

Friday, 23 January 2026

1

2 (10.00 am)

3 LADY SMITH: Good morning, and welcome back to our case
4 study hearings in Phase 10 of our work.

5 Now, this morning we move on to some evidence in
6 relation of another provision of residential care at
7 Widowers' Children's Homes. You will remember until now
8 this week we had been focusing on Lagarie, and
9 Ms Forbes, I think you are changing gear to look at
10 Widowers' now; is that right?

11 MS FORBES: Yes, my Lady, that's correct. We have a witness
12 who's an applicant this morning to give evidence. She
13 is anonymous and is known as 'Isa'.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 'Isa' (affirmed)

16 LADY SMITH: 'Isa', do sit down and make yourself
17 comfortable.

18 Thank you for coming along to help us with your
19 evidence this morning. We already have your written
20 evidence. That's been very helpful to me to be able to
21 read that in advance. A copy of it is in the red folder
22 that's in front of you and we can also bring it up on
23 screen to help you if you want to use either of them.
24 But we will not be going through it word for word, don't
25 worry.

1 A. Okay.

2 LADY SMITH: There are some particular aspects that we would
3 like to focus on, but it's also an opportunity for you
4 to add anything or explain anything in a particular way
5 that you want to do --

6 A. Okay.

7 LADY SMITH: -- we'd appreciate that.

8 But other than those practicalities, 'Isa', I want
9 to make sure you realise, I know what you're doing is
10 difficult. You've come into a public place to talk
11 about yourself, and your life, and in particular your
12 early life, when I know, from reading your statement,
13 not everything that happened was entirely wonderful, if
14 I can put it that way, and indeed some of it must have
15 been very difficult, and it must be difficult for you to
16 look back at it.

17 People can be caught unawares by their own emotions
18 when they're sitting exactly where you are, I'm well
19 used to that, don't worry if you are. Don't worry if
20 you feel you need a break, just ask, that's not
21 a problem.

22 A. Okay.

23 LADY SMITH: Or if you want us to explain something better,
24 if you don't understand us, that's our fault, not yours,
25 all right?

1 A. Okay.

2 LADY SMITH: There's a microphone there to help you and
3 we'll make sure once you start giving your evidence that
4 it's in the best position for us all to hear you and you
5 to be able to speak easily without shouting. But other
6 than that, there's nothing I need to mention at the
7 moment. Do you have any questions?

8 A. Not at the moment.

9 LADY SMITH: Okay. I'll hand over to Ms Forbes and she'll
10 take it from there.

11 Ms Forbes.

12 Questions by Ms Forbes

13 MS FORBES: Thank you, my Lady. Good morning, 'Isa'.

14 A. Morning.

15 Q. Now, your statement is in front of you in that red
16 folder and it'll also appear on the screen.

17 A. Okay.

18 Q. But you don't have to use either of them; it's whatever
19 you're comfortable with.

20 If you want to first of all, though, go to the very
21 last page of your statement, which is page 24.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. Have you got that? On that page, 'Isa', at
24 paragraph 161, there's a declaration, and it says:

25 'I have no objection to my witness statement being

1 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

2 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
3 true.'

4 And then you've signed it and it's dated 22 August
5 2019, is that right?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And is that still the position, 'Isa'?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. We can go back to the beginning of your statement if you
10 want, or you can put it to one side, it's up to you.

11 Now, 'Isa', we give your statement a reference
12 number, just for our records, so I'm going to read it
13 out for the transcript. It's WIT.001.002.8178.

14 So 'Isa', you tell us you were born in 1963, is that
15 right?

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. Yes. And you go on to talk about your life before you
18 went into care in your statement from paragraph 2, so
19 I'm just going to ask you about that. I think you tell
20 us your family home originally was in Edinburgh?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And you say that your mum sadly died when you were about
23 six months to a year old?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And after that you and your brother -- an older brother,

1 is that right?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. He's three years older than you. You both went to stay
4 with your maternal grandparents?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. However, they couldn't cope with two young children and
7 so you and your brother then ended up going into care?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. But again, you were very young so you don't have
10 a memory of going into care?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Now, 'Isa', is that comfortable for you with the
13 microphone there? Do you want to move it slightly more
14 towards you, is that better?

15 A. Yeah, that's fine.

16 LADY SMITH: Yes, thank you.

17 MS FORBES: 'Isa', I am now going to go on and just ask you
18 about Widowers' Children's Home, and you talk about that
19 from paragraph 4 of your statement, and really this is
20 where you spent your whole childhood, is that right?

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. Now, 'Isa', you tell us later in your statement that you
23 haven't been able to get any records, and we've talked
24 about that before today, before you giving evidence just
25 now, and you know that we've been able to get some

1 records.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Is that right? So I think from your recollection you
4 thought, or you were told, that you were in Widowers'
5 from about 18 months old or so. I think from our
6 records, 'Isa', we know you were admitted to Widowers'
7 on [REDACTED] 1965. So your birthday's in [REDACTED], so
8 you would have just turned 2 years old at that time.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. And you stayed there until [REDACTED] 1980, when you
11 would have been 16 years old, and that was when you went
12 to live with a Mr and Mrs Cormack?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Yes. And I think you were 16, coming up for 17, really,
15 at that point?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So it was your whole childhood.

18 A. Yep.

19 Q. That you were in Widowers'.

20 I'm just going to go on, then, 'Isa', to talk about
21 Widowers', and I think you are understanding that the
22 council maybe had a hand in the running of Widowers',
23 but it was run by a charity, mainly for people who'd
24 lost their mothers?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Hence its name?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. You say that originally, that's who got places there,
4 but later on there were other children in there whose
5 parents were maybe divorced, or who had been abused?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And I think at paragraph 6 of your statement, over the
8 page, you give us a bit of a description of the
9 building, and you say this was a huge building, and huge
10 grounds, is that right?

11 A. That's right.

12 Q. And you remember certain people that you name there, you
13 say there was a gardener?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And this was HRK [REDACTED]?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And his family stayed in a cottage there?

18 A. That's right.

19 Q. So he had his wife, [REDACTED]?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. So that would have been [REDACTED]?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And she was SNR [REDACTED] in the home?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. And they had three children, who you name there as well?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And they also stayed in the cottage with him?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You tell us your recollection, 'Isa', at paragraph 7
5 about the layout inside of Widowers', and you say that
6 you remember when you came in the front door there was
7 a room directly opposite, which was SNR's sitting
8 room?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And then to the right there was the dining room; is that
11 right?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. And then to the right of the dining room was the office?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And then you say there was something called an 'older
16 boys' sitting room'?

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. And that was opposite the office, and there was a wee
19 alley, you say, that led through to a staff area?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. You go on, 'Isa', to describe at paragraph 8 that there
22 was stairs on the left, is that right?

23 A. Right. Left, yeah.

24 Q. And there was a kitchen, the kitchen and an older girls'
25 sitting room?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So there were separate sitting rooms, then, for the
3 older boys and the older girls?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You say there was boys' and girls' toilets on the ground
6 level as well, and another set of stairs by them.

7 And just beside the stairs, you say there was also
8 a bathroom area, toilets, and a younger persons' sitting
9 area?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Was the younger persons' sitting area, then, a mixed
12 one?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So boys and girls?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And then you tell us that at either end, the stairs went
17 down to the basement, and also up to the bedrooms?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. So that's how you would get down to the lower floor or
20 up to the --

21 A. Yeah, there was two sets of stairs.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. At either side of the building.

24 Q. Okay. 'Isa', you then go on to tell us about staff at
25 paragraph 9, and you give us the name of the woman SNR

1 SNR at Widowers'?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And who was that?

4 A. That was HRF .

5 Q. Was she what was called SNR ?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. But did you have another name that you had to call her?

8 A. Aunty HRF .

9 Q. Okay. And also SNR ?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And we've talked about her, that was HRK 's

12 wife?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. . You remember some other staff as well.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. You name a woman called RHJ ?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. You say she was not a nice woman?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Is that right?

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. And you also name a Mary Baxter and HRE , who used to

23 be SNR ?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Was that SNR ?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. So was she similar, HRE, was she similar in
3 rank, if you like, to [REDACTED]?

4 A. HRE was SNR [REDACTED] before [REDACTED], and then when
5 HRE left, [REDACTED] went to be SNR [REDACTED].

6 Q. That's fine. And you give us a bit more description
7 about RHJ [REDACTED]. You say that she had an American
8 accent?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. So that's --

11 A. Sounded like American, yeah, it was -- yeah.

12 Q. So that's something that stuck out to you?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And you think she would have been in her 30s?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. And you say she was a big woman?

17 A. Mm-hmm, she was tall, yeah.

18 Q. So, tall?

19 A. Tall, yeah.

20 Q. When you say big, that's what you mean?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. And you also point out that she had huge feet?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. So that was a particular thing --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- that you recall?

2 LADY SMITH: I suppose when you were a child, you'd have
3 noticed her feet a lot if she was very tall.

4 A. Yeah. Yeah.

5 LADY SMITH: That might have been the main part of her that
6 you saw.

7 A. Yeah. And I think I probably thought she was big as
8 well, because you're so small. But she was tall.

9 LADY SMITH: Yes.

10 MS FORBES: So from your point of view, quite an imposing
11 character, then?

12 A. Very.

13 Q. 'Isa', you tell us that in relation to staff, there
14 would always be SNR [REDACTED], whoever that was, and
15 HRF [REDACTED] on duty?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And the staff all lived in the building?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. So there was always someone. And they had rooms on the
20 same floor as, you say 'ours', so is it the children?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Would that be on the floor above the ground floor?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And you say you think there were about five of them in
25 total?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. Was that five members of staff?

3 A. Yeah. Well, five rooms.

4 Q. Right, okay. Five rooms, okay.

5 A. Mm-hmm.

6 Q. Going over the page then, 'Isa', you say that to start
7 with, there was about 30 children staying there?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. So that's maybe your earlier memories of it?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. But then that dwindled down to about 15 or 20?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. While you were there. And I think you say that you'd
14 heard that the children weren't supposed to be under 2?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And the ages went up to 16?

17 A. Yeah, I think that's why, when I went, and I was under
18 the impression that I went in at about 18 months, but
19 you say my records say no. But I was told that they
20 didn't take anybody under 2, so they wouldn't have took
21 me and my brother together. So to get us together,
22 maybe they've put me down.

23 Q. Yeah, okay.

24 A. I was 2 when I went in.

25 Q. So I think that's information that you got told?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Because you can't remember, because you were so young?

3 A. No, no.

4 Q. But in any event, you were very young?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And you wouldn't have remembered any life before

7 Widowers'?

8 A. No.

9 Q. You say that, at paragraph 13, there was a few children

10 who were adopted --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- out of the home. Would you see that happening?

13 A. Erm, at the time I wouldn't have known that's what

14 happened, but there would have been ones that came and

15 then, they just went.

16 Q. But you say most of the children --

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. -- were there for a long time?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And you tell us, 'Isa', that you still have contact with

21 many of the children that were at Widowers'. You didn't

22 always have contact with them, but you got back in touch

23 through [REDACTED]?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And then some reunions that took place?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. You go on later to talk about that, so we'll come back
3 to that later, 'Isa'?

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. You go on to tell us about the routine and the set-up
6 from paragraph 15, and you say there was an older and
7 a younger boys' dormitories, is that right?

8 A. That's right.

9 Q. So they were kept separate?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And it was the same for the girls; an older girls' and
12 a younger girls' dormitory?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Dormitories, I should say. So you explain the youngest
15 ones were from the youngest, so maybe 2?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. To about 13?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And then the older ones were from about 13 to 16?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. So essentially once you become a teenager --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- you were the older?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And in the younger girls' dormitory, you say there was

1 cubicles, two beds to a cubicle, and about nine or ten
2 girls in the dormitory?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. The older girls then had a room for three or four girls,
5 and a new girl would move in when an older girl moved
6 out?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And you say the set-up was really just your beds and
9 a wardrobe in each cubicle?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And all your clothes and shoes were in the wardrobes?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And you tell us, 'Isa', that those clothes were donated?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And you describe the beds as being cast iron metal beds?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And then you had your little bedside cabinet?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. But you do tell us, 'Isa', you could put posters up and
20 things like that?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. So you were able to personalise your space?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And do you think that that was a good thing?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Just going over to paragraph 18, then, 'Isa', you say
2 that in the morning, staff would get you up about
3 7.30 am and the way they got you up was by shouting?
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. So essentially they'd shout you up?
6 A. Yeah.
7 Q. And if you didn't get up, there would be more shouting?
8 A. Yeah.
9 Q. And then, if that didn't work, they'd pull off the duvet
10 covers?
11 A. Yeah. Yeah.
12 Q. Do you remember that being a problem, about children
13 getting up in the morning, or not?
14 A. Yeah. No.
15 Q. Okay. 'Isa', you tell us about the food from
16 paragraph 19 and you say it was porridge or cereal for
17 breakfast?
18 A. Yeah.
19 Q. And you point out that you actually like porridge?
20 A. Yeah.
21 Q. But you didn't like the porridge there?
22 A. Yeah, no.
23 Q. You say it was horrible. What made it horrible?
24 A. Just, it was very watery, tasteless.
25 Q. And you say there was a place outside the kitchen area

1 that was always locked?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And that was where all the nice things were?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. But it was kept locked?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. So was this like a pantry or something?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. A cupboard?

10 A. It was like a corridor, and it was all locked cupboards.

11 Q. And you say that's where the nice things were?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. What types of things would be in there?

14 A. Like biscuits and sweets and cakes.

15 Q. But you tell us that all the food was prepared in the

16 home, in the kitchen off the dining room, and you'd have

17 all the meals together as children and you could just

18 sit wherever you wanted to?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And would the staff eat with the children?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. They would. But you tell us, 'Isa', like the porridge,

23 the food wasn't nice?

24 A. No.

25 Q. And, in particular, you talk about one of the cooks and

1 what you saw her doing. Do you remember what that was?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. What did she do?

4 A. She would smoke and she'd have her cigarette in her

5 mouth and then it would all be ash and it would fall

6 into the food, and she would just stir it in.

7 Q. So she'd be smoking while she was cooking?

8 A. Yes, yeah.

9 Q. And just let the ash fall in?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And I think you say it was things like macaroni cheese

12 and shepherd's pie?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And there were a lot of custard?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. And you particularly remember the ash going into that?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Once you saw that, what was it like then to have to eat

19 it?

20 A. Not nice.

21 Q. Yes. You tell us that you would get lunch at school and

22 you got the free school dinners, but then it was for

23 dinner and tea you were at Widowers'?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And if you didn't like anything?

1 A. You didn't get anything else.

2 Q. And I think you say you were forced to eat it?

3 A. Oh yeah.

4 Q. So what would you have to do, 'Isa', if --

5 A. If you didn't eat your food, they would keep it back for

6 the next meal, whether that was breakfast, or if it was

7 at the weekend it would be lunch to dinner, and if you

8 didn't eat it, you didn't get anything else.

9 Q. Okay, and did that happen to you?

10 A. Oh yeah, quite a lot.

11 Q. I think you say you wouldn't eat your dinner and it

12 would be served up the next morning for breakfast?

13 A. Yeah, mm-hmm.

14 Q. And if you didn't eat it then you just went without?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. But I think you tell us you would sometimes wait until

17 you were at school and get the lunch there?

18 A. Yes, yeah.

19 Q. And it was all the staff that enforced that rule, is

20 that right?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And that was from about primary school age, you say,

23 right through, so from about 6 or 7 till about 13?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And you describe that as being a 'bad era'?

1 A. Yeah, that was, yeah.

2 Q. And so, is that in relation to your whole time in the
3 home?

4 A. Yeah, it was. I reckon it's because I can't remember
5 before 5, 6, but I remember snippets up until I left.

6 Q. Yes. But I think you say there was a change after about
7 13?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Things didn't seem as bad?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. But the staff there were the same staff, so it wasn't
12 that there was a change of staff, or regime, but you say
13 maybe just because you were getting older?

14 A. Yes. And you just adapted, you just took that as your
15 normal life. You just got on with it.

16 Q. So maybe you were used to it by then?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. 'Isa', you say at paragraph 26 that sometimes you would
19 get a treat?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. But it would be at the weekend?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And how would that be dished out?

24 A. You would stand outside SNR [REDACTED]'s, outside the
25 office, and SNR [REDACTED] would come out. There would be

1 a cupboard in her office where there was sweets as well,
2 and she would come and give you sweets. But if your
3 face didn't fit, you didn't get a sweet.

4 Q. Okay. So just because you were in the line to get one
5 didn't mean you were going to get a treat?

6 A. No, no.

7 Q. It really depended on her say-so?

8 A. Yeah, yeah.

9 Q. And you point out that there were no snacks during the
10 day, or anything like that?

11 A. No, nothing like that.

12 Q. And you wouldn't dare ask --

13 A. No.

14 Q. -- for something if you were hungry?

15 A. No.

16 Q. And was that something you just came to learn in the
17 home?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. That you don't ask?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. For anything?

22 But you tell us that you would go and raid it
23 yourselves?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What was that?

1 A. You broke into it.

2 Q. Yeah?

3 A. And you would -- it would be two or three of us, and you
4 would, we would -- we managed to pick the lock and you'd
5 get in and get the sweeties yourself.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So we'd share that --

8 Q. Was this in her office?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So yeah, that's what we did. So that was our only way
12 of getting something.

13 Q. So somebody figured out how to pick the lock?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And did you do that often?

16 A. Oh, quite regular.

17 Q. And were you ever found out?

18 A. Er, yeah.

19 Q. And what happened?

20 A. You got beat, you got beat up. You got the belt.

21 Q. Okay, and who would administer that?

22 A. Aunty HRF .

23 Q. Aunty HRF , SNR ?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And where would she belt you?

1 A. On your hands. You had to put your hand on top of each
2 other.

3 Q. And do you remember how many times she would hit you
4 with the belt on your hands?

5 A. Quite a few; three, four, five times.

6 Q. Okay. And that would happen to you?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Would it happen to other people too?

9 A. Oh yeah.

10 Q. You tell us, 'Isa', that the evening meal in the home
11 was about 5 o'clock.

12 A. Mm-hmm.

13 Q. But there wasn't anything after that, there was no
14 supper?

15 A. No.

16 Q. And then would that be you, right through till breakfast
17 the next morning?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And the routine you say is after dinner you'd go outside
20 to play?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. But when you were older you were able to go and visit
23 friends?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. So friends outside the home?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. To their houses?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you say they were able to come and visit you in the
5 home as well?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And when you say when you were older, how old do you
8 think you would have been when you were able to do that?

9 A. Probably teenager.

10 Q. Okay. But that wasn't something that was restricted?

11 A. No.

12 Q. You were able to have friends --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- and go and see them.

15 You tell us, 'Isa', that bedtime went with your age,
16 but you say it was maybe never later than 9.00. So the
17 younger you were, would your bedtime be earlier?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. But you say, when you were small, there was never
20 anything like a bedtime story or getting tucked in?

21 A. No.

22 Q. So that's not something you ever really experienced
23 then --

24 A. No.

25 Q. -- as a small child?

1 A. Nothing like that.

2 Q. And as you've already told us, 'Isa', the staff were
3 living in the home, and they were there all the time?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And they would work all day until you went to bed?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And you say they then would go and sit in their living
8 room area?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And at night, if you wanted to go to the toilet, you
11 could just get up and go?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. But if you had a nightmare or couldn't sleep, there
14 wasn't anyone, really, to go to?

15 A. No.

16 Q. So you didn't look for comfort from the staff?

17 A. No.

18 Q. And do you remember having nightmares and not being able
19 to sleep?

20 A. Oh yeah, yes.

21 Q. Was that something frequent?

22 A. On the odd occasion, yeah, and you would just -- as
23 I say, no comfort from the staff, but whoever, if you
24 were younger and you were in the cubicle, you would have
25 the other person there, they would -- you would get

1 comfort from each other.

2 Q. So the children really were looking after each other?

3 A. Yeah, yes.

4 Q. 'Isa', you say about washing and bathing from

5 paragraph 32, that there was the nit comb that came out

6 once a week on a Sunday?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Who would administer the nit comb?

9 A. It would just be any member of staff.

10 Q. And then you say at that time you got a bath once

11 a week?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Is that when you were younger?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. But you explain when you were older, you could have

16 a bath whenever you wanted?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. But you say when you were younger, there wasn't any

19 privacy when you were bathing?

