron or one of the staff that would tell you when you had to sleep there and sometimes she would keep you there for three or four days.

62. I was raped when I was in the wet room. That was part of your punishment. I don't know who it was that raped me and it could have been a man or a boy. I was so frightened and I used to try and keep my eyes shut to try and pretend that it wasn't happening. That happened to me about five times when I was about eight or nine years old. I was in pain after that happened but I would never have told anyone so I couldn't get any medical help.
63. I have briefly spoken to my sister, [REDACTED], about what happened and she experienced the same as me. She was raped as well and she doesn't know who it was either.
64. I don't know if the matron knew what was happening but I don't think that she would have done anything about it if she did know. The staff should have noticed that something had happened to me but I think the young staff were just as scared of matron as we were. They had the choice to stay or go and we didn't.

Abuse at Lagarie, Rhu

65. Matron used to go with us to church but there was an occasion when I was about seven or eight years old when she didn't go to church with us and I received a message saying that we were to leave church at half time. Matron heard us all coming home and she asked who had said that everyone was to come out of church early so they all said that it was me.
66. Matron sent for me and I had to go to her bedroom which was on the same level of some of the children's bedrooms. She made me wash her, dress her and then clean her room but she was beating me the entire time. She stood in the bathroom completely undressed when I had to wash her. I filled the sink with hot water and I washed her all over, including her private parts, with a flannel. I wanted to die. I had

to put her clothes on her and then clean her room thoroughly, moving all the furniture as I went.

67. She was hitting me, kicking me and pulling my hair while I was doing all of this and she was calling my mother a prostitute and a whore. I didn't know what that meant at the time but I understood that it wasn't very nice.
68. Eventually she told me to go and get my hair combed because she had been pulling it and it was a mess. I went to Mrs KER and I was very upset and crying. At lunchtime when we all sat down to eat Mrs KER challenged Matron about what she had been saying to me and my heart sank. Matron came and took my food away and sent me up to my bed so Mrs KER never had any say so.
69. Matron would line us up to comb our hair with a bone comb which is a metal nit comb. Sometimes when she combed my hair she did it really hard and if I flinched then she would do it even harder which would sometime make my scalp bleed. I didn't get any medical treatment for that and any marks were covered by my hair.
70. Matron was clever and I never had any injuries that anyone would have been able to see. My injuries never required medical treatment and if they had then I still wouldn't have told anyone.
71. In the evening Matron sat in a big armchair in the television room. Children didn't speak when she was in the room so they sat and watched television. There were a few of us that she used to make stand naked in the television room for hours at a time. She made children do that whenever she fancied it and there would be no specific reason for it. Three or four boys and girls were made to do it at a time and there would also be boys and girls in the room who were not having to do it and they would sit watching television. When she made me do that I felt humiliated and embarrassed. It was horrible especially because I was about eight or nine years old so I was aware that there were differences between boys and girls. Eventually Matron would tell you to go to bed and that would bring it to an end.

72. There was a small toilet next to the sitting room and sometimes, when you were made to stand naked, she would put you into the toilet with the window wide open. She would flush your head down the toilet and then she would make you sit there until she told you that it was ok to come out. It would be freezing cold. She was very cruel.
73. [REDACTED] was a bit feisty and she was put into the toilet quite a lot. Sometimes she would answer back and there would be big trouble. I think I was desperate to be liked. I would see that happen to her and I felt frightened and upset that I couldn't do anything to help her.
74. When she was sitting in her armchair in the evening, Matron would call you over and offer you sweets. She would have a Mars Bar in one hand a Milky Way in the other. If you took the Mars Bar then she called you greedy and if you took the Milky Way then she called you a liar because she believed that you must have wanted the Mars Bar. You couldn't win.
75. Sometimes it was a relief just to go to bed but it wasn't really a relief because she would come round the bedrooms at night, when the kids were in their beds, and she would pick on someone for no reason. During the night I would hear matron shouting at someone and beating them up. While that was happening I would lie in my bed wishing that it was me because then at least I would know that it wasn't [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] that were being beaten. That happened regularly. I was frightened but we had no power and we were helpless. She picked on me and [REDACTED] more than others and I think the root cause of it all was that she hated our mother so much.
76. Matron took me to pick gooseberries one day and I had a glass bowl. I was so frightened and nervous that I dropped the glass bowl. I was frightened around her all of the time. I was beaten for dropping the bowl.
77. I went to Brownies in Rhu but I wasn't allowed to go very often. Matron would call me up to her big table in the dining room and tell me to do my homework in front of her but I would be so scared and nervous that I wouldn't be able to do my homework so she would say that I couldn't go to Brownies. I don't remember her ever asking about

homework or checking our homework other than when I was meant to be going to Brownies.