20 A. No.

21 Q. There was more than one person in a bath at a time?

22 A. Yes, yeah.

23 Q. You say two or three maybe, and then there was also

24 supervision by the staff members?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. But when you were older, you were allowed some privacy?
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. So at what age were you given a bit more privacy, do you
4 remember roughly?
5 A. Again, probably teenagers.
6 Q. Okay. And when you were a teenager, then, if you were
7 bathing, would you have staff supervising you --
8 A. No.
9 Q. -- or would you -- allowed -- be on your own?
10 A. Yeah.
11 Q. But you do say there was two baths in the bathroom, so
12 you would maybe be in one bath while a friend was in
13 another?
14 A. Yes, yeah.
15 Q. But that would be the girls together?
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. 'Isa', you say that there wasn't really chores; you had
18 to keep your room clean and tidy? That was one of the
19 rules?
20 A. Yes.
21 Q. But you did that whenever you could?
22 A. Yeah.
23 Q. So it wasn't a strict regime in the morning or anything?
24 A. No.
25 Q. But you had to make your bed before you went to school?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. You tell us, 'Isa', you got a Saturday job when you were
3 about 13 or 14?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And you got money from that job, and from your
6 grandparents as well?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Was that your maternal grandparents? The ones you
9 were --

10 A. No, paternal.

11 Q. Paternal, okay. And you say because of that you did
12 okay?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. So you would have some of your own money to spend?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. It wasn't taken from you by the home?

17 A. No.

18 Q. 'Isa', you tell us about clothing and uniforms from
19 paragraph 36 and you say you did have a uniform for
20 primary and secondary, but it wasn't new?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. And other kids could tell that?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. So when you were starting a new year at school, you
25 didn't have a fresh new uniform?

1 A. No.

2 Q. And you describe there being holes in your clothes, and
3 your shoes being tatty?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And they were just shoes that were donated?

6 A. Yeah, that's right.

7 Q. And there was a particular area in the home where you
8 would go to get shoes that had been donated?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And it was nothing ever new, and you just had to get
11 whatever fitted you?

12 A. That's right.

13 Q. But you explain that as you got older, the donations got
14 better, and they might have been new as well, but they
15 were never up-to-date stuff?

16 A. That's right.

17 Q. And outside of school hours there was, again, donated
18 clothes?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And anything new would have come from your paternal
21 grandparents?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And I think you explain that you used to visit them
24 every second Sunday?

25 A. That's right.

1 Q. And was that something that really continued throughout
2 your whole time at Widowers'?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. It was you and your brother would go to them every
5 second Sunday?

6 A. That's right, yeah.

7 Q. And you were allowed to keep those clothes, then, they
8 weren't taken away from you?

9 A. Yeah. No.

10 Q. But in relation to personal possessions, 'Isa', you tell
11 us that you didn't have much and things could get stolen
12 because the cabinet beside your bed didn't have a lock
13 on it?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Was that something you were aware happening?

16 A. Yeah, erm, like I say, if I had something that somebody
17 else wanted, they could just come and take it.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Because mine's was new, and they wanted it.

20 Q. Yes. You go on, 'Isa', to talk about school from
21 paragraph 40, and you say that you went to Carrick Knowe
22 Primary?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. But you were bullied there?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And you say you don't know if that was because you were
2 in the home, but there were names that you would be
3 called?

4 A. That's right, yeah.

5 Q. By the other children?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And what were the names they would call you?

8 A. 'Homers', or 'home-ites'.

9 Q. Okay, so you were singled out?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. For being in the home. And were there quite a lot of
12 children from Widowers' at that primary school?

13 A. Yes, yeah.

14 Q. You also say that you were quite tall so that maybe made
15 you a target as well?

16 A. Yeah, yeah.

17 Q. But you were definitely made to feel different?

18 A. Oh, yeah.

19 Q. You went on to then secondary school at Forrester High,
20 and you say that you made a decision between primary and
21 secondary that you weren't going to be bullied?

22 A. That's right.

23 Q. And then you say that you --

24 A. Yeah, I basically turned into the bully.

25 Q. And you were a bit unruly, you say, first and second

1 year?

2 A. Yeah, yeah.

3 Q. But then you settled down, I think later on you tell us,
4 third and fourth year, you became a model pupil?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. So it was difficult at first, but things got better?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. You explain, 'Isa', that the kids all knew that you were
9 from the home and you got dinner tickets?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Was that to get your free school meals?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And you say you would sell them?

14 A. Yep.

15 Q. And you say you did have friends at school and you name
16 a couple of people you are still in touch with now?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. From school you got homework, but you tell us you were
19 just left to your own devices in the home?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. So it was really up to you if you did it or not?

22 A. Exactly, yeah.

23 Q. And you say that you did it in your bedroom or in the
24 older girls' sitting room?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So was this homework really when you got to secondary
2 school?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. But you don't remember having a parents' night?

5 A. No.

6 Q. So nobody from the home would go to the school and sit
7 and talk with your teachers --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- about how you were getting on?

10 A. No.

11 Q. And you say there was no encouragement?

12 A. No.

13 Q. So the people in the home weren't willing you to do
14 well, or encouraging you to get on well at school?

15 A. Not that I can remember, no.

16 Q. But you say you could have stayed on at school, but you
17 didn't want to, and then you left school when you left
18 Widowers', so you were 16?

19 A. Yes. That's -- actually, when the home shut down, was
20 when I was 16.

21 Q. Okay. 'Isa', you go on to talk about some more things
22 about the home. At paragraph 48, you say there was
23 a big back garden there?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And there were swings?

1 A. Mm-hmm.

2 Q. And you would, as we've said, visit friends or friends
3 would come round to the home. And then there were also
4 toys that you could play with?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And you remember that when you were younger?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. But these were secondhand toys?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. You remember board games, but you basically made your
11 own entertainment?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And you say you would go out and about with friends and
14 play with the toys that were in boxes?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. There was also a television that you could watch after
17 dinner, and sometimes before bed?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And you remember, when you were older, fighting over
20 what you'd be watching?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. So was there a particular room in the home, then, that
23 you could go and sit and watch television?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. But from what you've said there, was that restricted

1 then to after dinnertime?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And what about the weekend, would it be something you

4 were able to do during the day, or not?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay.

7 You say you don't remember having any books, and

8 reading wasn't encouraged unless the book was from

9 school. So do you remember there being any sort of

10 library in the home?

11 A. No, the library was actually out in Corstorphine.

12 Q. Okay. So if you wanted to go to get a book, you would

13 have to go out to the library?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. But the way you explain it, 'Isa', is you say that you

16 were always just left to your own devices?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. You did go to Brownies and Girl Guides?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And something called Band of Hope?

21 A. Yep.

22 Q. But that was just to find something to do?

23 A. Yeah, I would go to anything just to get out.

24 Q. And there were some trips; would the home get free

25 tickets to go to the zoo?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And the Tattoo?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And that was when you were older, I think you say, about
5 13 or 14?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And you went ice skating on a Friday?

8 A. Yep.

9 Q. And then swimming at the Commonwealth Pool?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Would -- the ice skating and the swimming, was that
12 something you would be able to just go to on your own,
13 or were you taken there?

14 A. I went on my own and used my own money for it. They
15 didn't fund it.

16 LADY SMITH: And you weren't too far away from getting to
17 the ice rink, although the Commonwealth Pool would have
18 been a bit further.

19 A. Yes, you only went there when you were older.

20 LADY SMITH: So you'd have to get, what, two buses?

21 A. Yeah, two buses.

22 MS FORBES: You also say there was a yearly trip to Gullane
23 beach?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And you did that whatever the weather, so if that was

1 when it was planned and it was raining?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. You just went?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. But you remember Christmas parties that were fun, too?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And they were organised for you?

8 A. Yeah, but thinking back on it now, I just think 'cause

9 people from outside would come in, and I just think they

10 put them on for show.

11 Q. And you say there was also a pantomime, and you say the

12 'Gang Show'?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Every year. And that was organised, you say, by the

15 staff at Widowers'?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And you say you do remember going on holidays?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. You say you remember one in Scotland; you stayed with

20 people who had their own children?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. So this was a holiday with another family?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And you say you remember going to a funfair?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. And you particularly remember an incident --
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. -- with a dog about that. And you also remember going
4 on a holiday to Dunfermline once with your brother?
5 A. Yes.
6 Q. But that was with your own relatives?
7 A. Yes.
8 Q. You stayed with your own relatives?
9 A. Yes, yes.
10 Q. And you mention that your first memory is with
11 a particular boy who was -- who came to be in the home?
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. [REDACTED]?
14 A. Yes.
15 Q. And you remember going with him to get tomato soup?
16 A. Yeah.
17 Q. Was that with his family?
18 A. No, it was just the two of us.
19 Q. Okay. So, you say that was before you were in primary
20 school?
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. And you went out to somebody's house?
23 A. Yeah.
24 Q. And you say that that happened more than once?
25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So you remember going to this house more than once?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Do you know what that was about, or who that was?

4 A. Haven't a clue.

5 Q. No, okay. But these are happy memories?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You tell us a bit more, 'Isa', about the Christmas
8 parties from paragraph 60, and you remember Christmas
9 being okay, having happy memories of that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. There were stockings at the end of the bed --

12 A. Mm-hmm.

13 Q. -- for each person, when you woke up?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. But this was all donated?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. But not secondhand, this was new?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And there would be a huge Christmas tree and you would
20 have a sackful of presents --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- with your name on it. And there was a Christmas
23 dinner as well?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And you remember it being a good time?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. You say that they were good times, you tell us, I think,
3 but you say, paragraph 61, you say:
4 'It's just that they were outweighed by the bad
5 times.'

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. You do remember, 'Isa', going out of the home to
8 a Christmas party, where you say that you burnt your leg
9 on a radiator?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. On the wall and you've still got the mark. You don't
12 know what -- where that was or what that was for?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. And you also got a present on your birthday, you
15 say, but that was it; they didn't have a party or
16 anything?

17 A. No.

18 Q. And your dad and your grandparents would also give you
19 a present?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. You make the point, 'Isa', you say:
22 'So I was perhaps luckier in a sense than some of
23 the other kids. Not all of them had people outwith the
24 home and some had nobody.'

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. So when you were there and getting these things, that
2 was something you were aware of?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. That you were maybe quite lucky because other people
5 didn't have as much?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. You tell us, 'Isa', that you'd go to Sunday School
8 across the road and you didn't have a choice about that?

9 A. No.

10 Q. So that was something that you had to do --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- when you were in the home. But you stopped going
13 when you got to secondary school age, is that right?

14 A. That's right.

15 Q. And they didn't bother at that time --

16 A. No.

17 Q. -- about you stopping?

18 And you had to say your prayers before you went to
19 bed?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. That was a habit?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. So that was something that was a rule in the home?

24 A. Yeah, yeah.

25 Q. And you say you were taught when you were younger and

1 you just got used to doing it every night?

2 A. Yes. Yeah.

3 Q. 'Isa', in relation to visits and things, you tell us

4 from paragraph 66 that your dad would visit every second

5 week up until you were about 15?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. But then he just disappeared?

8 A. That's right.

9 Q. And you say when he stopped visiting, you just thought

10 he'd abandoned you?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Because you were old enough at 15 to notice --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- the difference. But you tell us nobody ever

15 explained, or told you anything about why he stopped

16 visiting?

17 A. No.

18 Q. And you just make the point that you hated him for years

19 after that?

20 A. God yeah.

21 Q. And you go on to say that no one ever came in and

22 visited you in the home. You'd go out with them and do

23 things.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And that was what you said about your grandparents;

1 every second Sunday you'd go to visit them?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. But would you stay over or was it just during the day?

4 A. No, it was just during the day.

5 Q. Okay. And you say that seemed like a chore, to be

6 honest?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And you say your grandmother wasn't a very nice woman?

9 A. No.

10 Q. And did she act differently towards you than she did to

11 your brother?

12 A. No, we were both the same.

13 Q. Okay. But you say that that's something you didn't look

14 forward to?

15 A. No.

16 Q. But it was just something that you had to do?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. But I think you make the point that your grandfather was

19 lovely?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. But your grandmother was very strict?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And a bit of a tyrant?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. I think you tell us, 'Isa', that you were aware of other

1 children in the home going and visiting family at the
2 weekends, and sometimes you would take friends with you
3 when you went to your grandparents?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And [REDACTED] was one of those people that you took?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And you would go with him to see his dad?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. So he was a particular friend, is that right?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And you also went with [REDACTED], you say, another girl
12 in the home, to visit her grandparents?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And you talk about her having a big family --

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. -- who were all in Widowers', and she was the eldest?

17 LADY SMITH: Was there any problem about arranging to go to
18 somebody else's family?

19 A. No, there was no, there was no issue.

20 LADY SMITH: But you would have to tell the home --

21 A. Yes.

22 LADY SMITH: -- that's where you were going, did you? Thank
23 you.

24 MS FORBES: So there was a lot of freedom, from what you're
25 telling us?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And I think the way you put it earlier was that you were
3 just sort of left to your own devices?

4 A. Yeah, yep.

5 Q. There were people, you say, though, that came into
6 Widowers' to visit?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. And they were members of the committee of the home?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. But they would come in and see Mrs HRF, and they
11 would have a look around, and you remember particularly
12 someone, 'Weatherspoon', or 'Waterstone', something like
13 that?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And there was also the local bobby, who you've named
16 there, at paragraph 75, and he would come in as well?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. And if you'd been getting up to bother, he would come in
19 and give you a talking to?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. But you didn't like him, is that right?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And you say that's just because he was police?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. An authority?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And at that time were you riling up against authority,
3 really?

4 A. Yeah, I was.

5 Q. When the members of the committee would come in, would
6 they ever speak to you or the other children?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. So it was Mrs HRF they were coming to see?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. 'Isa', you tell us about a special day called Pound Day
11 when local people would come round and donate food?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. So that was food donated to the home?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And you say that on that day, you had to be on your best
16 behaviour and in your best clothes?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And you describe it as:
19 'We were just putting on a show for the community.'

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. 'Making them think everything was hunky dory and we were
22 being well looked after.'

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And is that how you feel when you were getting spruced
25 up for these visits?

1 A. Yeah, we were just put on show.

2 Q. You weren't aware, 'Isa', of any official inspections,
3 but you were aware of having a social worker?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And she was someone that helped you find somewhere to
6 stay when you were leaving the home?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. But I think you tell us a bit later in your statement as
9 well, that after you left, you were really just on your
10 own?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And left to your own devices?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And you tell us at paragraph 78 that there was a time
15 when you were caught shoplifting?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And that triggered social work visits at that time as
18 well?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. But you really didn't have any other social work visits
21 until you were leaving?

22 A. No.

23 Q. So it wasn't like you had a social worker who would come
24 to the home regularly to speak to you and see how you
25 were getting on?

1 A. No, never.

2 Q. And you tell us, 'Isa', paragraph 79, that you don't
3 remember ever having an opportunity to talk with
4 an adult?

5 A. No.

6 Q. And even when your behaviour was unruly, we talked about
7 the shoplifting, nobody really ever spoke to you?

8 A. No.

9 Q. So you weren't sat down and asked what was going on?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Or what was causing the behaviour?

12 A. No.

13 Q. 'Isa', you tell us about healthcare from paragraph 80,
14 and you mention Dr HRI [REDACTED] and a dentist. But you say
15 in particular that you remember getting to that age
16 where you started your period?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Did anyone explain what was happening to you at that
19 time?

20 A. No, no.

21 Q. Did you feel there was anybody you could go to, to talk
22 to about that?

23 A. Just the older girls.

24 Q. So again it was the other children looking after --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- each other?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. But there was a room, outside, you say, HRF [REDACTED]'s
4 room?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And you would go there to get what you needed for your
7 period?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. But there wasn't a staff member that explained that to
10 you?

11 A. No.

12 Q. And you tell us, 'Isa', at paragraph 81 that when you
13 started your period, you remember thinking, 'What's
14 going on here?'

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. 'Am I dying'?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. So was it quite a shock?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And a worry to you at the time?

21 A. Yeah, it was.

22 Q. But then, once it was explained by the older girl who
23 helped you out, you knew then?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. But you say the staff didn't do anything, there was no

1 help and it was really scary?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. 'Isa', you talk about being in the home with your
4 brother, and he was with you throughout, until he left,
5 is that right?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Because he was a bit older, he left before you?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. But you say that you weren't that close --

10 A. No.

11 Q. -- with him, and I think you say he was very clever?

12 A. Very, yeah.

13 Q. And he was a bit up himself?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. But you remember a particular time that he was nice to
16 you, and you describe that at paragraph 84; it was after
17 you got knocked down coming back from the shops?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And you were injured and hit your head, knocked yourself
20 out on the pavement, and you say that he was nice to you
21 then, and I think you say that that's just really the
22 only memory --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- you have of him being nice?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. You tell us, 'Isa', that there were a few family groups
2 at Widowers', and you name who they were. So we've got
3 that there at paragraph 86, but they were, there would
4 be families with a number of siblings together?
5 A. Yes.
6 Q. And would they be there for quite a long time?
7 A. Yeah.
8 Q. 'Isa', you talk about bed-wetting from paragraph 87.
9 A. Yeah.
10 Q. And you say that there were children who wet their beds
11 and that was something that you had a problem with --
12 A. Yeah.
13 Q. -- when you were younger?
14 A. Yeah.
15 Q. And what happened when you wet your bed?
16 A. Nothing, you just had to sleep in it, and then the next
17 day, you would get your face rubbed in it.
18 Q. Okay. So would that be when staff --
19 A. Come to get you up.
20 Q. -- found out? So they would rub your face in the wet
21 sheets?
22 A. Yeah, yeah.
23 Q. And did they say anything to you when they were doing
24 that?
25 A. No.

1 Q. So that happened to you?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And did you see it happen to other people?

4 A. Er, yeah.

5 Q. But I think you say you don't have a great memory of
6 which staff did that, but in that bad era you were
7 talking about --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- I think you said before 6 to 7, up to 13?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. You say it was all of them?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. So you just had to sleep in your bed if you wet it and
14 then they would rub your face in it in the morning?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. I think you go on to say, 'Isa', at paragraph 89, that
17 after your face was rubbed in the wet sheets, you'd be
18 made to strip the bed and then make it back up?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. So you had to do that?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And that would be in front of other children?

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. And how did you find that?

25 A. You were humiliated.

1 Q. Okay. But it wasn't just you that happened to, though?

2 A. Oh, no, no.

3 Q. It was other children as well?

4 A. Yeah, there was other ones.

5 Q. 'Isa', you talk about running away, from paragraph 90,

6 and you mention your friend [REDACTED] again?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. You say that you and him were always running away

9 together?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And you say that you would get some food together?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Like cooking apples and things like that, and jump out

14 the window?

15 A. Yep.

16 Q. This would be at nighttime?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. But you would run off, but then come back?

19 A. Yep.

20 LADY SMITH: Which windows were you able to get out of?

21 A. It would be the basement, down in the basement.

22 Obviously not on the top floor, but yeah, down to the

23 basement, you'd get out the window there.

24 LADY SMITH: How would you get down to the basement without

25 anybody noticing?

1 A. Just down -- you got used to it, just down the back
2 stairs.

3 LADY SMITH: In the dark?

4 A. Yeah. No lights on.

5 MS FORBES: But this great escape, you say, didn't last
6 long?

7 A. Never amounted to much.

8 Q. No.

9 A. You just, you went -- you went away and you'd think,
10 'What are you doing? Get back'.

11 Q. And I think you tell us you would be back before anyone
12 knew you were gone?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. But again, is this the sort of freedom that you talked
15 about; you really were given --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- not a lot of supervision; you could do what you
18 wanted?

19 A. Yes.

20 LADY SMITH: Did you ever find when you got back that
21 somebody had shut the window?

22 A. No.

23 LADY SMITH: Luckily.

24 A. Luckily.

25 MS FORBES: But you say, 'Isa', no one knew, and you doubt

1 they cared?

2 A. Well, that's how we thought, yeah.

3 Q. 'Isa', you then go on to talk about abuse at Widowers'.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And this is from paragraph 92, so I'm going to just ask

6 you some questions now about that.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. And what you tell us about that. You've mentioned

9 shoplifting --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. -- already, and you say that you had a friend at school?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And you and her were caught shoplifting once?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And the police got involved and she'd given the wrong

16 name and address?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. And you say that after that, her parents stopped you

19 hanging about together?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. And you say the police then took you back to the home?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And you think you went in front of a Children's Panel?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And you say you were punished at the home as well?

1 A. Yeah, yeah.

2 Q. And you just say, 'That wasn't nice'.

3 A. No.

4 Q. Then you go on to tell us what happened at paragraph 94.

5 A. Mm-hmm.

6 Q. Who was it then that punished you?

7 A. Aunty **HRF**.

8 Q. And what did she do?

9 A. Well, could be anything, as I say, slapped about the

10 head, the backside, backs of your legs. Sometimes you

11 would be made to stand with your arms stretched out,

12 holding books, and if your arms dropped, you got slapped

13 round the legs.

14 Q. And so this first thing you've told us about in relation

15 to what happened when you got back after the

16 shoplifting, you say she was slapping you about the

17 head, slapping your backside and the back of your legs?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. Where did that happen in the home?

20 A. In her, in her wee sitting room.

21 Q. And was there anyone else there at the time?

22 A. No.

23 Q. So just you and her?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. I think you say that went on for a few minutes?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. How old were you at that time, were you a teenager by
3 then?

4 A. Yeah, probably 12/13.

5 Q. Okay. And you say that she told you you were
6 an embarrassment --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- for bringing the police to the door?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. But also she stopped you from getting anything to eat?

11 A. Yeah, that's right.

12 Q. So you didn't get any dinner?

13 A. No.

14 Q. So the food was a punishment, the withdrawal of food?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Do you remember other occasions when you wouldn't be
17 allowed to have dinner?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay, so this was just one occasion?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. You tell us, 'Isa', that when she did this to you, you
22 didn't cry?

23 A. No.

24 Q. And you make the point, you say:
25 'I never cried in there.'

1 A. No.

2 Q. And was that just you wilfully being stubborn and not
3 wanting to show them?

4 A. Yeah, it was just me zoning out. Basically they could
5 do what they want, but I wasn't, I wasn't going -- they
6 wanted me to cry and I wouldn't do it, I wouldn't give
7 them the satisfaction.

8 Q. But because you wouldn't cry, did that mean that it went
9 on for longer?

10 A. Mm-hmm, yeah. They would try and get me to cry so they
11 would just beat you longer.

12 Q. So that's what you thought they were trying to do, get
13 you to cry?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And I think you say that other girls like [REDACTED], who
16 we talked about --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- used to tell you to cry?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And that was to get it to stop?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. But you wouldn't?

23 A. No.

24 Q. You say that you started getting beatings from staff?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. And you say it was mostly HRF and RHJ ?
2 A. Yeah.
3 Q. So RHJ 's the American accent woman?
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. And you say that started from about the age of 6 or 7?
6 A. Yeah.
7 Q. That's what you remember?
8 A. Yeah.
9 Q. And you go on, then, 'Isa', to tell us a little bit more
10 about RHJ . We've talked about the fact you say
11 she was tall?
12 A. Yeah.
13 Q. She had the big feet?
14 A. Yeah.
15 Q. But she also wore something in particular on the feet,
16 and what was that?
17 A. Wooden Scholls.
18 LADY SMITH: Yes, and they were very popular at that time,
19 weren't they?
20 A. Yeah, yeah.
21 LADY SMITH: The 60s and 70s, they were solid wood with just
22 a leather strap over the toe area.
23 A. Yeah.
24 MS FORBES: What would she do with those wooden Scholls?
25 A. Slap you about the head with them, for no reason.

1 Q. So she would hit you with them?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And you say on the head?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. And I think you say she would slap you over the back of
6 your head with them or also with her hands?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And that wouldn't be just you and her on your own; that
9 would be in front of other children?

10 A. Oh yeah.

11 Q. And other members of staff as well?

12 A. Mm-hmm, yeah.

13 Q. And how often did that happen?

14 A. Oh, quite a lot. And you didn't have to do anything for
15 it to happen. Just depended what mood she was in that
16 day.

17 Q. I think you say that it happened to other kids as well?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. But you tell us, 'Isa', you think it happened more to
20 you, and I think you say that's because you didn't cry?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. And do you feel that you were singled out?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Because you didn't cry?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. You say that you had some injuries --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- as a result of these assaults and you say that you

4 suffered bruises and your pride was hurt?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. But there was never an occasion where there were broken

7 bones or anything?

8 A. No.

9 Q. And the bruises would be on your legs, mostly?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. But would these assaults, beatings, they would hurt?

12 A. Of course, yeah.

13 Q. You describe [REDACTED], 'Isa', as being the worst?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. So she was worse than Aunty [REDACTED]?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And these type of things went on all the time --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- when she was there?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. But there was a point when she left?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And you say she wanted to come back but she wasn't

24 allowed to?

25 A. No.

1 Q. And you don't know why she left?

2 A. No.

3 Q. And so then after that, did things get a bit better for
4 you?

5 A. Er, a wee bit, yeah.

6 Q. You go on to talk about some other punishments, 'Isa',
7 at paragraph 102. You said, I think you've mentioned
8 this already, that you were made to stand in
9 Aunty **HRF**'s sitting room?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And you said with the books?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. So what would it be, can you describe what would happen,
14 that you'd be told to stand there?

15 A. Yeah, so you'd be standing there, you'd have your arms
16 out, stretched out at shoulder height, where you're
17 holding books, and if your arms dropped, you got
18 slapped. You had to keep them at shoulder length.

19 Q. And would that be books in each hand?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And how many books would you have to hold?

22 A. About two.

23 Q. How long would that go on for?

24 A. It seemed like ages.

25 Q. And why would you get that type of punishment?

1 A. Just for normal messing up.

2 Q. Okay. You describe RHJ as being somebody who
3 would hit you --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- for any sort of reason, depending on what her mood
6 was like.

7 A. Mm-hmm.

8 Q. Was that the same for Aunty HRF or was it different at
9 all?

10 A. No, it was more if you'd mucked up. Just general
11 mucking up as a child.

12 Q. So if she thought you'd done something wrong?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. But when you got punished by her, would you know what
15 you were getting punished for?

16 A. Erm, mostly at the time, yeah.

17 Q. But that wasn't the same with RHJ ?

18 A. No.

19 Q. And I think you've already told us, 'Isa', that if you
20 dropped the books you got your legs slapped?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. So it was your legs in particular?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. But there was also the belt that you've told us about.
25 And you say that that would be just for normal day

1 messaging up, nothing serious?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And you describe it as being outside her office, outside

4 Aunty **HRF**'s office?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And she was the one that would give you the belt?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Now, was that on your hands, then --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- with your hands out?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And I think you've described it one hand on top of the

13 other?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Is that what she would tell you to do?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And you say you got that:

18 'It happened all the time.'

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. 'And to quite a lot of us.'

21 A. Mm-hmm.

22 Q. And you describe there always being a row of kids with

23 their hands out, standing outside her office?

24 A. Yeah, mm-hmm.

25 Q. So they would be waiting for their punishment?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And was that painful?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Would it leave marks?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And I think you already told us earlier that you would
7 be hit by this belt on your hands?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. More than once?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Can you describe what type of belt it was?

12 A. It was like a leather one.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. A long, thin leather belt.

15 Q. So was it the type of belt that somebody would wear, or
16 something different?

17 A. No, it was more, kinda if you were at school and you got
18 the strap at school, it was like that.

19 LADY SMITH: So when you said, 'Isa', there'd be a row of
20 kids --

21 A. Mm-hmm.

22 LADY SMITH: -- with their hands out, outside her office.

23 A. Yeah.

24 LADY SMITH: So they were having to hold the books like
25 that, standing in the corridor outside her office?

1 A. No, when we held the books, we were in her sitting room.

2 LADY SMITH: Right.

3 A. So we would be in there. Outside her office it would be
4 when you were getting the belt.

5 LADY SMITH: Ah, okay, thank you. So they'd be belted in
6 the corridor?

7 A. Yes. Yeah.

8 LADY SMITH: Where everybody could see them?

9 A. Yes.

10 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

11 MS FORBES: And you say, 'Isa', you didn't behave and you
12 were always getting into trouble.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. And so would you be one of the kids in that row, quite
15 often?

16 A. Oh, all the time.

17 Q. Was this -- we were thinking about how frequently; would
18 it be daily or a couple of times a week?

19 A. Oh, a few times a week.

20 Q. A few times a week. And you just say that, this is at
21 paragraph 105, you say:
22 'I just it did it out of sheer wickedness because of
23 what I was going through.'

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. But you've already explained, nobody ever spoke to

1 you --

2 A. No.

3 Q. -- about why you were misbehaving?

4 A. No.

5 Q. You tell us, 'Isa', that you remember one particular

6 occasion when you say you got a beating from

7 RHJ [REDACTED]?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. And you were about 6 or 7. So do you remember anything

10 more about that, what she was doing to you?

11 A. I don't know why, but I can just remember I got

12 a beating and I just went up to the dormitory and I just

13 upturned all the beds. Erm, when I was in the home

14 I did have a quick temper, I was quite volatile, so

15 I was forever getting into trouble.

16 Q. And you say that after you went up to the dormitory and

17 upturned all the beds, you got another beating for that?

18 A. Yeah, yeah.

19 Q. Was that from RHJ [REDACTED] again?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. But you tell us, 'Isa', that the staff would use

22 a particular method, you say, to try to calm you down?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. What was that?

25 A. Submerge me in a bath of cold water.

1 Q. So I think you say they would run a bath --
2 A. Uh-huh.
3 Q. -- of cold water and then lift you up?
4 A. Uh-huh.
5 Q. So would there be more than one member of staff
6 involved?
7 A. Yeah, physically put you into the water and they would
8 just push you under, so --
9 LADY SMITH: Did you still have your clothes on?
10 A. Yeah.
11 MS FORBES: And they would push you under the water?
12 A. Yeah.
13 Q. So would you be completely submerged?
14 A. Yeah.
15 Q. Your head under as well?
16 A. Yes, yeah.
17 Q. And I think you say you'd be kicking and screaming when
18 that would go on?
19 A. Mm-hmm, yeah.
20 Q. So more than one member of staff involved in that?
21 A. Yeah.
22 Q. You say maybe two or three?
23 A. Yeah.
24 Q. But you also say, 'Isa', that your brother was involved
25 in that too?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. So he would sometimes be one of the people doing that to
3 you, along with the staff?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. You tell us he would do that of his own free will?

6 A. Yep.

7 Q. And I think you say, 'Isa', that that's something that's
8 particularly horrible to talk about?

9 A. Yeah.

10 LADY SMITH: Can you, and if you can't do this, it's not
11 a problem, but can you give me an example of anything
12 that happened that led to you being put in the bath of
13 cold water?

14 A. I can't remember.

15 LADY SMITH: I mean, you say in your statement that it was
16 circumstances where the staff seemed to want to calm you
17 down.

18 A. Yeah, 'cause I had such a quick temper.

19 LADY SMITH: Okay.

20 A. And they just thought that was a way to calm you down.

21 LADY SMITH: Did they physically have to drag you to the
22 bath?

23 A. Yep.

24 LADY SMITH: From what age, about, did that start happening?

25 A. It would be between the ages of, I would say 6 or 7.

1 LADY SMITH: Oh dear. Do you remember any particular
2 members of staff doing it?

3 A. No.

4 LADY SMITH: Thank you, 'Isa'.

5 MS FORBES: 'Isa', did that then happen more than once?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And how frequently would that type of thing happen?

8 A. I can only remember it happening a few times.

9 Q. Okay. And did it happen when you were a lot older as
10 well, or just --

11 A. No.

12 Q. -- when you were younger?

13 A. It was when I was younger.

14 Q. Okay.

15 Because, like you say, they would have to pick you
16 up --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- and put you in the bath?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And I think you've told us you were quite tall as you
21 got older as well?

22 A. Yeah. Yeah.

23 Q. So it would've been more difficult, I think, the older
24 you got?

25 A. Yeah, much more.

1 Q. You go on to say, 'Isa', that you personally think that
2 your brother may have been sexually abused in Widowers'?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you say that as a result of that, you think he then
5 went on to sexually abuse quite a few people in the
6 home?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. But that's not something that you were aware of when you
9 were in the home?

10 A. No, no.

11 Q. But this is something that, when you've talked to other
12 people at reunions --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- and the like, that you've heard about?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. I think one of the people, you say [REDACTED] --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- came to your house and told you?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And she said it was going to come out and she wanted you
21 to know about it --

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. -- before that happened?

24 A. That's right.

25 Q. And you tell us, you say you think it's awful to think

1 that your brother has been through that, and then also
2 done that to other people?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you say you feel guilty?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Why do you feel guilty about that?

7 A. Because he did what he did to friends, and he wasn't
8 here to answer, 'cause he's not with us anymore. And
9 I just felt that he was my brother, so they must blame
10 me for it.

11 Q. But it wasn't you.

12 A. No.

13 Q. But I think part of the thing is, you tell us later,
14 'Isa', that your brother has died, is that right?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. So when these allegations have come out --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- and you found out about them, you're not able to
19 speak to him about that?

20 A. No.

21 Q. So you weren't able to speak to him when he was alive?

22 A. No.

23 Q. So it's a sort of unanswered question for you?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. You go on to say, 'Isa', at paragraph 112, that

1 [REDACTED] also told you something about seeing your
2 brother --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- in the home. What was it she told you about what
5 she'd seen in relation to your brother?

6 A. She told me that she'd walked past SNR [REDACTED],
7 Aunty HRF [REDACTED]'s bedroom, and her door was open, and my
8 brother was lying on her bed naked.

9 Q. Okay, so that's a memory that she had --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. -- that she told you about?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. You also tell us, 'Isa', that there was a bit on the end
14 of the gardener's cottage --

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. -- like a storage area?

17 A. Uh-huh.

18 Q. And that [REDACTED] has also told you that she once saw
19 you and a few other girls coming out of there --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. -- with the gardener, HRK [REDACTED]?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And she's told you that you weren't wearing anything on
24 your bottoms?

25 A. Yeah, none of us had anything on the bottom half.

1 Q. So that was you and the other girls that were there?
2 A. Yeah.
3 Q. So naked from the waist down?
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. But you don't remember any of that?
6 A. No, no.
7 Q. And you don't remember suffering any sexual abuse at
8 Widowers'?
9 A. No.
10 Q. But you make the point, 'Isa', at paragraph 113, you
11 say:
12 'I blocked out so much.'
13 A. Yeah.
14 Q. Do you think there's a possibility that you blocked
15 something like that out, or not?
16 A. There is a possibility, yeah. 'Cause I've been to
17 counselling, and they says my way of coping was just
18 blocking things out. It was fight or flight, kind of
19 thing.
20 Q. You say that a memory you do have, 'Isa', is of
21 ██████████'s younger sister, ████████, and you say you were
22 all about the same age and usually got on with each
23 other?
24 A. Yeah.
25 Q. But you have a particular memory of one day, you

1 describe it as 'beating' [REDACTED]?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. In the boys' sitting room?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. So you were hitting her?

6 A. Uh-huh.

7 Q. And you remember being surrounded by people; was that

8 other children?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. And they were encouraging you?

11 A. Yeah, they were egging you on.

12 Q. And you were sitting on top of her, hitting her head off

13 the floor, and [REDACTED] was one of the girls

14 encouraging you?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Even though it was her sister?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. You say you were about 13 or 14 when that happened?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Did other things like that happen in the home?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. So sometimes there would be children fighting with each

23 other?

24 A. Oh God, there was always fights, yeah.

25 Q. Or, the way you've described it there is, someone

1 actually --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. -- hitting someone else?

4 A. Yep.

5 Q. But all you knew was the Widowers' home, is that right,

6 growing up?

7 A. Yeah, that's all I've known, yeah.

8 Q. And there is another thing that you've been told, 'Isa',

9 this is at paragraph 116, and you point out that this is

10 all hearsay.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. But a friend of yours, who you knew from school, she

13 wasn't at Widowers', is that right?

14 A. That's right, yeah.

15 Q. But she said that she remembered coming round to visit

16 you at Widowers'?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. And that you told her that you couldn't go into

19 Aunty HRF's sitting room, or HRF's sitting

20 room?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Because that was where she measured all the boys'

23 willies?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. So she remembers you telling her that --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- at the time?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. When you were a child?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. But do you remember that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Do you remember saying that to her?

9 A. I don't remember that at all.

10 Q. So you don't remember knowing about that?

11 A. No.

12 Q. But that's quite a specific thing that you've told her

13 --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. -- isn't it?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. 'Isa', you say that you did report beatings, you say, to

18 HRF [REDACTED]?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. So were these beatings by RHJ [REDACTED]?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. But you say nothing was ever done about it?

23 A. No.

24 Q. And you say that she just made out like she didn't

25 believe you?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And there was nothing about it, as far as you know,
3 there was nothing done about it; is that right?

4 A. Yes, sorry.

5 Q. That's okay.

6 But you say you just gave up in the end and you say
7 other people reported things, even to the police, but
8 nothing happened?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. So you were aware of people speaking to the police?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. Was that the local policeman?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. You've named him as RDY [REDACTED] ?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. And did they tell you about it at the time or is this
17 something that you've learnt as an adult, that people
18 reported things?

19 A. This is learnt as an adult.

20 Q. Okay, and was that particularly from [REDACTED] ?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And she, I think you tell us, she told you that she
23 thought that the local policeman had abused, sexually
24 abused, her brother?

25 A. Yes, yeah.

1 Q. But again, that's -- nothing like that you knew about at
2 the time?

3 A. No.

4 Q. You say you didn't report anything else to anyone, not
5 to a teacher, not to your father?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Or your grandparents?

8 A. No.

9 Q. But you say that other people have told you that your
10 brother's behaviour got worse after he'd been away
11 visiting your grandparents?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. But that's not something you remember?

14 A. No, no.

15 Q. And you say you can't speculate about anything like
16 that?

17 A. No.

18 Q. But personally, nothing bad happened to you at your
19 grandparents?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Apart from what you've told us about your grandmother --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. -- about the way she was?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. 'Isa', you tell us then about leaving Widowers', and

1 I think you've explained that it was closing; is that
2 right?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And there was a social worker that you mentioned who got
5 involved to get you somewhere to stay?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And this was just a room with a couple that was let out
8 to students?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Now, again, you've not seen your records, 'Isa', but we
11 know that [REDACTED] 1980 was the official date when
12 you left Widowers' and went to live in that house?

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. And so you were coming up to 17.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. So you go on to tell us, 'Isa', that after that, after
17 you left Widowers', there was just no follow-up?

18 A. No.

19 Q. That was you, you were out?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. And you just had to fend for yourselves?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. But I think you make the point, your brother was 18?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. He was older than you.

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So he left before you did. But he stayed there until he
3 was 18?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And is that, do you think, because he stayed on at
6 school?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. So he would have been one of the, well, oldest?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. At Widowers', by the time he left?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. 'Isa', you tell us about your life after being in care
13 from paragraph 123, so I'm going to move on now and talk
14 about that a little bit.

15 You mention, again, your father disappearing when
16 you were 15, and you say that he didn't come back on the
17 scene again until you were about 45?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. So that was quite a long --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. -- part of your life that you weren't in contact with
22 him?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. But you say that that's probably the right time for you
25 --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- to reconnect with him. And I think you say you tried
3 to tell him about what his mother was like?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. But he didn't see that side of her?

6 A. No.

7 Q. You tell us that your dad had a big row with his parents
8 when you were about 15 and that he told you that's why
9 he had to move to London, and that he'd left a letter
10 with them to explain things, but they never gave that to
11 you?

12 A. No.

13 Q. So you were left at 15, when your father disappeared,
14 you just didn't know why that was?

15 A. No.

16 Q. And they didn't tell you?

17 A. No.

18 Q. 'Isa', going back to then when you were 16, you were
19 living in the Cormacks' house.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. You say you went to college?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And you had a part-time job?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. But there was no support, so no support from social

1 work?

2 A. No.

3 Q. I think you say there might have been some financial
4 help for the rent?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay, but you also got a grant from the college at that
7 time?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. And you worked in the evenings. And you say that you
10 did well at college?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And you spent two years there, and then got a job
13 working in hotels and schools and hospitals?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. And you say after your brother died, you got his place?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And then you met your first husband?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. 'Isa', you go on to tell us about these reunions, so
20 we'll just talk about that a little bit at
21 paragraph 130.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. And you say after the home shut down, there was these
24 annual reunions, and you've been to most of them?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. And they were good, it was nice to see everyone, because
2 these are people that you spent your whole childhood
3 with?
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. But you say that there was never any discussions about
6 abuse?
7 A. No.
8 Q. At that time. But the reunions stopped because the
9 committee changed, and they said that they felt there
10 was no need for these reunions?
11 A. Yeah.
12 Q. So, do you remember roughly when they stopped?
13 A. God, that's thinking back.
14 Q. If you can't remember, don't worry.
15 A. I got married for the first time in 1991, so it could
16 have been about that, around about that time, the '90s,
17 anyway.
18 Q. So quite a long time ago then?
19 A. Yeah.
20 LADY SMITH: So you'd have been in your late 20s?
21 A. Yeah.
22 MS FORBES: But you kept in contact with HRF --
23 A. Yeah.
24 Q. -- after you left your Widowers'?
25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Was that you and your brother?
2 A. Well, quite a few of us, actually.
3 Q. And she wrote to you?
4 A. Yeah.
5 Q. And you saw her at the reunion?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. So she would go to the reunion as well?
8 A. Yeah.
9 Q. What were your feelings like towards her after you left
10 Widowers'?
11 A. It was weird, because, I suppose she was all we knew
12 growing up, and she did kind of look after us. So I did
13 get on with her, I did, yeah, it wasn't any ill-feeling.
14 But I suppose it was just, you just thought that what
15 went on was just the norm.
16 Q. Okay.
17 A. So yeah, everything was fine.
18 Q. Because some people might think that's quite unusual,
19 but it's --
20 A. Yeah.
21 Q. Was it difficult to break that relationship?
22 A. Yeah, it was.
23 Q. Because it was really that -- really all you'd known?
24 A. Yes.
25 Q. As somebody looking after you?