78. Matron went into hospital at one point and it was like freedom. Mrs KER was SNR SNR and it was like night and day. I didn't have the fear that I normally had when Matron was there. You could go out to play when you wanted. We were happy to chat and you could talk to other kids.

Leaving Lagarie, Rhu

79. I remember Mrs KER told me in confidence that I was going home to live with my mum and I was relieved. We were doing a play at school and I said to the teacher that I couldn't do it because we were going home on the date of the play. However, we never went home that day and at Church on Sunday I was terrified that the teacher would say something to Matron about me going home and then Matron would wonder how I knew about it and she would go mad but the teacher didn't say anything.
80. I don't know if there was a legal requirement keeping us at Lagarie but my mum had to fight to get us home and she had to get a house because she had stayed with my grandparents after she came out of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. I remember someone who I think was called Miss Coutts and I think she might have been a children's welfare officer for the council. She was the one who helped my mum get us home but I don't know when she became involved. and I were in Lagarie until we were twelve and we were due to start secondary school. was ten and a half and still at primary school.
81. We went home to my mum's house in Granton, Edinburgh and I think it was the sailor who first brought us to Lagarie who also brought us home. The Sailors' Society didn't have any involvement with us after we had left and I didn't see my dad very often. It wasn't all a bed of roses going home. I had thought naively that it was going to be wonderful but we weren't even home a year when we were placed in foster care in Aberdeenshire.

82. It was pretty awful being at home. My mum started a new relationship and I was furious because we had just come out of the children's home after all these years and she should have been looking after us. She was a drinker and she was always trying to kill herself. There were a number of times when we were left at home while she was carted off to the hospital but not one social care person came.
83. When I went home [REDACTED] and my mum shared a double bed and I slept in a single bed in the same room as them. During the night I would have night terrors so I would be shouting and screaming. I don't know what I was saying but I quite often would be crying. They would wake me up and my mum must have heard that but she would just tell me to go back to sleep and she never asked me about them or sought any help for me.
84. I went to Ainslie Park secondary school but I didn't get on well at school. My brother did really well but I think my problem was that I was so worried about keeping the family together that I would be cleaning the house or cooking the tea and trying to make things right for my mum. It wasn't my place to do that and nothing that I did made a difference. I was consumed by anger and upset.
85. I don't remember exactly what led to us being taken into foster care but I think that my mum probably tried to kill herself. I would often come home from school and see that she had hurt herself in various ways.

Foster Care, Aberdeenshire

86. We went into foster care not long after we had gone home and it was Miss Coutts that took us there. I think that I was twelve or thirteen when I went into foster care. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went as well and it was a long car journey from Edinburgh to Aberdeenshire. The foster home was on a farm and we lived there with a couple, two other foster children and the couple's own son. The couple were farmers and I think they were maybe in their thirties. Their son was eight or nine and the other two foster

children were a boy and girl at about eleven and twelve years old. I think that they were siblings. I don't know why we were sent to Aberdeenshire. My grandparents came from Aberdeen but we didn't have much to do with them and they lived in Edinburgh at that time.

87. The woman never beat us or anything but she was very careful with the food and the meals were quite small. Her own son would be given boiled eggs and toast for breakfast and all of the foster children were given porridge. My mum used to send us pocket money and the three of us used to go down to the village and buy sweets and stuff our faces.
88. One day they took all of the foster children to a park and dropped us off in the morning without food, drink or money and they didn't come back for us until later on in the afternoon.
89. The woman went to the fish market and bought all these fish that she then made me stand and gut for the freezer. I remember it was a long job and I was there forever.
90. [REDACTED] and I shared a bed and the blankets weren't big enough so we were fighting all night and it was cold. It was just us in that bedroom. [REDACTED] had a different room but I can't remember if he was sharing. One day she shut [REDACTED] in the room and [REDACTED] hung out the window and screamed for the duration of the afternoon but there was no one there to hear her.
91. It was the school holidays while we were there. We had a bit of freedom to go walking through the hills and the fields. Sometimes she would get us to do gardening but generally we did have freedom to wander. I think we were a bit horrible to the other two foster children. I remember I didn't want anything to do with them so I spent my time with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
92. We didn't keep in touch with my mum while we were there and I think she must have been in hospital. We never saw anyone else while we were there and I think Miss

Coutts came back for us and took us home. We were probably in the foster home for six to eight weeks.