1 A. Mm-hmm.

2 Q. She was SNR [REDACTED] ?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. But you tell us that she died in 2009.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And you say then that the people from the reunion then,
7 when [REDACTED] started up, there was a group that was
8 created; is that right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And then people kept in touch through the [REDACTED]
11 group?

12 A. Yeah, yes.

13 Q. And you talk about [REDACTED], who was somebody who was at the
14 home?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And you say that it was from about 2014 that [REDACTED]
17 started coming along, and then started discussing
18 abuse --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- at Widowers'?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. So through the [REDACTED] group, then, you would meet up,
23 is that right?

24 A. Yes, yeah.

25 Q. And how often would that be?

1 A. Erm, we would meet up two or three times in the year,
2 just when we could all get together.

3 Q. And in the next paragraph, 134, you give us a list of
4 names who would come along?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And one of them was [REDACTED]?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Who you were close to?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. And you also talk about the fact that [REDACTED] --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- who was HRK [REDACTED]'s girl?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Although you think maybe he was her stepdad?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. That she would also come along too?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So she would live in the cottage?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. With him and her mum, is that right?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. But would she often be in the home as well?

23 A. Oh yeah, yeah, they would come in.

24 Q. So his children were, spent a lot of time in the home,
25 were part of the home?

1 A. Yeah, there was three of them.

2 Q. And you also go on then, 'Isa', to talk about some of
3 the older ones, and you name somebody called [REDACTED],
4 who was older than you, and she would come along
5 sometimes as well?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. I think you mention one person at paragraph 135, you
8 say, who doesn't come anymore?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. And just refused to admit that anything happened?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And she said she had a happy childhood and that you got
13 disciplined when you needed to get disciplined?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. But that's not how you see it, looking back, is it?

16 A. No, no.

17 Q. And from what you've told us, it's not how some of the
18 other people that you're in touch with --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- sort of see it either, is it?

21 A. No.

22 Q. You go on to talk about some other people who you
23 remember being at Widowers', who you've been in touch
24 with, but haven't come to any reunions, and you say in
25 particular there are two brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. And you say that they had lots of information, and
3 they've reported a lot of things to the police?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And I think you say these reunions, when you say that,
6 these are the ones that you've continued -- you've
7 organised yourselves --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- through the group. They're nice --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. -- but it does rake up some not nice memories?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And that's also connected to your brother?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Because you then get told about what people are saying
16 about him?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. And that's caused you the most upset, you say?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. 'Isa', you tell us a bit about impact, then, on you,
21 from paragraph 140.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And you say you're quite upset to think you were put
24 into care to be looked after, and that your father paid
25 for that.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. So he was thinking you were being looked after?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. He was paying for that privilege?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. But you weren't?

7 A. No.

8 Q. So you feel let down?

9 A. Big time.

10 Q. Yeah. And you say let down by the system?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. You go on, 'Isa', to say that you have difficulties
13 sometimes expressing your emotions and you put up walls,
14 and even now you don't cry a lot?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Is that right? And you link that to the experiences you
17 had at Widowers'?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And these beatings to try and make you cry?

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. But you say that people close to you, who know you well,
22 describe you as maybe being hard on the exterior, but
23 soft in the centre?

24 A. Yeah, yeah.

25 Q. And being in Widowers', you say, has affected your

1 attitude towards authority and it made you quite
2 rebellious as a teenager?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you say you've had to see a counsellor?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. You mentioned that earlier. And you say that maybe
7 sometimes things have manifested, maybe, and you've been
8 a bit aggressive and physical?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. But at the time you gave this statement, you say you
11 found the counselling beneficial?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Is that something that you are still doing?

14 A. I'm waiting to get counselling again, I'll be speaking
15 to somebody in the next week for that, for some stuff.

16 Q. But the counselling you've had, you feel has helped you?

17 A. Yes, big time.

18 Q. And when you've the counselling, have you been able to
19 talk about your experiences --

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. -- when you were growing up? You have?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Your husband now, you say, has told you that when you
24 wake up in the night crying --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- you shout things out?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And that's not something that you were aware of before?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Is it?

6 A. No.

7 Q. And he says that you shout out things like, 'Leave me
8 alone, don't touch me'.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. And you say you know you've woken up crying, but you
11 weren't aware of any of the shouting?

12 A. No.

13 Q. And do you know what you're dreaming about when you're
14 saying, 'Leave me alone, don't touch me'?

15 A. I don't. Don't remember the dreams.

16 Q. Yes. And you mention, 'Isa', that when your maternal
17 grandparents died, your father told you they left you
18 and your brother money?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And you say you were in Widowers' then and you never got
21 it?

22 A. No.

23 Q. You don't know what happened to that money?

24 A. No.

25 Q. And that you spoke to HRF [REDACTED] about that before she

1 died?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And she said she had a recollection, this is

4 a recollection of something to do with this money?

5 A. Yes, yeah.

6 Q. But that you would need to speak to the committee, or

7 the treasurer that now deals with all that?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. And you say you spoke to them, but they must have spoken

10 to her, because the next thing, she denied that she'd

11 said anything to you?

12 A. Yeah, mm-hmm.

13 Q. So did you get an answer about what happened to that

14 money?

15 A. No, they just said there was no record of anything.

16 Q. So did your father think, or was he under the

17 impression, that that money had been passed to

18 Widowers', to give to you --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- and your brother; it's not something he had?

21 A. No.

22 Q. But Widowers' didn't admit that they had that?

23 A. Yes, they said they had no record of it.

24 Q. And you never got that?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Do you have any idea of the amount of money it was?
2 A. My dad never said, he just said it was left when they
3 both passed away.
4 Q. Okay. And I think, sadly, you say, 'Isa', that, you
5 know, your mum died, obviously, when you were very
6 young.
7 A. Yeah.
8 Q. And she was an only child --
9 A. Yeah.
10 Q. -- and you had no contact with her side of the family,
11 so you don't even have a photograph of her?
12 A. At that time I didn't. I do now.
13 Q. You do now?
14 A. Yeah.
15 Q. Okay. So that's something you've been able to get
16 a hold of?
17 A. Yes.
18 Q. And has that helped?
19 A. Yeah.
20 Q. Okay. But you point out that you don't have any
21 photographs of you?
22 A. No.
23 Q. When you were a child?
24 A. No.
25 Q. So no photographs of you growing up in Widowers'?

1 A. No.

2 Q. You point out that being in the home probably affected
3 your education, because there was no encouragement, but
4 you do say that compared to some of the people who were
5 at Widowers', you feel you've done well?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And you've seen the impact on others who you've met up
8 with, and I think you tell us there's been a lot of
9 self-harming amongst them?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. There's drug and alcohol dependency?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And you tell us about one person's brother taking their
14 own life?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. And people think that's because of things that happened
17 to him in the home?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And again, [REDACTED]'s sister dying of a brain
20 haemorrhage?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. And she thinks that's from some of the things that
23 happened in Widowers'?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. So you say you've witnessed the impact of being brought

1 up in care in Widowers', and what that had on everyone
2 else as well?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you feel that you've got off lightly?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. Because you don't have those problems --

7 A. No.

8 Q. -- the alcohol or drug dependency, and you've not
9 self-harmed.

10 But you do tell us, 'Isa', at paragraph 152 that
11 [REDACTED] tells you --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- that you had the worst physical abuse of them all?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. So that's her opinion of what she saw?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And when you think about that, do you agree with her?

18 A. From what I can remember, yeah. Yeah.

19 Q. And as we talked about earlier, you say that you feel
20 that you were singled out --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- because of not crying?

23 A. Yeah, because I wouldn't cry.

24 Q. You have gone to the police, though, 'Isa', is that
25 right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. In 2016, and you gave a statement?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you say the police were nice and supportive?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. But they told you afterwards that RHJ and

7 HRF had died?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Or couldn't be found, so there was nothing more could be

10 done about it?

11 A. No.

12 Q. And again, you say you went to Open Secrets to get

13 records?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And we talked about the fact that you hadn't been able

16 to get any records.

17 A. No.

18 Q. And you were told there was no records of you ever

19 having been in the home?

20 A. No.

21 Q. But as you now know, there are some records we were able

22 to get from the council that have a lot of details about

23 you being in the home.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. And I think that's something you might try and get; is

1 that right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Do you think that's something that might help you?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Okay.

6 In relation to lessons to be learned, 'Isa', you

7 tell us from paragraph 155, you say:

8 'You must listen to what the children say, don't

9 think they're lying or making up stories. It can't

10 happen again.'

11 A. No.

12 Q. And you tell us it would have been better to have some

13 support. You say:

14 'Children weren't heard, they weren't believed,

15 people only believed an adult [back then].'

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And you make the point, 'Isa':

18 'At 16, you shouldn't just be turned out on the

19 street by yourself with no support.'

20 And that you and your brother had no one?

21 A. No.

22 Q. And you were just out and that was it?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. There was no one for you to speak to, there was no

25 support, and you even say you even thought the policeman

1 was involved?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Did you think that at the time, or is that something

4 you're thinking now, after speaking to people?

5 A. Yeah, just thinking now.

6 Q. Okay.

7 At paragraph 159, 'Isa', you say:

8 'The attitude was that the kids were being looked

9 after, they had a roof over their heads, so what more do

10 you want.'

11 A. Yeah, exactly.

12 Q. But kids need more than that. Is that right?

13 A. That's for sure.

14 Q. And you go on, 'Isa', to say:

15 'Things must change. That must never happen again.

16 It can't happen. Children must be looked after.

17 I don't think they will learn from it. Well, they might

18 learn a bit, but I still think abuse will happen, they

19 won't put a stop to it.'

20 A. No.

21 Q. But I think you make the point that things must change?

22 A. Yeah, they have to.

23 Q. Things -- from when you were there, they shouldn't be

24 the same way?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Now, 'Isa', that is all the questions I have for you
2 today, so thank you very much. But is there anything
3 that you want to say that I haven't asked you?
4 A. No.
5 Q. Or that you haven't had a chance to say?
6 A. No, it's been fine.
7 MS FORBES: Well, thank you.
8 LADY SMITH: 'Isa', let me add my thanks.
9 A. Thank you.
10 LADY SMITH: I'm very conscious of the fact that we've
11 whizzed you through an enormous chunk of your life in
12 barely an hour and a half, but it's not lost on me just
13 how long you were in care at Widowers', and how often
14 the bad things happened --
15 A. Yeah.
16 LADY SMITH: -- that you've told me about. I'm very
17 grateful to you for being able to do that in person,
18 because it's not lost on me, and it's added enormously
19 to our learning.
20 A. Thank you.
21 LADY SMITH: So thank you so much for that, and I'm now glad
22 to say you're able to go.
23 A. Thank you.
24 LADY SMITH: And it's Friday, and I hope the rest of the day
25 is peaceful and restful for you.

1 A. Thank you.

2 LADY SMITH: Okay.

3 (The witness withdrew)

4 LADY SMITH: Well, we will move on now to the morning break,
5 but before I do that, there are some names I want to
6 mention, and these are of people whose identities are
7 protected by my General Restriction Order. And although
8 we've used their names or their first names in the
9 course of the hearing, they're not to be identified as
10 referred to in our evidence outside this room.

11 And that is HRE, RDY, HRK,
12 HRF, RHJ, possibly
13 a Mr and Mrs, but please check with us about
14 that first. Somebody called, somebody
15 referred to as, and
16, and I'm going to check with my expert at the end
17 of the desks there as to who I've missed.

18 THE SOLICITOR: Dr HRI.

19 LADY SMITH: It's Dr HRI. Dr HRI. Thank you very
20 much. We'll now take the break.

21 (11.31 am)

22 (A short break)

23 (11.47 am)

24 LADY SMITH: Just before we move on to the next stage,

25 I mentioned as possibly protected by my

1 General Restriction Order. There's actually only [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]; Dr HRI [REDACTED], who we mentioned finally.
3 So we now move on to other things.
4 Mr Peoples, welcome.
5 MR PEOPLES: Good morning, my Lady. We will now move on to
6 some read-ins, and I'm doing the first read-in this
7 morning. The first read-in is from a statement of
8 an applicant who is anonymous, and whose pseudonym is
9 'Rebecca'.
10 'Rebecca' (read in)
11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.
12 MR PEOPLES: And the reference for 'Rebecca's' statement is
13 WIT.001.001.6027.
14 LADY SMITH: Thanks.
15 MR PEOPLES: 'Rebecca' was born in 1956. She was one of
16 seven siblings, six girls and one boy. She tells us at
17 paragraph 3 of her statement that the reason that the
18 children went into care was because their mother died.
19 I should say we do have some records which help us with
20 some dates, and the dates are slightly different from
21 the statement, but I will give them for the benefit of
22 the transcript.
23 LADY SMITH: That would be helpful.
24 MR PEOPLES: And for your Ladyship.
25 LADY SMITH: And again, are these records we've secured from

1 the council rather than from the charity themselves?

2 MR PEOPLES: Yes, I think it's important to say because I
3 think a number of applicants, I should maybe say this
4 now, have commented that the records don't appear to say
5 things that they think should be in them.

6 Now, they may well be right about the records
7 they've seen, but it appears that Widowers' may well
8 have had their own records and files. But we've
9 obviously tried to obtain what we can by way of records
10 and it appears that any records that Widowers' did have,
11 that they kept for their own use, have been destroyed
12 and certainly have not been located.

13 So that's possibly the short answer; that if someone
14 is looking for records about their time in Widowers' and
15 they're from a particular local authority area, they
16 would be better just to the approach the council.

17 LADY SMITH: Get something from the local authority.

18 MR PEOPLES: They might have something.

19 LADY SMITH: Possibly.

20 MR PEOPLES: Possibly.

21 So, so far as her mum is concerned, the records
22 record that she died in [REDACTED] 1960.

23 LADY SMITH: Okay, thank you.

24 MR PEOPLES: Obviously, 'Rebecca' doesn't have a clear
25 understanding of what happened before she went into

1 care, but again the records do say that her father was
2 employed at the time, I think by the Corporation, in
3 fact, and was obviously a widower, and that
4 an application was made by her father to have some of
5 the children admitted to a home. And that was
6 an application on [REDACTED] 1961, according to the
7 records, to Edinburgh Corporation, as it then was.

8 As 'Rebecca' says in her own statement at
9 paragraph 6, she has a -- she tells us that the children
10 were placed in a children's shelter until a place came
11 up in Widowers' Home. It is correct to say that the
12 records indicate that for a short period, she was in
13 a children's shelter. I think she went there on
14 [REDACTED] 1961, when she would be aged 4.

15 LADY SMITH: Right.

16 MR PEOPLES: And from there, she went on to Widowers'
17 Children's Home, which she tells us about from
18 paragraph 7 onwards.

19 Now, again, I can give some dates from records, if
20 I may.

21 LADY SMITH: Yes, please, thank you.

22 MR PEOPLES: The records indicate that 'Rebecca' was
23 admitted on [REDACTED] 1961, aged about 4 and a half. And
24 that she returned home to the care of her father on
25 [REDACTED] 1967, when she was aged 10. That broadly

1 coincides, I think, with the dates that are given in the
2 statement.

3 She tells us about arriving. She's got very little
4 recollection of the point of arrival. She has
5 a recollection, paragraph 8, of arriving and being taken
6 into Widowers' to a dining room and seeing what she took
7 to be [REDACTED] -- [REDACTED] SNR, who was sitting at the
8 head of the table with [REDACTED] SNR, and she tells us
9 that [REDACTED] SNR is someone we've already heard
10 about; Aunty HRF, HRF [REDACTED].

11 LADY SMITH: Mm-hmm.

12 MR PEOPLES: At paragraph 9, 'Rebecca' tells us that there
13 were about 26 children in the home when she was there.
14 There were two dormitories, one for girls and one for
15 boys. She shared a dormitory with her sister, but were
16 not in beds next to each other, because of the
17 difference of age. She tells us at paragraph 9 that
18 children were placed next to children who were near
19 their own age.

20 But she does say that she saw a fair amount of her
21 younger sister, and there were no restrictions, I think,
22 on access between them.

23 From paragraph 11, she tells us a bit about the
24 routine at Widowers', when she was there. And I'll just
25 read that, if I may.

1 LADY SMITH: Please.

2 MR PEOPLES: At paragraph 11 she says:

3 'You would get up in the morning, get washed, then
4 get dressed. Then it would be off to school. When we
5 came back from school, it was homework time before
6 a play time outside. There was a playground with swings
7 and a seesaw. You'd then have your dinner before going
8 to get about 7.30 pm. There were also baths and we had
9 them a couple of times a week.'

10 Moving to paragraph 12:

11 'On the weekend we got pocket money so we could go
12 to the pictures or to the zoo. Sometimes we'd just go
13 up Corstorphine Hill. We weren't kept under lock and
14 key. I had very good times at the home.'

15 She then has a section dealing with staff, and at
16 paragraph 13 she tells us:

17 'The staff most of the time were good. There were
18 a few members of staff who stayed, like [SNR],
19 Auntie HRF; Auntie HRE, who was SNR, and
20 another auntie called Auntie PZU. However, most
21 of the time the other staff didn't stay long.'

22 And I think we'll find that's a recurring theme
23 that's borne out, I think, by other records that we've
24 been provided with.

25 She tells us at paragraph 14:

1 'We were encouraged to call the matrons "Auntie".
2 There would have been about six or seven "Aunties" at
3 any one time. I don't remember there being any
4 "Uncles".'

5 And again, I think that's generally speaking
6 correct. There were males, but usually in the positions
7 of being gardeners, or handymen or maintenance
8 individuals at that time.

9 LADY SMITH: Yes.

10 MR PEOPLES: As for food, at paragraph 15 she tells us:

11 'The food was all right. Even though you didn't
12 like the food, you were made to eat it. If you didn't
13 eat it, you would get it the next day. I suppose that
14 was just like any home back then. As far as I was
15 concerned, we were well fed and looked after.'

16 As for education and schooling, she tells us that
17 the school she went to was Carrick Knowe Primary:

18 'We used to get called "homers" at school. We all
19 got on fine at school, though, I used to have my friends
20 at the school. I was allowed to go and visit them
21 outside of school. Staff were good with us at the
22 school. We got the belt there as well, but we weren't
23 alone in that at that time.'

24 And I don't think that's a very controversial
25 statement.

1 As for Widowers' itself, she says at paragraph 17:

2 'I did learn skills whilst in the home. [A member
3 of staff, who was known as] "██████" used to help learn
4 things. I don't remember doing ironing and washing.'

5 As for holidays she says:

6 'I remember there used to be families who came in to
7 take children on holiday with them. Those families
8 weren't vetted. I remember being taken on these
9 holidays just by myself. Nothing happened to me, but
10 I do wonder why they weren't vetted at the time. I have
11 no idea how the families who took other people away came
12 to be taking kids on holiday. I know one of the
13 families who took me away were parents of a kid I was
14 friendly at school with.'

15 I think we'll hear more about that from other
16 statements.

17 LADY SMITH: Yes.

18 MR PEOPLES: As for visits from family, at paragraph 19

19 'Rebecca' tells us that her dad and older siblings,
20 especially one older sister, came to visit her and her
21 sister:

22 'It was a few years before we visited them at the
23 family home.'

24 She says.

25 She tells us that she's not aware of any

1 restrictions being placed on her dad or her siblings
2 visiting the home.

3 As for visits and inspections, she has no
4 recollection of any social worker involvement. She
5 says:

6 'I don't recall ever seeing anybody or talking to
7 anybody. I don't recall there being any inspections.
8 The committee from the home used to come every so often.
9 They wouldn't speak to the children individually.'

10 Can I just say at this point there are records which
11 we've got which do record periodic visits during that
12 period by councillors of the Corporation, and also
13 a person that appears to be a childcare officer,
14 throughout the time, in fact, that 'Rebecca' was there.

15 It's fair to say the records are pretty brief, and
16 don't give you a lot of factual information, but having
17 said that, I think they do, generally speaking, paint
18 a favourable picture of 'Rebecca's' time, and describe
19 her as well-behaved, no problems at school, happy,
20 likeable and sensible. And that she would go out with
21 parents of school friends and so forth. And she had
22 a holiday on one occasion with her father shortly before
23 she returned to his care.

24 LADY SMITH: Yes.

25 MR PEOPLES: So there's very little, but it gives some idea

1 that there were some visits, according to the records.

2 Going on, she has a section on abuse, and I'll just
3 read that out, if I may:

4 'Bed-wetting.

5 'I used to wet the bed, as did my sister. A few
6 others also wet the bed. We used to get a row and
7 a skelp if we did it. We were usually skelped with
8 anything that was on their feet. If not, they used
9 their hands.'

10 Physical abuse. She says at paragraph 23:

11 'One time in the winter, I was asked to close the
12 curtains in the dormitory. I closed them and then went
13 to my bed. The next thing I knew, I was being dragged
14 out of bed. Apparently there had been an apple on the
15 windowsill and somebody had taken a bite out of it.
16 I was blamed because I was the one who shut the
17 curtains. That night, I was taken around every single
18 one of the staff who was on. I was beaten with whatever
19 was on their feet. I remember one of them had Scholls
20 on.'

21 Scholl sandals, I think.

22 LADY SMITH: Yes, Dr Scholl's.

23 MR PEOPLES: 'I was battered with that on the backside.

24 'The following morning I was in the kitchen and
25 Mrs [REDACTED], the cook at the home, who we also called

1 "██████████", noticed the bruising down the back of my legs.
2 ██████████ took me straight to Auntie HRE because
3 Auntie HRF was on holiday at the time. ██████████ demanded
4 that something be done about it. I wasn't taken to the
5 doctor at all.

6 'Later on, Auntie HRF came back from her holiday.
7 That night, a member of staff was sacked. I don't
8 remember the name of the member of staff. I did ask
9 Auntie HRF the name of the member of staff at a reunion,
10 but it just hasn't stuck.'

11 She goes on at paragraph 26:

12 'Auntie HRE skelped me that night, but she skelped
13 me with her hand. In the early years, Auntie HRE and
14 Auntie HRF only used their hands. Auntie HRF did,
15 a few years later, start to use the belt across your
16 hands. It was just like the belt you used to get at
17 school.'

18 She's then got a section headed 'Sexual abuse',
19 starting at paragraph 27:

20 'Mr RGV was ██████████'s husband. He was the
21 full-time gardener. We had big grounds. Mr RGV lived
22 with ██████████ in a cottage. He did the gardens but he
23 also did the maintenance in the house.

24 'When I was 6 or 7, Mr RGV started calling me into
25 the cottage. I would always try and stay as far away

1 from the cottage as possible but he would always come
2 out. He would call me in, then unzip his trousers. He
3 would then put his penis in my mouth. Then he would
4 disappear into the bathroom. He would tell me to stay
5 where I was. He would then come back out and let me
6 leave the cottage. It never progressed beyond that.
7 That's all he did. It happened on five or six occasions
8 over the years. It was always just Mr [RGV]. I don't
9 know what happened with everybody else. The abuse
10 stopped when I was roughly about 8.'

11 That would be about 1964, I think:

12 'That was when Mr [RGV] retired.'

13 And then she says at paragraph 29:

14 'I always thought it was just me.'

15 And I'll come back to that, because she does tell us
16 more about that later in her statement.

17 At paragraph 30, she says:

18 'I never blamed Aunty [HRF]. I always thought
19 I wouldn't tell anybody until my dad and Aunty [HRF] had
20 died.'

21 She then deals with reporting of abuse during her
22 time in Widowers' Home. At paragraph 31 she says:

23 'I could never have told Aunty [HRF] and Auntie [HRE]
24 at the time. Mr [RGV] told me not to say anything.
25 I honestly can't remember what his exact words were, but

1 I was told not to tell anybody.'

2 Moving to paragraph 33, she tells us that in 1992 or
3 1993, before her father died, she had a visit from her
4 brother. And she says that on that occasion she told
5 her husband and her brother that she'd been sexually
6 abused in the home; that's Widowers':

7 'I didn't go into the detail of what had happened.
8 I swore them to secrecy and told them they were never to
9 tell my dad.'

10 I suppose it's the point here, again, that like the
11 previous witness, her father was paying for his daughter
12 to be in the home.

13 LADY SMITH: Yes.

14 MR PEOPLES: And to be cared for and looked after by the
15 home. And she was there from a young age, as -- this is
16 perhaps a bit more unusual than some of the care
17 settings that we have at that stage, children going in
18 because they've lost a mother, often, at a very young
19 age.

20 LADY SMITH: And a large family.

21 MR PEOPLES: And a large family.

22 LADY SMITH: Understandable that it was going to be
23 impossible for her father to cope on his own.

24 MR PEOPLES: Yes. I mean, ironically, in this case, this
25 home seems to have been a way to reunite families rather

1 than split them up, but obviously, other things happened
2 which should not have happened.

3 LADY SMITH: Yes.

4 MR PEOPLES: So then she says that she did later tell her
5 husband what happened in more detail, at paragraph 34.

6 She's got a section about the reunions. We've
7 already heard some evidence about that this morning. At
8 paragraph 35, she says:

9 'I've been to reunions since I left the home. The
10 subject of the physical abuse was discussed at the
11 reunions, but not the sexual abuse. Nobody ever said
12 anything about the sexual abuse. I think that's why
13 I've always thought it was just me.'

14 And again I'll come back to that, because she has
15 a little more to say on that towards the end of her
16 statement.

17 She says she did tell the police what happened in
18 2016, and was told that, in due course, a report would
19 be written up. And then she tells us at paragraph 38
20 that her time at the home:

21 '... came to an end after the three of us got
22 together...'

23 This is the three children that were in care:

24 '... and asked dad to take us home. That was when
25 I was about 10.'

1 Well, that's right, I think, from the dates we have,
2 ██████████ 1967, and they were allowed to go home and
3 return to their father.

4 LADY SMITH: Yes.

5 MR PEOPLES: She then has a section about life after care.

6 And I'm going to read some of this, but I'm not going to
7 read it all. I think some of it we can read for
8 ourselves, but at paragraph 39 she says:

9 'My life was good after leaving care. After leaving
10 and returning to the family home, I started to take
11 charge.'

12 She says that she left school, at paragraph 40, when
13 she was 15, and took up an apprenticeship, and then she
14 says after six months of the apprenticeship, her father
15 became ill and she left the apprenticeship to look after
16 him. And then, ultimately, she was the last of the
17 siblings to be left with her father.

18 LADY SMITH: And she was the oldest of the group of three --

19 MR PEOPLES: Of the younger group, yes.

20 LADY SMITH: -- that were taken back by the father.

21 MR PEOPLES: Yes, yes, yes. There were older siblings, but

22 ...

23 LADY SMITH: I see that, but this particular group had her
24 as the oldest.

25 MR PEOPLES: Yes, so she became, effectively, the person

1 really doing everything, she did say that, washing,
2 cleaning, shopping and so forth, from a relatively young
3 age.

4 LADY SMITH: And then looking after her father.

5 MR PEOPLES: And then looking after her father, so yes. And
6 indeed she says she did get married, but then her
7 father's illness, cancer, returned and she moved in with
8 him for a time with her husband to care for him, but he
9 didn't on that occasion survive.

10 She then goes on to say that she had -- after she
11 left the home, [REDACTED], that she'd spoken about, got in
12 contact with the home to find her. She said she always
13 had a good relationship with [REDACTED], who wrote to her
14 and invited her to stay, with [REDACTED]. There was
15 an exchange of letters and she discovered Mr RGV [REDACTED] had
16 died by that time. And after that she did visit, and
17 she tells us that she doesn't think that [REDACTED] knew
18 anything about what was going on, and what happened to
19 her.

20 She has a section on impact, and she tells us at
21 paragraph 44, and I'm not going to go into the detail,
22 but she says with boyfriends before marriage, she was
23 unable to have sexual relations because of her
24 experiences in care. She says that sometimes the abuse
25 would come back to her mind but it wasn't always there,

1 but there would be the odd thing that would trigger it.

2 She said:

3 'I don't think it's affected me in any other way
4 than that.'

5 Well, I think that's perhaps rather modest, but it's
6 quite a --

7 LADY SMITH: Yes.

8 MR PEOPLES: She's telling us that was the effect. But she
9 has said that she has received support from Open Secret,
10 which has been good support for her.

11 As for records, she says she got records from the
12 shelter in November 2015 and got records from, it says
13 from the home, I think --

14 LADY SMITH: Records about the home.

15 MR PEOPLES: I think it's about the home.

16 LADY SMITH: Yes, possibly.

17 MR PEOPLES: Because I'm not sure that these are in fact
18 Widowers' records, they are probably council records,
19 perhaps similar to the records we've received.

20 LADY SMITH: Mm-hmm.

21 MR PEOPLES: She says:

22 'Some of the records are redacted.'

23 And this is again maybe something a number of
24 statements speak about, the quality of the records, and
25 the usefulness. She says:

1 'They aren't great quality and are difficult to
2 read.'

3 And I think I could confirm that.

4 LADY SMITH: Yes.

5 MR PEOPLES: There's a lot in handwriting at that time, and
6 sometimes the writing's very difficult to make out, and
7 faint at times. She was not satisfied with her records
8 and she doesn't think everything is there:

9 'There's not a lot there and I can't read what is
10 there, they're very faint and not great quality.'

11 She says she remembers seeing her records when she
12 was in the home and having a recollection of Aunty HRF
13 having records in front of her, and saw a phrase, 'Not
14 for adoption', in the records, and says that phrase
15 doesn't feature in the records that she managed to
16 obtain, so she concludes it's not a complete copy.

17 Now, I think that goes back to the point I made at
18 the beginning; there are probably Widowers' records and
19 council records and they are not necessarily one and the
20 same, which would, I think, explain it.

21 LADY SMITH: Yes.

22 MR PEOPLES: It would be helpful if we could have seen some
23 of these records, but they're not available.

24 LADY SMITH: I mean, from what she tells us about her family
25 circumstances, you can understand that the approach to

1 her care would be that she wasn't a child for adoption.

2 MR PEOPLES: Yes.

3 LADY SMITH: Because she had a living parent who had
4 an ongoing relationship with her, and, indeed, the
5 children wanted to go back to.

6 MR PEOPLES: Indeed. And she returned when she was 10.

7 LADY SMITH: And she returned, yes.

8 MR PEOPLES: And then finally, towards the end of her
9 statement, she explains why she came forward, at
10 paragraph 49. I'll just read that, if I may.

11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12 MR PEOPLES: 'One of the former kids in the home [whom she
13 names] came back for a reunion. I wasn't able to go
14 because I was working. A couple of days later I found
15 out that there was a closed group for former kids of the
16 home on [REDACTED]. I was invited to join. When I joined
17 the group, I noticed that a couple of members of the
18 group had posted messages about sexual abuse they
19 suffered whilst in the home. They didn't provide
20 details about the abuse. Then I noticed that a couple
21 of members, who were kids at the home at the same time
22 as me, were saying that it was a load of lies. That's
23 when I said that it happened to me and that these people
24 were not liars. I hadn't heard about their abuse at the
25 time of me being in the home, but they had mentioned it

1 in this group. I wanted to say that they weren't liars.
2 That's when I decided, when I heard about the Inquiry,
3 that I couldn't continue to keep quiet. I decided that
4 enough was enough and I was going to talk about these
5 things now.'

6 And she has signed her statement, which is dated
7 15 May 2017, and she has the usual declaration.

8 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Thank you very much.

9 MR PEOPLES: Thank you very much. And I'll now pass over to
10 Ms Forbes to do some more read-ins --

11 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

12 MR PEOPLES: -- before lunch.

13 MS FORBES: My Lady, the next statement is from an applicant
14 who is anonymous and is known as 'Robert'.

15 'Rebert' (read in)

16 MS FORBES: He actually has given us two statements, my
17 Lady, an original one and then a supplementary short
18 statement.

19 LADY SMITH: Right, yes.

20 MS FORBES: So the first one is WIT.001.001.1162 and I will
21 give the reference for the second after I read the first
22 one, my Lady.

23 LADY SMITH: Thanks.

24 MS FORBES: 'Robert' tells us that he was born in 1950, and
25 then he goes on to tell us about going into Widowers'

1 Home in Edinburgh. And he says that that was
2 in [REDACTED] 1953 when he was aged nearly 3. And he says
3 he was separated when he went into the home from his
4 older brother, who he names.

5 Now, my Lady, we do have some records, again, from
6 the council for 'Robert', and I think by way of
7 background, we know from those records that 'Robert'
8 ended up being in care because both of his parents died.
9 His father died in [REDACTED] 1952 and then his mother died
10 on [REDACTED] 1953. And it was on that day, [REDACTED] 1953, that
11 he was put into Canaan Lodge. He was aged 2 at that
12 time.

13 LADY SMITH: I think that's pronounced 'Cay-nan'.

14 MS FORBES: 'Cay-nan', sorry, my Lady.

15 LADY SMITH: And it's in Morningside.

16 MS FORBES: I knew I was going to pronounce it wrong.

17 LADY SMITH: No, it's all right.

18 MS FORBES: He was there until [REDACTED] 1953 when he then
19 went to Widowers'. So he was still 2 then, nearly 3,
20 and he remained in Widowers', according to those
21 records, until [REDACTED] 1964, when he was aged 14.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 MS FORBES: So the background to that then is obviously his
24 mother dying, and I think we'll hear after this from
25 a statement his brother gave us, and he has more

1 information, but again the records related to them
2 really say that it seems like it was [REDACTED] poisoning,
3 and it may have been self-inflicted, my Lady.

4 LADY SMITH: Oh. Mm-hmm.

5 MS FORBES: So 'Robert' then goes on to tell us that once he
6 was in Widowers', he says he was looked after by the
7 girls there to start with, and they had to change him
8 and wash him and clean him, and when they went to
9 school, he would be put into the laundry, and he
10 describes at paragraph 3 what he remembers doing in
11 there. He says he had to stand on and jump on clothes
12 in the sink and he would catch clothes from the mangle,
13 and he did that five days a week.

14 He talks about the regime in the early years, from
15 paragraph 4, and he says that he had a friend in there,
16 who he names, and he says that he was left to play with
17 him in the laundry. They used to play with a pram, and
18 would push each other around in it.

19 But, he says at paragraph 4:

20 'If we pushed the pram to the boys' end, we would
21 get our legs slapped.'

22 He says the boy was about 4 when he first came and
23 then he says:

24 'RGO [REDACTED] would do the slapping. She was SNR [REDACTED]
25 SNR [REDACTED]. I never saw Ms RJD [REDACTED]. RGO [REDACTED].

1 RGO was responsible for looking after the boys.
2 She would belt us with the palm of her hand. She would
3 hit us wherever she could hit. This included the tops
4 of our heads, our backs and our ears. This probably
5 happened once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
6 She would be shouting, "Get back up there to the girls'
7 end". It was a strict rule.

8 'At breakfast we were given a bowl of porridge and
9 some rhubarb. We ate out of a bowl and a mug using
10 a spoon. There were no knives and forks. There were
11 about 40 children in the dining room. One day [he names
12 the boy; he says he and the boy] were sitting having
13 breakfast.'

14 And he goes on, he says:

15 'I said "He wants more". We then both stood up
16 together and asked for more. We were told to sit down,
17 we were belted and put in the corner by RGO.
18 I think we would have been of school age then.'

19 'Robert' goes on to talk about bed-wetting at
20 paragraph 6. He says:

21 'If you wet the bed, you were made to sit at
22 a separate table in the dining room. Both girls and
23 boys had to sit at this table. It was just to embarrass
24 them in front of the other children. I had to go to
25 that table lots of times. Wetting the bed caused them

1 work.'

2 He then talks about RJD from
3 paragraph 8. He says:

4 'Ms RJD was SNR of the home.
5 She didn't rise until 10.00 am. At 6.00 pm the fire
6 doors on the top area of the building were shut. That
7 was where her bedroom was. 6.00 pm was bedtime for
8 everyone, unless there was a special occasion. I rarely
9 saw Ms RJD. She had her meals in her room at the
10 top of the house.

11 'Ms RJD's room was at the top of the house.
12 The office was on the ground floor at the entrance. The
13 dormitories were in between. There was a basement floor
14 where the dining room was located. The laundry was in
15 the basement too. There was a visitors' room on the
16 ground floor. When any committee member visited, SNR
17 took them into the visitors' room, which she called the
18 playroom. She called it the playroom to make it look
19 good. We would be taken up there from the basement to
20 be seen to be playing in that room. We would have our
21 clothes changed first into better than our normal
22 clothes. Then, when the visitors had gone, we would be
23 taken back downstairs to the real playroom and our
24 clothes would be changed back into our normal clothes.
25 This happened right up until Ms RJD left in about

1 the summer of 1959. So in my experience, this happened
2 between 1953 and 1959.

3 'We just did things like normal boys do. If [and he
4 names his friend and he says] if he and I did something
5 wrong, like go down to the girls' end, we would be
6 slapped.'

7 And I think that should say:

8 'Then we'd be put in the corner until bedtime at
9 6.00 pm. This would be from after school at about
10 4.15 pm. If you wet the bed, your sheets were changed
11 and you had to sit at the bed-wetters' table in the
12 dining room. If you didn't get caught, you'd take the
13 bottom sheet on your bed and put it on top and
14 vice-versa. Otherwise, you'd get belted.

15 'One time I was put in the corner, I started seeing
16 pictures. The one that hit me most was my sister.
17 I asked to see her and Ms RGO said, "She's not
18 here". RGO would shake me when I was in the
19 corner. She would slap me and shake me when I was in
20 the corner.'

21 My Lady, we know that he had two sisters, one who
22 was quite a bit older at the time he went into care, and
23 then one who was separated from them, and in care for
24 a time. But she wasn't in the Widowers' with him and
25 his brother.

1 LADY SMITH: I see.

2 MS FORBES: He says at paragraph 12:

3 'I moved to the big boys' side with [he names a boy,
4 another boy]. We had to wait until there were empty
5 beds. I was about 6 or 7 at the time. Once we were
6 moved to the boys' side, we were not allowed to go to
7 the girls' side. RJD or RGO would give you
8 a belting. Ms RJD could see it all from the top
9 floor landing. She'd just shout. She never did the
10 belting. She wouldn't have known that the bed-wetters
11 were put at a separate table. I think the staff were as
12 scared of RJD as we were.

13 'As far as rules are concerned, you couldn't play
14 outside before 10.00 am. You would disturb RJD.
15 It was the older boys and RGO who beat me.
16 RGO had more to do with the boys. RJD had to
17 do with the girls.

18 'We were frightened to death of the older boys. One
19 in particular wasn't right in the head. RGO and
20 RJD knew. We were taught boxing and had boxing
21 lessons from a man who used to box. It was bare-knuckle
22 boxing. Brother would be made to fight brother.
23 RJD and RGO knew that the older boys were
24 hitting the younger boys.

25 'There were around 40 boys and girls coming and

1 going while RJD was SNR. RJD, RGO
2 and RJW were the main staff. There was also
3 a sewing lady who came in. She'd make a fuss of me.
4 She would bring in cream to put on my sores. The sores
5 were caused by beatings and slapping. The lady would
6 bring me a sweet. I can't remember her name. I had
7 hand-marks, bruises, and when I was younger, nappy rash.
8 She saw marks on my arm first. She then saw there were
9 marks on my legs while I was sitting. She would pull my
10 shirt up and see bruises on the top of my shoulders and
11 arms. I suppose I told the lady I got punished
12 downstairs. She would be repairing the charity clothes
13 that were brought in for to us wear. I think she was
14 a volunteer. She worked in a cubicle. This was when
15 I was still on the girls' side.

16 'There was a cook called [REDACTED]. She was
17 a member of staff. If she wanted the kitchen cleaned,
18 then we would brush up, et cetera. As we got older on
19 the boys' side, we'd have to clean the toilets,
20 et cetera. This was from age 6 or 7. We used carbolic
21 soap.