Life after being in care

93. I spent the rest of my childhood at home with my mum but she continued to make attempts on her own life and was often taken away to hospital. I don't think the local authority were involved after I returned home. I went back to school but I failed all of my exams. ██████ did well but he was the blue eyed boy. I found out that my mum was giving him steak and me and ██████ were getting egg and chips. I felt I didn't deserve steak.
94. ██████ tried to take her own life when she was about fourteen and when she was fifteen she ended up in Bangor Hospital which was a Children's Adolescent Unit, West of Edinburgh. She had an accident and was at the hospital. My mum should have been with her but she wasn't and when a doctor came to see her ██████ became frightened and was crying. The next thing my mother had signed the papers for ██████ to go into hospital and ██████ was there for about a year. I don't think ██████ had the help that she needed in Bangor Hospital.
95. I was at home when ██████ was taken to the hospital but I left shortly afterwards to go and work down South as a nanny. My mum was furious with me and she wasn't even at home when I left, she was at her boyfriend's. No one said goodbye to me. However, my wages were five pounds a week so when it was ██████'s birthday I spent my whole five pounds on a pair of shoes for her and she always says that she was delighted when she received the parcel.
96. I married when I was twenty and he abused me both physically and emotionally. I was frightened of him and I still don't know where I found the courage to leave him. However, I did leave him and I went to America and didn't come back for six years. I was twenty six when I left and it was good for me because I learnt to speak up for myself there. ██████ had also split up from her husband and had already moved to

America so we lived together. She had a son, [REDACTED], who lived with us and he had two mums.

97. A few years ago my friend, [REDACTED], phoned me and asked me to make a sleeve for a patient who was constantly pulling out his IV drip. I looked on the internet and couldn't see anything but I managed to make something anyway and that was quite successful. [REDACTED] then asked me to look at making something for dementia patients so I looked that up online and now I spend most of my time making fidget mats for dementia patients. Fidget mats are quilts that have different textures and things attached to them for the person to feel. It's not a job but I get some funding which is coming to an end soon. I spend a lot of my own money buying fabric, zippers and things like that. I always make sure I put a plastic badge holder on them so the patients' relatives can put their favourite photos in it for them or they can write their name on it. I have made about two hundred fidget mats and I now make sleeves in all different colours.

Impact

98. I never felt good enough in Lagarie or at home and I never had any encouragement. When I was at home my mum never asked if I had done my homework. I was skipping school to clean the house and one day I broke a bone in my foot and when my mum came home I was sitting with a plaster cast on. I hadn't been able to phone her and ask her to take me to the hospital.
99. I visited my dad a few times when I was working down South and he was living in Southampton. I really didn't know my dad that well and in a lot of ways he was like a stranger but I did tell him that while we were in the children's home we had suffered abuse. I didn't go into any detail but I told him that it had been the most horrendous time in our lives, however, he didn't want to know.
100. When I arrived home there was a letter for my mum from my dad's then wife. [REDACTED] and I steamed the letter open and read it. My dad's wife had written that only my mum knew who [REDACTED]'s real dad was and she called my mum whore. With

hindsight we should have destroyed the letter but we didn't. When my mum read the letter she went mad and she was going to kill me because it was all my fault. I was seventeen at the time.