22 'For toilet facilities, there was no toilet paper.
23 We used newspaper to wipe ourselves after the toilet.
24 Usually there was no newspaper. We used our hands to
25 wipe ourselves, then we wiped our hands on the walls.

1 We used to pinch newspapers from letter boxes to use in
2 the toilets. Staff made no provision at all for toilet
3 roll for the boys to use. In the upstairs toilets on
4 the girls' side, you would find toilet roll sometimes.

5 'I was 8 or 9 when RJD [REDACTED] left. There were two
6 other SNR [REDACTED] before Ms HRF [REDACTED], one of them -- '

7 LADY SMITH: In fairness, this is the 1950s.

8 MS FORBES: Yes.

9 LADY SMITH: Toilet roll was a problem. It was not unusual
10 to find families using newspapers.

11 MS FORBES: Newspaper.

12 LADY SMITH: It was in short supply, post war, for quite
13 a long time, and expensive.

14 MS FORBES: He says, I think that should be:

15 'There were two other SNR [REDACTED] before Ms HRF [REDACTED]. One
16 of them lasted for a weekend, the other lasted for
17 a couple of weeks. Everyone just uproared.'

18 He then talks about something called 'the boiler
19 room incident' at paragraph 19:

20 'When we were moved to the boys' side, we were
21 lifted at night to be taken to the toilet. This was
22 when I was 6 or 7. We were in our beds from 6,00 pm.
23 One night, it wasn't RGO [REDACTED] who came to lift me. It
24 was two older lads. They took me downstairs to the
25 boiler room where the --'

1 I think that should be 'coal'?

2 LADY SMITH: Coke. No, it would be coke.

3 MS FORBES: Oh, coke, okay.

4 LADY SMITH: It was a type of fuel.

5 MS FORBES: Right, thank you, my Lady.

6 LADY SMITH: It's not used now, but it was then.

7 MS FORBES: '... where the coke was kept for burning. One
8 held me by the legs and one by the arms. A man was
9 standing in the middle of the floor with a rake and had
10 black coal-staining on his face. He opened the boiler.
11 It was sizzling. It had clocks on it. They picked me
12 up. They put my head towards the opening of the boiler.
13 I could feel my hair singeing. The man was screaming,
14 "Now get him in there". They put my feet in. My feet
15 were very close to being inside the boiler. My feet
16 were left blistered and bleeding. Then they started
17 laughing. I tried to run up the piles of coke to get
18 away. I wet myself in bed, I was really, really
19 frightened. I continued to wet the bed after that and
20 to get punished. I didn't receive any treatment.'

21 He then talks about somebody called [REDACTED],
22 paragraph 20:

23 'The man in the boiler house was [REDACTED]. His
24 nickname was [REDACTED]. Mr RHM [REDACTED] was the boiler man. He
25 lived in a cottage in the grounds and kept the gardens.

1 Mr RHM got [REDACTED] a job as a tea boy. He would use
2 a billy can and carry tea for workers. [REDACTED] was
3 an older boy but to me, he was like a man. He had left
4 school, but he slept in the same dormitory as us.'

5 'Robert' then talks about abuse at paragraph 21:
6 'Another time, I was taken from my bed to an older
7 boy's bed. This was during the night. I was made to
8 take his penis in my mouth and to hold it and kiss it.
9 I couldn't cope with that. I was taken by [REDACTED]
10 to [REDACTED] bed. They bent my arm up my back.
11 There was [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and another boy of
12 about the same age. They asked me to suck his cock.
13 [REDACTED] said, "Suck his cock". [REDACTED] was
14 lying on the bed. He was about 14 to 15 years old.
15 I was about 6 or 7 years old. They were laughing.
16 I don't know if anyone else was aware of what happened.
17 It happened only once. My brother [and he names him]
18 would have been in the same dorm at the same time.
19 This, and the paragraph about the boiler room incident,
20 detail the worst incidents that happened to me during
21 RJD [REDACTED]'s time. [REDACTED] was not involved in the
22 boiler house incident. There were five boys, including
23 [REDACTED], in total involved in the two incidents.
24 They were like grown men. I didn't tell anyone about
25 either of these incidents. You didn't shop or squeal on

1 anyone. I kept silent then and afterwards.

2 I eventually told Aunty HRF, Ms HRF, when she came
3 as SNR.'

4 He then talks about the boys' dorm at night.

5 Paragraph 22:

6 "There were 14 beds in a dorm. Seven on each side.
7 There were other older boys in the dorm of a similar age
8 to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was the ringleader and was in charge in
9 the dorm. At nighttime, [REDACTED] and the older boys would
10 spend some time in the staffroom after we went to bed at
11 6 pm. I do not know if what happened to me happened to
12 anyone else.'

13 He then talks about bath time at paragraph 23:

14 'Bath night was a Sunday night, the night before
15 school on the Monday. There were only two baths, one on
16 the left and one on the right. We had to queue up
17 outside the bathroom. We would have to queue from the
18 little ones back to the big ones. There would be
19 perhaps 10 to 12 of us. If you had a small cock [and
20 he's put in brackets, it says] (penis), you had to go to
21 the front of the queue no matter what age you were.
22 I think it was [REDACTED] who organised this. He made
23 us swing until we were bumming each other, in other
24 words, pressing our penises against the boy in front's
25 bottom. Some of these lads went away with erections.

1 RGO would wash us. She'd have a little feel at
2 your private parts. We were naked at the time. She
3 would drop the soap into the bath in order to have
4 a feel at you. She knew what was happening. This
5 happened regularly from when I was about 6 or 7. This
6 also happened with older boys. These are important
7 memories I have from the time RJD was SNR.

8 'My brother left the home in 1958. That was shortly
9 before Ms RJD retired. I did not feel at all safe
10 in the RJD era. I felt frightened. I kept wetting
11 the bed because of these things. I didn't tell anyone
12 what had happened to me. There was no affection, love
13 or even kindness shown by RGO and RJW. I did
14 tell Ms HRF when she came. When my brother had left
15 and started taking me out, I used to cry when I had to
16 go back.'

17 And then he tells us that he didn't have any contact
18 with his two sisters during the time he was in the home.

19 Paragraph 26, he says:

20 'When we were taken out of the home in Corstorphine
21 to school, we'd be lined up in twos. The villagers
22 would cross over onto the other side of the road.
23 However, when Aunty HRF, Ms HRF, came, we were
24 allowed out to go and see friends, as long as we were
25 back by an agreed time. She trusted us.'

1 'Robert' goes on then to talk about [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED],
2 Ms HRF [REDACTED], at paragraph 27:
3 'HRF [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] who [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED] Ms RJD [REDACTED]. She wanted to us call her
5 Aunty HRF [REDACTED]. She wanted all of the female staff in the
6 home to be called "auntie" by the children. There had
7 been a clear-out of all the boys and girls before she
8 came. 25 children went. RGO [REDACTED] and RJW [REDACTED] went too.
9 Things began to change. Aunty HRF [REDACTED] spoke to the older
10 girls and said things were going to change.'

11 He names a boy who became the oldest boy and he
12 says:

13 'I was about 9 or 10. I was one of the oldest. One
14 day, Aunty HRF [REDACTED] asked me into the office while I was
15 doing chores. She asked if there was anything she could
16 do. I said she could find my sister [and he names that
17 sister] for me. She said there would be no more
18 cleaning toilets. After that, we got jobs to do, but
19 they were not like a punishment. We had to tidy up
20 after ourselves and tidy the dining room and dorm.'

21 And he goes on to say that he was in a learning
22 class at school and he changed primary school from
23 Corstorphine to Carrick Knowe Primary School. He then
24 tells us about changes under Ms HRF [REDACTED].

25 Paragraph 29:

1 'Every morning, except on her day off, Aunty HRF
2 would have breakfast with us. She wanted more staff and
3 the rooms were cleaned out. She decided to close the
4 basement area down. The laundry had to stay down there.
5 The dining room was moved to the visitors' room on the
6 ground floor. The dining room then had tables and
7 chairs and knives and forks.

8 'Aunty HRF was determined to close the basement
9 because of the stories the children told about the
10 basement. She asked how things were before. She
11 planned for all of the children to sleep upstairs and
12 she closed the basement. Aunty HRF used it only as
13 a laundry. The basement was more or less shut up. She
14 set up an older boys' room with a library. She set up
15 a younger boys' playroom. She did the same for the
16 girls.

17 'Aunty HRF talked to my brother about finding my
18 sister. She lived in England. Eventually, after about
19 12 years' absence, I saw her. I saw her in 1965. She
20 came to see me with [my brother]. It was five years
21 before I saw my sister [this was his eldest sister, and
22 he says] she lived only three miles away near the
23 Western General in Edinburgh.'

24 He then tells us that he remembers some of the girls
25 in the home, and he names them. And then he talks about

1 more changes from paragraph 32 and he says:

2 'When Auntie HRF came, I was one of the older boys.
3 She tried to put boys of similar ages together and she
4 managed that. The number of residents reduced from 40
5 to 25. There was also a turnaround in staff. New staff
6 came in. There was Auntie HRE, Auntie
7 Christine and Auntie Martha. RHV-RGM came. He
8 did the garden and boilers. Mrs RHV was the cook.

9 'Doing chores under Auntie HRF was not a punishment.
10 The practice of putting children at a bed-wetting table
11 stopped. She told me she was unhappy about some of the
12 things that had been happening. The bed-wetting table
13 was stopped. The doctor stopped coming to us, we went
14 to see the doctor, like other people. This was in
15 contrast with during RJD's time. Dr HRI used
16 to make visits to the home.'

17 It then goes on at paragraph 34:

18 'Subsequently I took my children there and we had
19 a holiday. My wife will confirm this. This was in the
20 mid 1970s. Auntie HRF had problems at that stage
21 because she had some black children who had been abused
22 by their fathers. They were from Glasgow. She also had
23 a number of gay boys. Auntie HRF warned me to keep the
24 children away from some of them.

25 'I didn't think Auntie HRF was happy with the

1 committee. They were short of the money and children
2 necessary to keep the home open. Aunty HRF gave me
3 a list after I had left. It was a list of all the
4 children who had been cared for in the home. I have
5 produced it to the Inquiry.'

6 We do have that, my Lady, from the documents.

7 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

8 MS FORBES: 'I received it through the post. I got this
9 from her about 10 to 12 years before she died in 2011.
10 She didn't say why she sent it to me.'

11 He then says that there are some records from his
12 time in the home; they are the Children's Department of
13 Edinburgh Corporation records. And he talks about
14 records of visits to the home by persons referred to as
15 'Councillor', and he says that these are perhaps records
16 of someone visiting the home. Again, he's provided
17 these records to us.

18 He says that there's a reference in the records to
19 the effect that adoption was considered for him at the
20 outset. However, RJD decided he would be better
21 with his brother.

22 And there's also a record of him being, having been
23 incontinent during the night, during Aunty HRF's time.
24 But he says there's only two references to bed-wetting.

25 He talks about the reference to councillors' visits

1 and then goes on at paragraph 40 and says:

2 'When the committee members visited the home,
3 RJD would meet them at the door. She would bring
4 them to the visitors' room. The person would put his
5 head round the visitors' room door to see me playing
6 with another child. Tea and coffee would be brought up
7 for them with cups and saucers. Afterwards, I was taken
8 back downstairs and put into my old clothes again.'

9 And then he goes on at paragraph 41 to say:

10 'When visitors came to the home, RJD would say
11 we were to be seen and not heard. I think we did
12 a salute to visitors.'

13 He talks about a Reverend RGQ, and says
14 at paragraph 42 that he thought there was a family that
15 he was going to go to Australia with, and he wanted to
16 go, and he says --

17 LADY SMITH: He mentions the £10. These were people who
18 were known as the 'ten pound poms', once they got to
19 Australia, because they did get £10 funding if they
20 would go.

21 MS FORBES: So they were offered the money to emigrate.

22 LADY SMITH: Yes.

23 MS FORBES: And he wanted to go, he says, and then he tells
24 us:

25 'I remember I was in the bath when Reverend

1 [RGQ] was brought up by Auntie [HRF] to tell me that
2 I couldn't go.'

3 And he says it was because his eldest sister didn't
4 want him to go. So perhaps she was asked, I think, for
5 permission, but he says that was during [RJD]'s time.

6 He goes on to tell us about annual reports that he's
7 been shown, and he says in particular at paragraph 43
8 about the 59th annual report from 1955 to 1956. He says
9 he would have been about 5 or 6 at that time and he
10 says:

11 'There is reference to thanks being given to the
12 residents of Corstorphine and Carrick Knowe for the
13 continued kindness they had shown to the children in the
14 home. There is a reference to interest and affection
15 being shown to the children by [SNR], Ms [RJD],
16 to Christmas parties, picnics in the summer and to
17 a high standard of hygiene and care being maintained in
18 the home.'

19 He says:

20 'There were Christmas parties, and we went to
21 a pantomime. However, it is absolutely rubbish to
22 suggest, as the report does, that affection was shown by
23 [RJD], [RGO] and [RJW] to the children.'

24 He goes on:

25 'As far as hygiene is concerned, that is a nonsense.

1 We used to have to clean the toilets, which were
2 disgusting. We had to clean the toilets with carbolic
3 soap.'

4 And he says:

5 'Dr HRI [REDACTED], for example, would not have seen the
6 state of the toilets, no one did.'

7 At paragraph 45, he talks about the 61st annual
8 report which was the year to 30 September 1958, and the
9 last two paragraphs on page 6, he says:

10 'The detail is about continuity and stability
11 supporting a solid and secure life under RJD [REDACTED]. The
12 detail is not correct. I don't believe a word of it.
13 Children didn't settle down quickly and securely, as is
14 suggested.'

15 He then talks about page 8 of the report, where it
16 says about children in the home having visits from their
17 fathers and he says:

18 'I do remember that my friend's [who he names]
19 father used to visit him. I used to get sweets from his
20 dad too. I was told not to do that. I was punished for
21 that. I was told not to go outside and mix with them.
22 Other children also said "You don't pay any
23 contribution", they said "Who's paying yours?" The
24 other material about SNR [REDACTED] being a mother to all of the
25 children is rubbish.'

1 'There was one girl that SNR was a mother to [and
2 he names her], she took epileptic fits. We had to help
3 her. RJD took a big interest in her. She was
4 looked after a lot better than us. She was the
5 exception.'

6 He talks about the 62nd annual report at
7 paragraph 47 and he says:

8 'RJD retired as SNR. This is for 1958 to
9 1959. I am asked about a suggestion in the report about
10 countless men and woman throughout the world who knew
11 RJD as "Mum". She was never called "Mum". It is
12 also said that the success of the home was undoubtedly
13 due to RJD's enthusiasm, careful foresight and the
14 love and affection she has devoted to the many children
15 who have passed through her hands. None of that is
16 true.'

17 He says that there was a meeting with the agents of
18 the trustees of the home on 15 April 2015, to discuss
19 some of the things that happened to them, and he told
20 people about the boiler house incident when he was
21 a child. But he didn't say anything about the sexual
22 abuse, nor about bath time.

23 He then tells us at paragraph 49 about a meeting
24 with the police on 28 February 2014, and he says he's
25 asked about a summary of what was discussed, which was

1 produced by an individual called Ruth Berta, and he's
2 asked about a reference on page 4 to activities in
3 the janitor's room. And he says:

4 'I remember I was in the older boys' changing room.
5 There were about ten of us. They brought us in from the
6 dining room. There were girls screaming in the
7 janitor's office. It was during winter, and about 4.30
8 to 5.45 pm in midweek, Monday to Friday. There was
9 screaming and crying. To me it sounded like a cry for
10 help. I think there was more than one girl. I would
11 have been about 7 or 8 at the time. It lasted quite
12 a while, about 15 to 20 minutes. The janitor was
13 Mr RHM . I didn't see him at the time. I could see
14 shadows moving in the corridor under the door and
15 I think it came from the janitor's room. I don't know
16 who was there. There was no discussion afterwards.
17 This was during RJD 's time.

18 'In RJD 's time I didn't tell anyone about
19 anything. I told Aunty HRF about the incident in the
20 boiler room, but not about the other things. I have
21 kept these things to myself. I did tell the police
22 about them, however.'

23 He then says he has been getting counselling, from
24 paragraph 51, through Jessop's Medical Centre. And
25 during those sessions he's told of awful incidents, he

1 says the boiler room incident, the sexual abuse, the
2 bath time incidents and the screaming from the janitor's
3 room. And the counsellor said he would have to go to
4 the police about that.

5 He says that he suffered a bang on the head, was
6 knocked unconscious, and was taken to hospital, and
7 everything came back into his head about what happened
8 when he was in care and he had the accident in 2008 and
9 went into counselling.

10 He tells us about leaving the home from paragraph 52
11 and he says after he left, he was working before and
12 after school delivering fish. He then worked as
13 an apprentice builder and undertook chimney sweeping and
14 repair work. He says that after he was discharged from
15 the home, he went to Winchburgh, and was sleeping rough
16 for a bit. And then he went to Coventry with
17 an individual who was in trouble back there, and that
18 led to him being discharged from the home into the care
19 of his brother. And that was about, he says,
20 in [REDACTED] 1968.

21 He's received further counselling support from
22 a counsellor at SV2 and from his GP and at the time of
23 this statement he was being supported by his son and
24 daughter, and by his wife.

25 He talks about the fact that his education was

1 terrible and that hindered him in life and he felt there
2 was pressure in his head.

3 At paragraph 55, 'Robert' says:

4 'My brother and I were able to be reunited with our
5 sisters.'

6 And he says he went to live with the younger of the
7 two sisters. He says:

8 'I still see my sisters. I have managed to bring my
9 family up without having too much of an adverse effect
10 on them of my experiences of childhood events.'

11 And then he's signed that and it's dated 5 August
12 2016.

13 'Robert' then gave us a supplementary statement, and
14 that is, the reference for that, my Lady, is
15 WIT.001.001.1178.

16 LADY SMITH: And this was just about a month later than the
17 main statement.

18 MS FORBES: Yes, it's signed and dated 23 September of 2016
19 and he says, paragraph 2, about physical abuse, and he
20 says:

21 'An incident occurred when I was 13 or 14, in about
22 1963 or 1964. This was during Aunty HRF 's
23 [Ms HRF 's] time as SNR . However, she was on
24 holiday visiting her aunt in Selkirk, I think. There
25 was a black woman who worked at the home. She was

1 a former police officer. She came from Falkirk, but
2 I cannot remember her name. She was about 6 feet tall
3 and weighed about 13 to 14 stones. She worked with both
4 boys and girls in the home. On a particular day, I was
5 attacked by this woman. She put her arms around me and
6 there was a struggle. This happened outside the office.
7 I managed to put my leg behind hers and tripped her. We
8 both fell to the floor. Then SNR [REDACTED] came
9 out of the office. She had a belt in her hand which she
10 used to strap me on the stomach, back and legs, and then
11 the black woman put my arm up my back and forced me into
12 the office. I was again whipped with the belt by SNR [REDACTED]
13 SNR [REDACTED] in the office.

14 'A couple of days later, I required medical
15 attention. I had suspected appendicitis. SNR [REDACTED]
16 SNR [REDACTED]'s husband took me to Leith Hospital where I was
17 checked over. They told me I was okay.'

18 He says later he did suffer from appendicitis when
19 he was older, when he was 15.

20 He goes on:

21 'SNR [REDACTED] and the black woman were
22 worried about what would happen following this incident,
23 when Auntie HRF [REDACTED] returned. Auntie HRF [REDACTED] dismissed both of
24 them when she returned. It was Auntie HRE [REDACTED]
25 who told Auntie HRF [REDACTED] about the incident.

1 'I want to add that I once saw Aunty HRF using the
2 belt on someone. She belted [REDACTED]. She had
3 bought three pairs of new jeans for [REDACTED]. He
4 had ripped all three pairs. She belted him for that.
5 That is the only time I ever saw Aunty HRF belting
6 anyone. I am aware that other residents are making
7 allegations on [REDACTED] and have been giving statements
8 to the police about events during Aunty HRF's time as
9 SNR of the home.'

10 And then he's made the declaration and signed it on
11 the date that I mentioned, my Lady.

12 I think since giving these statements, sadly
13 'Robert' has passed away.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 MS FORBES: My Lady, there is another statement that I could
16 start.

17 LADY SMITH: Let's do that.

18 'Andrew' (read)

19 MS FORBES: My Lady, this statement is from an applicant
20 who's anonymous, and is known as 'Andrew', and he is the
21 brother of the previous applicant.

22 The reference for his statement is WIT.001.001.0081.
23 'Andrew' tells us he was born in 1943, and then talks
24 about his life before entering care. He knows a little
25 bit more than his brother did, because he was older and

1 he tells us that, from paragraph 2, that his father's
2 job was a van driver and goods receiver, and he was also
3 a lay preacher and preached in mission halls. He had
4 his sister who was a year older than him and then he
5 also had his other sister, who was younger. And then
6 his brother, who he ended up in care with, who was the
7 youngest of the four.

8 He tells us about his father's death, and he says
9 that his father, at paragraph 4, he says his father
10 became ill and eventually underwent an operation for
11 cancer of the stomach, aged 39, and never really
12 recovered after the operation, and he died in 1952.

13 He then talks about his life after that, and what
14 went on in the family home with his sisters and his
15 mother and what happened to his sisters in later life,
16 and I won't go into that, other than to say, at
17 paragraph 7 at the end, he says that his younger sister
18 went to Canaan Lane, and I think that's where she went
19 when they were -- the two boys were put into Widowers'.

20 He then tells us about his mother's death from
21 paragraph 8 and he tells us the date, which was
22 [REDACTED] 1953, which was the date they went in to
23 Widowers'. She was only aged 30 when she died and he
24 said he came back from school and there was two men in
25 the house one day, and they said to his mother that if

1 she didn't have money by Friday, they would come back
2 and take the children away.

3 He then goes on to say at paragraph 8:

4 'The next week, on the Thursday night, we got the
5 chairs together as a family. We had a fire in the grate
6 and mum lit the fire. She must have got a bit of coal
7 from somewhere. Mum asked me to go and get dad's bag.
8 Dad used to sing in a male voice choir and the bag is
9 where he kept all his song books. We got his song books
10 out and we started to sing all through his songs.

11 'After this, mum asked me to take care of [and he
12 names his younger brother] overnight. He used to sleep
13 in beside mum, and on this evening she said she wanted
14 to on her own. We never thought anything of it. The
15 children slept together in one room that night and my
16 mum slept alone in the other. In the morning, I woke up
17 and I could [REDACTED]. I got out the bedroom and came
18 through to mum's door.'

19 And then he basically talks about how [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]

21 [REDACTED] she was dead.

22 He sets out, really, what happened after that, and
23 what he did with his brother and sister, and we do have
24 a record, my Lady, that says that when people became
25 involved, authorities became involved and aware that his

1 mother was in the house and she had died, that the three
2 children were there on their own.

3 LADY SMITH: Mm-hmm.

4 MS FORBES: But it seems that he felt that he had to try and
5 look after his brother and sister.

6 LADY SMITH: Yes.

7 MS FORBES: But ultimately people became involved and they
8 were taken away in a car. He says that all three of
9 them were taken to Canaan Lane later that day, on the
10 [REDACTED] 1953. And then his sister was taken away in a car
11 and he never saw her again for 12 years. He says that
12 she was traumatised by all of this and had to have
13 extensive treatment.

14 He says also at paragraph 16 that they still don't
15 know where their mother and father are buried. He
16 believes his mother was buried in a pauper's grave.

17 He then tells us about life in care, and I think we
18 have been through the dates, my Lady, but I think that,
19 just to check, I think they were in Canaan Lodge, sorry,
20 from [REDACTED], the date that their mother died, until
21 [REDACTED] 1953, and then they were admitted to Widowers'
22 on [REDACTED], and he remained at Widowers' until
23 [REDACTED] 1959, when he was aged 16 years old.

24 'Andrew' then tells us that they were moved from
25 Canaan Lane to Widowers' Children's Home, this is at

1 paragraph 18. He doesn't know why they were placed in
2 Widowers' Home as opposed to an orphanage, because they
3 were orphans, and he says at paragraph 19 about
4 Ms RJD, and he says:

5 'Ms RJD left some time in 1959 and Aunty HRF
6 HRF came in as SNR after I had gone, but also in
7 1959.'

8 So during his time there, it was Ms RJD, he
9 wasn't there during Aunty HRF's time.

10 He then talks about documents that he has passed to
11 the Inquiry from page 20, a bundle of documents, and
12 that some of that is relevant to him and his family and
13 their period in care, and some of it was annual reports
14 relating to the Widowers' Home. And he tells us that,
15 at paragraph 21, that in April 2016 his brother posted
16 to the Inquiry a number of documents running to
17 106 pages, and that contains information about the
18 Widowers' Home, former residents, correspondence between
19 him, ie 'Andrew', and the board of trustees of the
20 Widowers' Children's Home Trust, correspondence from
21 HRF to his brother, and some medical and other
22 records relating to his brother, and there's also a note
23 of a meeting with the police prepared by Ruth Berta,
24 which took place on 28 February 2014. And this also
25 contains the list of former residents that I mentioned

1 in the previous statement.

2 LADY SMITH: Yes.

3 MS FORBES: My Lady, he talks about dormitories, the set-up
4 at Widowers', from paragraph 22 and he says:

5 'I remained in the home between 1953 and 1959. When
6 I went there, I was a little Christian lad. I would say
7 my prayers at night, kneeling down by my bedside. I was
8 placed in a dormitory with a load of other lads and my
9 bed was before the big one at the bottom. I wanted to
10 say my prayers, but with all these lads there I wasn't
11 sure how I was going to be able to do that. Eventually
12 I did get down, but I didn't actually pray. It was just
13 the act of getting down. A big silence came across the
14 whole room, but I just kept on doing it at night.

15 'One night RGO [REDACTED], the boys' nurse, came in
16 and stood at the door. She said, "Well, we are all
17 going to say our prayers". That was it, lads sat up in
18 their beds. There were lads there who were just not in
19 to that, they didn't like it. So that started one or
20 two of them pushing and shoving me. As the years went
21 by I was starting to get further and further away from
22 what I knew. I started to come out of this church
23 bubble and into this home life.

24 'I was starting to learn about swearing. I was
25 starting to learn about fighting. Things of the other

1 world. I'm aware now that things happened to my
2 brother, but at the time I didn't know what was
3 happening to him.

4 'I remember one particular boy called [REDACTED].
5 He was older than me. I was appointed to wake him up in
6 the mornings to go to work with Mr RHM [REDACTED], the janitor.
7 This was because he couldn't get himself up in the
8 mornings. [REDACTED] was the "Billy Can Boy", his job was
9 making tea and sweeping up. Mr RHM [REDACTED] was also the
10 foreman of a road squad. He lived in a cottage at the
11 home. His responsibilities were to look after the
12 grounds and boilers. The boys looked after the boilers
13 and ran the boiler house.

14 'Looking back, [REDACTED] was a psychopath. I did
15 know that they took people out of the dorm at night.
16 They would come up and take a couple of lads out. [REDACTED]
17 [REDACTED] was the kingpin in doing this.

18 'I saw boys of [REDACTED]'s age taking younger
19 boys out of the dorm at night, supposedly to the toilet.
20 The boys that were taken out were younger than me, aged
21 about 7 and over. I don't know what happened when they
22 took the younger boys out. The boys that came back
23 would never speak about it.

24 'There were three [REDACTED] in the home [he names
25 them, and he says] one of them, [REDACTED], beat [REDACTED] up for

1 what he was ~~doing to~~ the boys. I know that [REDACTED]
2 is now dead.

3 'There was an older boy called [REDACTED]. I think that
4 his first name was [REDACTED]. I saw other boys getting in
5 to his bed under the covers with him on several
6 occasions. I didn't really think anything of it at the
7 time. We were used to sleeping in the same bed as
8 a family. His bed was about two beds down from mine.
9 Just one boy would get in with [REDACTED] at a time. He
10 would be aged around 10 to 11. [REDACTED] was aged about 13
11 or 14 at the time. I'd say this usually happened about
12 8 to 9 pm. I saw it happen more than once. I simply
13 don't know what, if anything, happened. I was about 12
14 at the time. I can't remember the names of any of the
15 people who went into [REDACTED]'s bed. The police have said
16 that [REDACTED] has now gone to Australia.'

17 At paragraph 30 he talks about bed-wetting and
18 'Andrew' says:

19 'I wet the bed on occasions. It was because of
20 nerves. I would try to hide it. I would turn the
21 sheets down. I would try to wash the sheets myself,
22 because I was embarrassed. I didn't get beaten for it.
23 But it was despised. Everyone got to know about it.
24 Everyone got to know because you had to sit at the table
25 for bed-wetters in the dining room. It was in the early

1 days at the home that I wet the bed. I used to pray to
2 God to wake me up so I could go to the toilet, and that
3 worked.'

4 He then talks about Ms RGO, a staff member, at
5 paragraph 31. He says:

6 'I remember one time I had a problem with my penis.
7 When I pulled my foreskin back it formed into a "rubber
8 ring" and it wouldn't roll back. I talked to RGO
9 RGO about it. She put some cream on it and
10 bandaged it. All the other boys knew about it and it
11 was embarrassing. She was dressed like a nurse. I was
12 off school for two days because of that. She wore
13 a blue gown with a white apron. I'm not sure, looking
14 back on it, whether she actually was a nurse, because of
15 the way she dealt with my issue. She gave the
16 impression she was a nurse. She was regarded as
17 the nurse, at least on the boys' side.'

18 He then talks about Ms RJD on paragraph 32.

19 'Ms RJD wore a uniform and head covering on
20 special occasions. One such occasion was the dedication
21 of a plaque, seen in the group photograph with
22 Ms RJD, called the Bequest. Then
23 what happened was that the plaque was replaced with
24 a picture. The playroom was never named in memory of
25 ; the bequest was used for repairs of the

1 Widowers' Children's Home. The orphans themselves were
2 forgotten.

3 'We saw Ms RJD on Sunday nights with Mrs Bonnar
4 from the Woman's Voluntary Service. It was our
5 singalong and sweetie night in the playroom.

6 Ms RJD dressed casually and watched us enjoy
7 ourselves. At the end, Mrs Bonnar always brought a box
8 of chocolates or biscuits.

9 'Apart from seeing Ms RJD on Sunday nights, we
10 hardly saw her. We were confined to the basement. She
11 seldom came near there. Even when playing or working in
12 the grounds, she would watch us from her window on the
13 top floor. If we boys crossed onto the girls' side, she
14 would shout out her window, 'Get on your boys' side'.
15 Not even allowed to chat or play together.

16 'There is a photo on page 17 of bundle A which I am
17 shown. This is a photo of the Widowers' Children's
18 Home. It was purchased in 1911 for £2,500. The home is
19 on the left. There is a convalescent home above it.
20 The home was on three floors. The lowest floor was the
21 basement.

22 'The boys' side of the house was to the west, the
23 girls' side was to the east, the infants were
24 accommodated above the girls.'

25 He then talks about bath time, paragraph 37:

1 'Bath time was one of the most embarrassing times at
2 the home. At bath time there were two lines, one for
3 each of the baths. There were long benches that went
4 down the side. RGO [REDACTED] wasn't always on duty at
5 bath time because she took days off. On those
6 occasions, the older boys, like [REDACTED], [REDACTED],
7 and other older boys, would sit on the benches and
8 instruct you to stand against and rub yourself against
9 the person in front, or gyrate. They did this in order
10 to see the size of people's penises, whether it was
11 round or bent or whatever. They wanted to see erect
12 penises. When the boys were rubbing up against each
13 other, the big boys would be getting excited by this.

14 'Then, if you'd not been too good, some of the boys
15 like [REDACTED], who had left the home and been in the navy
16 or the army, used to come back and introduce little
17 things that they had learned. They shouldn't have
18 actually been in the home. One of the things was the
19 sponge wash. They would get a lot of soap into a sponge
20 and then they would rub it into someone's nose until
21 they started to sneeze uncontrollably. These older boys
22 didn't actually do this to the boys, but they taught
23 others to do it.

24 'The bath water was very shallow, just over the
25 ankles. There would be three boys standing in each

1 bath. [REDACTED] would count to ten and everyone had
2 to be out. Then the next ones were in. So you had ten
3 seconds to get bathed. That was even if we'd been
4 playing football or something like that. Ms RGO [REDACTED]
5 hardly ever came into the bathroom. I can count on two
6 hands the amount of times Ms RGO [REDACTED] was ever present
7 at bath time. I can't remember ever sitting in or lying
8 or enjoying a bath.

9 'There was a young man who had previously been a boy
10 in the home and I think his name was [REDACTED]. He came
11 and stayed in the home when he was on leave from the
12 army.'

13 He goes on to say:

14 'He would have still been a teenager but past 15 or
15 16. He would come back and stay and would be part of
16 the bath time process with the residents. Another older
17 boy used the boys' bathing area to walk about naked.
18 I don't know who he was or what he was doing there.
19 I remember because he had [REDACTED], we called him
20 "[REDACTED]". Ms RGO [REDACTED] didn't go into the bathing area
21 very often. If she had done, I don't think she would
22 have allowed the big boys to make the other boys do the
23 gyrating thing.'

24 Perhaps, my Lady, is that a time to stop?

25 LADY SMITH: That would be a good place to break. Let's

1 stop now for the lunch break, and I will sit again at
2 about 2 o'clock. Thank you.

3 (1.01 pm)

4 (The luncheon adjournment)

5 (2.07 pm)

6 LADY SMITH: Now, I take it we're picking up where we left
7 off, are we, Ms Forbes?

8 MS FORBES: Yes, my Lady.

9 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

10 MS FORBES: Yes, just to continue with 'Andrew's' statement,
11 and we had got down towards page 11.

12 I think at paragraph 42 he tells us that he only had
13 a Bible to read and he loved it, and they called him
14 'the [REDACTED]'. He talks about doing badly in exams
15 and he said:

16 'The children in the home spent most of their time
17 in the basement where there were no books and there was
18 no encouragement in academic matters, beyond attending
19 school.'

20 Going to paragraph 45, 'Andrew' then talks about
21 sexual abuse whilst he was a resident of Widowers', and
22 he says:

23 'There was a man called RJR [REDACTED], he was one
24 of the Boys' Brigade [REDACTED], he lived in [REDACTED].
25 He was one of the [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED] Company. They

1 met in the Parish Hall in [REDACTED]. He took me to his
2 house and sexually assaulted me. We used to play
3 football at school and in the BBs. He said to me to
4 come to his house. We went there. The fire was on. He
5 sat down beside me. He was talking about puberty and
6 maturity, then about sex. He took me into the bedroom.
7 There was a mirror on the wall. He got his penis out.
8 He pulled my pants down. He then put his penis between
9 my legs. There was no penetration. He stood before the
10 mirror and masturbated. I was lying on my side on the
11 bed. When he had done his business he put me in the
12 car.

13 'It was as if he was having sex with a girl.
14 I can't remember if he ejaculated. He took me back to
15 the home. I don't think I spoke to anyone about this.
16 There was another lad he used to drive around. He
17 bought him a present. I stopped going to the Boys'
18 Brigade. I was about 13 to 14 years old at the time.
19 The boys knew. They said, "We know what he does". They
20 had seen him interfering with others. It was evident
21 that he had done it with other boys. I cut him off.
22 I stopped playing football.'

23 He then says about the janitor's room in
24 paragraph 47:

25 'This room was part of an initiation room and [REDACTED]

1 used the room to introduce the younger boys to gang
2 rape. I was there and I was in the janitor's room on
3 the occasion that I am going to describe. I was ordered
4 there by [REDACTED]. They were trying to introduce the
5 younger lads to sex, myself included. What there was,
6 was the janitor's bench and there was a little ladder up
7 to a shelf. The shelf had a mattress on it. The girl's
8 name that was there [and he names her] and she's still
9 alive today. She was interviewed by the police but was
10 unable to give evidence about what had happened in the
11 home.

12 'I was present, she was present. I was about 12 or
13 13. She was older than me. I remember that because she
14 sat on the big girls' table. There were other younger
15 lads, younger than me, maybe aged about 11 or 12 years
16 old. [REDACTED] was there and another older lad,
17 [REDACTED]. There was a little ladder which you had
18 to climb to get up onto a mattress. This was placed on
19 top of a cupboard. He was up there on the mattress when
20 we arrived. I'd say the girl was terrified. They had
21 her pants off. She was ready and prepared for gang
22 rape. The first lad was sent up, and then two more.
23 Then I was sent up to have sex with her.

24 'We were ordered by [REDACTED]. He said it was
25 an initiation ceremony. He was saying, "Enjoy yourself,

1 have your shot". It was an order. I had to lie over
2 her. I didn't have sex with her. She didn't say
3 anything. She was shaking like a leaf. She was in
4 distress. She had a dress on. It was pulled up.
5 I don't know if she had sex with anyone else. [REDACTED]
6 [REDACTED] didn't go up. I think he was in before. He took
7 her in.

8 'I was so taken aback by what was happening that
9 I did as I was told to do. I saw another boy go up the
10 ladder before I left. And there was someone went up
11 before me. She was very distressed. She was shaking,
12 I would say she was dumbstruck. This must have happened
13 after 1956 because I didn't tell the police about it.
14 I didn't tell anyone about it at the time.

15 'I only saw this happen on one occasion, but it
16 happened on other occasions too. I believe [he names
17 a boy] was there. I don't have memory of discussing it
18 with him. I think he didn't say anything, but I knew
19 that something was going on. I never had contact again
20 with [the girl], or [REDACTED], after I left the home.
21 It was known among the lads that this was the initiation
22 room. The young lads were not sure what it was about.
23 Before you went into the room, you didn't know what was
24 going to happen.'

25 He then talks about boxing and bullying at

1 paragraph 52:

2 'Mr Bonnar taught us boxing in the Scout hall.
3 However, after this, boys fought with each other in the
4 changing rooms until they were bleeding.

5 ' [REDACTED] used to organise this, but there were
6 no staff there at the time. This even happened with
7 boys, such as the [REDACTED] brothers. Boys were being
8 injured when they had to box each other. They were
9 using their bare knuckles to hit each other. Their
10 vests were soaked in blood.

11 ' [REDACTED] was about the same age as [REDACTED]
12 [REDACTED]. He'd punch you in the stomach to wind you and
13 uppercut you as you bent over. It happened to me once.
14 They made boys fight when they didn't want to. They
15 regularly picked on [one boy who he names]. The boys
16 were picked to fight against each other. They were not
17 necessarily fighting boys the same age. There was no
18 referee. It was [REDACTED], an older boy, he was in
19 charge. Some of the boys were crying, they didn't want
20 to do it. I never saw anyone being knocked out. This
21 was one of the things that caused me to go to the
22 police. Staff such as RGO [REDACTED], RJW [REDACTED] and RJD [REDACTED]
23 knew about the boxing in the Scout hall. The fights in
24 the changing rooms were a different story.

25 'I don't know if RGO [REDACTED] or SNR [REDACTED] knew

1 about these fights taking place, but they were
2 definitely not there when they happened. I didn't know
3 anywhere else to go to make some of this stuff stop, so
4 I think the boxing was one of the main reasons that
5 I decided to go to the police.

6 'I was thinking that something had to be done about
7 the bullying in the home. I remembered a police box
8 that my father had gone to years before.'

9 And he says he arranged to meet two boys at the
10 police box:

11 'That was in about 1956 when I was 13 years old.
12 I opened a police box and made a phone call. I said
13 I was being bullied at the home. There was a police
14 car --

15 LADY SMITH: Bullied at the home.

16 MS FORBES: Bullied at the home, yes.

17 LADY SMITH: The home, yes. Not just 'home'.

18 MS FORBES: 'There was a police car outside the home by the
19 time we got back there in the evening.

20 'Ms RJD [REDACTED] and the police were in the
21 playroom/visitors' room. All of the boys were lined up
22 and interviewed. [REDACTED] said to me [and he
23 addresses him by the boy's surname], "See you, I'll see
24 you afterwards". We all went back down to the basement
25 and I was waiting for [REDACTED] to retaliate. But when he

1 came back down he was shook up. Someone had told him
2 that it wasn't right. Everything changed for about one
3 month. ██████ used to hit me on the head with a brush.
4 He also did hit me on the shoulder once. He did it to
5 other boys too. That stopped for a few weeks.'

6 He talks about the changing room after dinner at
7 paragraph 57, and this is in reference to page 21 of
8 bundle A that was handed over to the Inquiry. And it
9 relates to the boys' changing room and he says:

10 'We were routinely left in darkness. That was part
11 of the routine. We weren't allowed to speak. In the
12 corridor, the only light was shining under the door. It
13 was dark and the young lads were terrified. You went to
14 the changing room after dinner. It was inhumane. It
15 happened at least three times during a winter. We had
16 to sit there until the call for came for bed.'