101. I tried to speak to my gran about the situation at home with my mum and she called me a liar and didn't want to deal with it. My gran never liked me and when she was coming to the end of her life I visited her in hospital because my mum insisted on it. When I visited her my gran said to me that she had never like me, she told me that I had sleekit eyes and that it was no wonder that I didn't have a man. I had no one.
102. When my dad died I never went to his funeral. My cousin always says how much of a wonderful man my dad was and how much they loved him. I told her that I don't want to hear it but she still goes on about it so I have practically given up all ties with her. He could have given up his job and looked after us but he didn't.
103. I was still very angry with my mother who was still drinking. I was told by a counsellor that just because she is my mother, doesn't mean that I have to love her. She told me that I had a choice as to whether I had my mother in my life or not and, at that time, I decided that I didn't need her in my life because it was far too upsetting. However, my mum was diagnosed with breast cancer so I went to see her in the hospital and she knew things weren't right with me. It took me a long time to reconcile myself to the fact that she was my mum and she was the only one that I had. My mother often said in later life that she didn't deserve me. I'm glad that we reconciled because it would have been awful if she had died and I had still been angry and upset with her. I've learnt that thoughts are not facts. You can think things but it doesn't make them true.
104. I have been depressed for most of my life and I think I was depressed while I was in Lagarie but you weren't allowed to express your emotions or let anyone see that you were upset. There was no one paying attention so no one noticed how depressed I was.
105. I think I was first prescribed antidepressants a year or two after I came back from America. I was on anti-depressants for a long time and then in my thirties I was referred

to counselling by my GP and that was really the first time that I had spoken about Lagarie. I told the GP some of what had happened but I didn't go into detail and then I spoke to the counsellor. I wasn't getting enough sessions from the NHS so I paid for counselling. She was a registered counsellor that I saw privately for about a year. However, when I asked her to do a statement for me she refused because she wasn't a psychiatrist. All I wanted was a statement about my general health. I did find my time with her helpful. I told her about my experiences in Lagarie and that's not something you can really talk to people about.

106. In my early fifties I went to university and obtained my nursing degree. I started working as a staff nurse but I wasn't given any support and I was getting bullied. I wasn't sleeping because I was working twelve and a half hour shifts and I was up at three in the morning. After working as a nurse for six months, I had a breakdown and I ended up in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. I was there for a few months and then I was discharged but I wasn't home for very long before going back into hospital. I was there for a long time, almost two years. I was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder and I was given electric shock treatment.
107. My friend, [REDACTED], was a rock when I was in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and when I told her that I was giving a statement to the inquiry she said that she couldn't come with me because she couldn't bear it. I have spoken to her about what happened to me in Lagarie.
108. There were a lot of times when I was in hospital in the Royal Edinburgh and [REDACTED] was working in another hospital but she would come off a nightshift and come up to the ward to sit with me for ten or fifteen minutes and that would calm me down and help me get through the rest of the day. She would phone the nurse in charge of the hospital to get permission to come because it wasn't a visiting hour. I didn't want my mum to come and see me at that time. She knew that and never visited.
109. I tried to take my own life a few times. I took an overdose whilst I was in hospital, that's how much care they take of you. I could not eat for days and no one cared or noticed. If I was upset and wanted some diazepam then they wouldn't give it to me. [REDACTED] is a

senior staff nurse so I would phone her and she would get on the phone to the ward and eventually they would give me the diazepam but only because she had phoned. I was there on a voluntary basis but I didn't feel that I had a choice really. I was there for psychiatric treatment but there wasn't really a program. You would have a meeting every day with your named nurse and they had some activities that you could do if you signed up for them. I started painting when I was in there.

110. I used to see a psychologist and a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) but then you reach a point when they think there's nothing else that they can do and you're discharged and left on your own but I'm a lot more stable now because of my medication. It has taken me a very long time but I finally feel like I'm on the right medication. I would never come off my medication now because I would be frightened that if I did then I would go back to the way that I was. They had me on lithium for a while but not for very long and I think that it a bit of a nasty drug. The last four or five years I have felt like I have been on the right medication.
111. I'm on antidepressants and antipsychotics. I'm just plodding along and doing my bit but I never returned to nursing. When I look back I think that if I had a different home life then I probably would have been better at school and gone into nursing then. The happiest time of my childhood was when I was in hospital and I think that was behind my decision to go into nursing but I should have done it a lot sooner.
112. I found forming relationships difficult and I've not really had a relationship. I did have one relationship but I knew it wasn't going anywhere. I've never had a relationship where I have thought that it was what I wanted. I've had to care myself and I just get on with it. It's like when you are abused as a child and you just get on with it. I just put my face on for the world.
113. For years I had panic attacks at night and it was because I had been in bed at night and had been hearing children crying and screaming. I had a flashbacks that I was walking about without a skirt on. It's better now.

114. I think people who have suffered abuse go on to suffer even more abuse. The guy that worked in the chip shop that we went to after school sexually assaulted me. He used to take me in his car to the beach and he once took me to a house. I think I didn't know how to say no. The chip shop was called [REDACTED] and it was in Granton. His finance worked in the chip shop with him so I don't think that he was that old. I was fifteen years old.
115. When I was working down South I was still having stomach problems so I went to the hospital in Slough and the doctor had a good feel of me all over. He was a consultant and I didn't say no. He touched me everywhere including my private parts. I was only seventeen years old. I've never told anyone about those incidents.
116. My mum said to me once that she was really proud of us all and I pointed out to her that [REDACTED] was on his third wife, I couldn't get a relationship and [REDACTED] had been seeing a psychologist for thirty years. It definitely has an impact on your life.

Reporting of Abuse

117. I spoke to the police in 2001 because I was feeling upset and overwhelmed by everything and I was having flashbacks. I didn't feel well and that's what made me pick the phone up. I phoned Lothian and Borders police and it was a family liaison person that I eventually spoke to. The police looked into it but because it was historical and Ann Millar was dead there was no case to take forward. They came out to my home and I think that they took a statement. I told them everything that happened in Lagarie involving Ann Millar but I didn't tell them about the male person who assaulted me in the wet room. They reported back to me that Ann Millar was dead.
118. I have a letter from Strathclyde police dated 2004 which says that the investigation resulted in a report being made to the Procurator Fiscal in Dumbarton. It goes on to say that both people referred to in the police report are deceased and consequently no criminal prosecutions are possible. I think one of the individuals that they are referring to is Ann Millar. There were also allegations of abuse by two other people,

after Ann Millar had left, so the letter might refer to those two people who I understand are dead now as well.

119. I also have a letter dated June 2019 which says that an investigation was recently conducted into allegations of historical physical and sexual abuse at Lagarie Children's home. I think the letter refers to reports made by me and others.
120. I have a Sunday Mail article dated 25 November 2001, right after I made my report. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] In the article it says "Last night Lothian and Borders police revealed that another former resident of the home had made similar allegations of abuse and violence." [REDACTED] The family officer brought me the cutting from the newspaper to warn me that it existed.
121. I have a letter from the Sailors' Society dated 28 June 2019 which reads "Please accept our apologies for not contacting you sooner. We have been awaiting new developments to confirm those points listed below. In accordance with our safeguarding policy and duty of care responsibilities we have informed the National Child Abuse Investigation Unit of your name and that of your abuser in connection with allegations of abuse whilst a resident at Lagarie's Children Home in Rhu . The police have now asked that we write to you to ask if you would consent to us forwarding your contact details on to the NCAIU." I haven't contacted the Sailors' Society, it was the police that contacted them back in 2001 but I don't think the Sailors' Society were in touch with me at that time. If I received a letter then I would have kept it with these documents.
122. There was a lawyer called Ross Harper in Glasgow that I have had some correspondence with but I don't think that anything came of it.
123. I have a letter at home about the redress scheme.

Records

124. I have been given photos of us at Lagarie from the Welfare Officer at the Sailors' Society. I have a photo of us that was taken during the summer with an actress. I remember the day that she came and I remember that we had a sandwich and an apple for lunch instead of a hot lunch. I had fallen and chipped my tooth the night before and it was so painful that I couldn't eat the apple.
125. I think that Lothian and Borders police would have asked for a copy of my records. They gave me copies of newsletters with photographs that they obtained.

Lessons to be Learned

126. I think it should be possible to go into a home and observe children and see how they behave. Are they happy and playing or are they silent and frightened? I completely understand why children don't tell anyone what is happening to them, it's because they are too frightened.
127. I think that if Lagarie had been assessed then it would have been done by the Sailors' Society and having looked at their newsletters it appears that they thought that Ann Millar was an angel. I think it would have to be an independent body that would have to do assessments. Ann Millar ran Lagarie how she wanted and she didn't need to answer to anyone. The kids were too frightened to say anything.
128. If I had said anything then it would have had to have been away from the home. If there had been an adult who had sat down with me and showed me some care and compassion and if they had said that I could tell them anything and they would look after and support me then I might have been able to say what was happening. But what would happen then? Would I have had to go back and face her? She would find out so it's not easy.

Other information

129. 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..... 24/01/20