17 He then talks about boys and girls being segregated
18 except at mealtimes and that was a rule and there was no
19 speaking at mealtimes, and then he comments that there's
20 entries within his records of people coming to the home
21 and making comments about him being a happy and healthy
22 boy. And he says at paragraph 59:

23 'Well, I was a happy, healthy boy, and that is God's
24 grace. However, I do not recall ever meeting any
25 visitors or being interviewed by people with regards my

1 wellbeing. I don't know who would have said these
2 things about me.'

3 And he says that the records have people's names
4 blanked out.

5 He says that the police came to the home in 1956 and
6 interviewed RJD . At paragraph 60, he says:

7 'The final conclusion was that it was just little
8 boys having a fight with each other. That was the last
9 of it. Nothing else was done.'

10 He then talks about the fact that his eldest sister
11 was never brought to see them, even though she only
12 lived a few miles away, and she'd been told by her
13 adoptive father that they were in a bad boys' home and
14 it would happen to her if she wasn't good.

15 He then goes on at paragraph 63 to talk about the
16 police investigation in 2014, and he says, he refers to
17 the report of a meeting that was had on
18 28 February 2014, and he says:

19 'I went to the reunion for former residents of the
20 home in 2004 or 2005. We were in the zoo. That was the
21 final reunion. I was disappointed because there was
22 hardly anyone there from my era. Then I went to talk to
23 the trustees to ask about records. The word came back
24 that the records had been destroyed.'

25 And he says he started then to investigate and was

1 given the council records from Birthlink and he then got
2 in touch with the police. He says he didn't want to
3 have a criminal investigation pursued.

4 And he then talks about the conclusion of the police
5 investigation, paragraph 65, and he says:

6 'The conclusion of the police investigation was that
7 there had been a systemic failure in the duty of care
8 owed to children in the home.'

9 He tells us about his life then after care from
10 paragraph 66 and he says that he graduated from the
11 [REDACTED] College with a Diploma in
12 [REDACTED]. He was then [REDACTED].
13 He talks about his different appointments after that.
14 He talks about presenting [REDACTED]. And
15 again, that was in relation to [REDACTED]. He also did
16 [REDACTED] on the same theme.

17 And he tells us then about his work, training
18 leaders and workers for the [REDACTED], and doing [REDACTED]
19 work. And he says he retired from [REDACTED]
20 after 48 years, and then commenced [REDACTED],
21 and he tells us some details about that.

22 At paragraph 70, he says:

23 'RJD [REDACTED], who [REDACTED] home, was appointed, but
24 there is no reference to her having any qualifications
25 whatsoever. She was appointed in her very early 20s,

1 after six months as SNR . There was not
2 a single report from SNR in all the years that
3 she was there.'

4 He says that SNR selected the staff and never
5 appointed any male staff, and at paragraph 71 he says:

6 'The older boys thought that they could do what they
7 liked because they had some authority. The older
8 children in there, in effect, became the staff.'

9 And he talks about if qualified male staff had been
10 appointed, he says a lot of the things wouldn't have
11 happened.

12 He talks about the fact that if he had been given
13 opportunity and encouragement to study, then they all
14 could have achieved more. And he says he has achieved
15 a lot in life but feels he could have achieved even
16 more.

17 He mentions at paragraph 72 that the annual general
18 meetings records show that Edinburgh Council was making
19 payments to the home, and that started when he and his
20 brother went in there. He thinks that these were
21 supposed to be for their board, clothing and pocket
22 money.

23 He comments that other boys had their dads coming to
24 visit on Saturdays and would give them sweets and pocket
25 money, but they didn't have a dad to do that for them,

1 and they shouldn't have been in the home as they were
2 orphans. And they never received this council money
3 from the home, never got any pocket money or new
4 clothes; all hand-me-downs.

5 But he does say at paragraph 73 that when they left,
6 someone from the council took them to buy clothes and
7 kitted them out, and he says at paragraph 74:

8 'I believe that reports compiled by people
9 responsible for the home have been distorted. They are
10 not right.'

11 And he has signed that, and it's dated 2 December
12 2016, and again, sadly, he has died since giving his
13 statement, my Lady.

14 There is one thing I was going to correct, my Lady,
15 in relation to 'Robert's' statement and account.

16 I think I'd said it was 1964 when he left Widowers'.

17 LADY SMITH: Yes.

18 MS FORBES: But I read the digit wrongly, it looked like a 4
19 but it's actually a 7.

20 LADY SMITH: 7, right.

21 MS FORBES: So he was in the cottage, I think, at Widowers'
22 for about a month in [REDACTED] 1967, and then finally left
23 the home on [REDACTED] 1967.

24 LADY SMITH: '67.

25 MS FORBES: Yes.

1 LADY SMITH: I think you previously said 1964.

2 MS FORBES: 4, yes. So it made it look like he was a lot
3 younger, but he was, I think, 17 by then.

4 LADY SMITH: He'd be 17 by then. I did wonder what had
5 happened between 14 and 17 years old. That would make
6 more sense. Thank you very much.

7 MS FORBES: And that's when he went to Winchburgh that he
8 talked about.

9 LADY SMITH: Yes, right, thank you.

10 MS FORBES: My Lady, Mr Peoples now has a couple of
11 statements.

12 LADY SMITH: Right. While Mr Peoples gets organised, let me
13 catch up with names of people whose identities are
14 protected.

15 Firstly, we've got a list; a Mr RGM, a Mrs RHV,
16 a Dr HRI, Miss RJD, Aunty HRF, HRF,
17 Auntie HRE, RGO, ,
18 , and then RJR,
19 somebody called , somebody called , or the
20 brothers, . I have already mentioned
21 . at one point, somebody RJW and
22 somebody . And then Aunt HRE, Mr RGV,
23 who I may already have mentioned, Auntie PZU and
24 Aunty HRF.

25 I think that completes all the people who, as ever,

1 the explanation is they are protected by my
2 General Restriction Order. That means that although we
3 can use their names within these four walls, they are
4 not to be identified as referred to in our evidence
5 outside this room.

6 Where are we going now, Mr Peoples?

7 MR PEOPLES: My Lady, the next read-in is from a statement
8 of an applicant who, again, is anonymous and whose
9 pseudonym is 'Jennifer'.

10 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

11 'Jennifer' (read in)

12 MR PEOPLES: And the reference for 'Jennifer's' statement is
13 WIT.001.002.3055.

14 LADY SMITH: Thanks very much.

15 MR PEOPLES: 'Jennifer' was born in 1962. She tells us
16 about her life before care, and I'm going to take this
17 fairly short, that she lived at home with her parents.
18 She has two brothers and one sister. And she tells us
19 that she was at home until 1967, when she was 5 years of
20 age, and doesn't have very much memory of that period,
21 understandably.

22 She tells us her father did work, but her mum,
23 sadly, passed away in her sleep due to a brain
24 haemorrhage. She tells us at paragraph 3 that the
25 family members couldn't take the children. Her dad

1 couldn't cope. So the younger siblings, including
2 'Jennifer', went to care. [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]. And
4 I think that maybe explains the age of 2; I think anyone
5 under 2 initially perhaps --

6 LADY SMITH: Had to go somewhere else.

7 MR PEOPLES: -- went somewhere else, and when they become
8 around 2, they perhaps are reunited, as happened in this
9 case, in somewhere such as Widowers'. So I think that's
10 just an example of, it wasn't a sort of permanent
11 separation, necessarily.

12 That's a generalisation, I mean, obviously some
13 children were split, and some went off to be adopted and
14 so forth, but in this case I think the children, the
15 younger ones, did get back together again.

16 And then 'Jennifer' went, in 1967, to Widowers'
17 Children's Home, and the records that we have indicate
18 that she went on [REDACTED] 1967, at the age of 5. And
19 she left on [REDACTED] 1975, aged 13.

20 She tells us about Widowers', starting at
21 paragraph 4. She has a memory of being collected by
22 a social worker, and tells us:

23 'We were told we were going on holiday, but everyone
24 was crying.'

25 She said she didn't understand why everyone was

1 crying at the time. She then said that she -- she tells
2 us there was a mixture of boys and girls at Widowers',
3 from 2 or 3 years old, up to 15 or 16. She reckons
4 there was about 20 or 30 children in total.

5 She then tells us about the staff, and I'm not going
6 to read all of the names out here, but some of them are
7 quite familiar already.

8 LADY SMITH: Yes.

9 MR PEOPLES: Including the Aunt HRF, who was SNR.
10 And one perhaps I can pick out is that she said there
11 was one particular member of staff called HRE that she
12 would call 'HRE', and I think we'll probably
13 find out more about that later in her statement.

14 LADY SMITH: Yes.

15 MR PEOPLES: She does say, however, she can remember
16 a particular auntie, June, who was really nice to her.

17 She tells us that -- about the routine, or rather
18 layout, I think, from paragraph 8, and she said that
19 when you went in the front door at Widowers', in her
20 time, straight ahead was Auntie HRF's sitting room and
21 office. There was a dining room, a boys' playroom and
22 a staffroom. And that's on the ground floor. There
23 were stairs down to the basement on both sides. And
24 then, in paragraph 9 she says:

25 'Within the basement there was a laundry, a toilet,

1 a kitchen that wasn't in use, a cloakroom, boiler and
2 storage rooms.'

3 And then in paragraph 10 she says:

4 'There was a staircase within the dining room which
5 lead up to the first floor where there was a dormitory
6 for boys and a room for older girls on the righthand
7 side and opposite, there was a staffroom and [what she
8 calls] the bigger boys' dormitory, Aunty HRF's bedroom
9 and bathroom. Then you could go through fire doors to
10 the girls' dormitory and bathroom.'

11 I think these were perhaps some changes that were
12 perhaps introduced in Aunty HRF's time. I think we
13 heard about a slightly different layout earlier on.

14 LADY SMITH: Yes.

15 MR PEOPLES: She tells us that the girls' dormitory had
16 divider partitions separating it into cubicles of two or
17 three beds, and that there were nine girls in her
18 dormitory. And she tells us that she shared a room with
19 a girl whom she names, and she also shared a room with
20 her sister as well, when she was older and came to
21 Widowers'. That's the youngest of the family.

22 She said that most mornings, at paragraph 12:

23 'Aunty HRF would wake us up.'

24 She says:

25 'Things would be okay until breakfast, when you

1 might be hit, depending on who was on duty.'

2 And she said bedtime, at paragraph 13:

3 '... was about 8 or 9 o'clock at night. Nobody put
4 us to bed. Staff would come up with us, and Aunt HRF
5 would come round last thing at night and make sure
6 everyone was accounted for and in bed.'

7 And she said as they got older, they moved around
8 within the same dormitory into these different cubicles.

9 And she mentions two girls in paragraph 14; these
10 are actually the daughters of the member of staff who
11 lived in the cottage.

12 LADY SMITH: Right.

13 MR PEOPLES: In case -- it gets a bit confusing, [REDACTED]

14 [REDACTED].

15 LADY SMITH: Yes.

16 MR PEOPLES: She just says they actually were around the
17 house, and really grew up, to some extent, as part of
18 the home.

19 She goes on to deal with mealtimes from
20 paragraph 15. She says:

21 'If you didn't like something, all hell would break
22 loose. HRE would force-feed it to you, or beat you,
23 slapping you on the body, arm and legs. It was just
24 with her bare hand, not an implement. She did it to me
25 and others.'

1 She says one girl in particular hated porridge, and
2 she describes her being bent over the table and beaten
3 by HRE , Auntie HRE , while Aunt HRF just sat there.
4 So if her recollection's accurate, there's obviously
5 knowledge --

6 LADY SMITH: Yes.

7 MR PEOPLES: -- on the part of the person SNR of how
8 other staff were dealing with the children, at least
9 some of the time.

10 And she said:

11 'The food was okay, but if you didn't like
12 something, tough, you were made to eat it by HRE ,
13 Auntie HRE , or else.'

14 Which again, I think, accords with some of the other
15 evidence.

16 LADY SMITH: What others have said, yes.

17 MR PEOPLES: She talks about washing and bathing. She said
18 that bath time was about 6.30 to 6.45 at night, pm:

19 'We didn't get a bath each night. You got a bath
20 once a week, mostly on a Saturday. Again, it's a bit
21 like mealtimes, it was okay depending on the member of
22 staff who was on duty and it wasn't okay when Auntie
23 HRE was on duty.'

24 And she also names another person whose name has
25 come up. She calls her 'RHJ'. Can I say

1 this: I think the name [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are sometimes
2 used, but I think it's clear it's the same person that's
3 being described.

4 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

5 MR PEOPLES: Whether it's [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

6 And she says:

7 'These two individuals could be quite rough when
8 washing and they would slap you when you were still wet.
9 They would hit you anywhere. You didn't know why they
10 hit you, they would hit you when you were in the bath.'

11 And then she asks the rhetorical question:

12 'What could you be doing wrong in the bath? It
13 would be for not keeping your head forward or not
14 keeping it back or for getting soap in your eyes. When
15 you got hit, your head would hit off the taps. They
16 would hit you more often than not, but that was when you
17 were younger. When you got older, about 11, you got to
18 wash your hair yourself.'

19 I think she probably means you got to wash yourself
20 entirely.

21 LADY SMITH: Yes, that would make sense.

22 MR PEOPLES: And I think that, again, accords with some of
23 the evidence we may have heard already.

24 LADY SMITH: Yes.

25 MR PEOPLES: Clothing, I'm not going to dwell on that. They

1 wore their own clothes at the house, but things were
2 donated, and that's in line with what we've heard
3 before. And if you needed clothes, you went to a large
4 clothes cupboard where staff would pick out things for
5 you.

6 They wore a school uniform, and again she talks
7 about remembering going around with a hole in her shoe
8 until it was changed. And she then talks about school,
9 and she says that someone would walk children round to
10 school in the morning. And children had lunch at
11 school. She tells us about schools she attended,
12 primaries and secondaries.

13 She makes a point which is, I think, a recurring
14 theme:

15 'There wasn't any one-to-one at the home. When we
16 got home from school, nobody helped you with your
17 homework.'

18 That's at paragraph 22. So we're getting a familiar
19 theme that education wasn't really seen as very
20 important.

21 However, she does go on to tell us at paragraph 23
22 that obviously chores were a different matter, because
23 she has a recollection of having to sweep all four
24 flights of stairs from the age of about 8 or 9 years of
25 age. She said she did chores on a Saturday, tidying the

1 dormitory, mopping toilet and bathroom floors, wiping
2 down the kitchen surfaces, helping with the dishes and
3 dishwasher after every meal.

4 I think we have heard about, obviously, a cook doing
5 the cooking, but we haven't heard much about anyone
6 being a domestic cleaner at that time.

7 LADY SMITH: Mm-hmm.

8 MR PEOPLES: Leisure time, she said, as the children got
9 older, 9 or 10 years of age, she and others that she
10 names, and some of them are familiar names, I think,
11 already, would play and hide in the basement and muck
12 about outside. There was a toy room, a mixed boys' and
13 girls' room, with building bricks, a blackboard and
14 a seesaw. The bigger boys, the teenagers, had their own
15 playroom and they had a piano in there. She says she
16 can't remember there being any books:

17 'We were just left to our own devices, we were not
18 supervised.'

19 I think the lack of supervision is another, I think,
20 theme that's coming out already.

21 LADY SMITH: Mm-hmm.

22 MR PEOPLES: She said:

23 'On Saturdays we got a wee bag of sweets but no
24 pocket money.'

25 She said, at paragraph 26:

1 'Children can be cruel. We were called "homers" by
2 the other children at school so we would all stick
3 together.'

4 But she does say that she made friends outside of
5 the home, and I think she names some of those.

6 But she does say that:

7 'We didn't have our friends back to the home for
8 tea, but you could go to their houses for tea, but when
9 we got older, friends were allowed into the playroom.'

10 And again, I think that's in line with what we have
11 already heard.

12 LADY SMITH: Yes.

13 MR PEOPLES: As for trips, she mentions a zoo, the beach at
14 Gullane. She says that she attended Brownies and
15 Guides, there was Scouts for the boys and there was
16 a hall in the grounds.

17 She talks about staying with a family, with another
18 boy from the home, for a holiday, and recalls going to
19 Eyemouth. She enjoyed the holiday itself, and describes
20 it as a good time.

21 She talks about birthdays and Christmases and I'm
22 not going to read this all out. I think the gist is
23 that Christmas was good and she describes why it was
24 good, and at birthdays there was presents and a cake,
25 although they didn't go out for any celebration, and you

1 had to wait until after school to enjoy the celebration.

2 As for visits, she said she did see her younger
3 sister, who was in the same home, as well as her
4 brother, who was also in the home. Her brother ended up
5 taking his own life, having suffered from depression,
6 which she believes had a lot to do with his time in
7 care. And he is a boy that I think we hear some
8 evidence about.

9 LADY SMITH: Yes.

10 MR PEOPLES: And she said one of her aunts used to come and
11 see her on a regular basis and that she and the other
12 children of the family would stay with her at weekends.
13 She said her father did come and visit, but not very
14 often.

15 And then at paragraph 33, she says she didn't have
16 a social worker, and that the only time she saw a social
17 worker was when she was preparing to leave Widowers'
18 Children's Home.

19 She says at 34, paragraph 34:

20 'To my knowledge, no one official who came and
21 visited or did any inspection or spoke to me about the
22 place. There was no one identified to me as being
23 someone who I could talk to about care, nobody that
24 I would call a keyworker.'

25 And I think that's, again, in line with things we

1 have heard already.

2 As for healthcare, she mentions the doctor that
3 we've heard before, and says that:

4 'He would feel you all over your body, your breasts,
5 the top of your thighs, whenever you went to see him
6 about something. One time I went in to see him about
7 stomach ache and he was lifting my legs up and down.
8 I didn't think anything about it at the time, but
9 looking back on it now, it seems a bit strange. I'm not
10 the only one who said that about that doctor.'

11 That's at paragraph 35.

12 Moving on to paragraph 38, which deals with running
13 away, she says she thinks she ran away once, and went to
14 Glasgow for a look about, and then came home.

15 She does say that she does remember saying to Aunt
16 **HRF** that she didn't want to be at Widowers'. She said:

17 'I was older and I was seeing how the younger ones
18 were being treated, how I used to be treated.'

19 As for bed-wetting, I think one can say, she says
20 quite frankly:

21 'I don't know how the staff dealt with bed-wetting.'

22 And I think anything she's learnt has really been
23 told to her by others.

24 LADY SMITH: Yes.

25 MR PEOPLES: So I'm not going to read all of that out.

1 LADY SMITH: That's fine.

2 MR PEOPLES: But it's in line with, I think, what --

3 LADY SMITH: What we have heard so many times. Yes.

4 MR PEOPLES: What we've heard, yes. I mean, clearly, it
5 wasn't treated sympathetically, if what she was told was
6 correct.

7 For discipline, she says that they would be
8 grounded. Wouldn't get to visit family members. Would
9 not be allowed to go swimming and so forth.

10 And then she goes back to RHJ, at
11 paragraph 41, whom she says would hit children with
12 a wooden Scholl's sandal, or shoe. Her younger sister
13 would get that treatment from the age of 6 or 7, she
14 says, and half the time it was just for fidgeting. She
15 said Auntie RHJ would hit her sister on the legs,
16 sometimes once, sometimes two or three times.

17 She goes on at paragraph 42 to say:

18 'You would have to sit in the playroom with your
19 arms and legs crossed. You were told, "Don't speak
20 unless spoken to". If you spoke out of turn you would
21 get hit, sent to bed early or made to stand in the
22 corner of the room.'

23 Auntie RHJ did hit, she says, did hit her with
24 the wooden shoe, and she can also remember a time when
25 the children were lined up and Auntie HRF hit all of

1 them with a slipper or a plimsoll. She doesn't remember
2 what the reason for that was, but she does remember the
3 occasion.

4 She has a section that's headed 'Abuse' and that
5 begins at paragraph 43. She says:

6 'The atmosphere in general was sometimes good, and
7 sometimes bad. Every day, I used to think what will
8 happen today?'

9 At paragraph 44 she goes on:

10 'There was one night I got beaten by HRE because
11 another staff member's daughter wanted into the house to
12 see her mum and I unlocked the back door for her. I was
13 beaten for doing that because the door had been locked
14 by Auntie HRE and I had opened it. I got bent over
15 a chair. My lower clothes were removed and I was
16 smacked on my back, my legs, and my backside. Anywhere.
17 I had marks on my legs and backside. I got sent for
18 a bath and to my bed and the nice member of staff gave
19 me a bath. I showed her my injuries. And she felt
20 sorry for me.'

21 She goes on to just say, at paragraph 45 she got
22 slapped about quite a lot. And then she mentions
23 occasions when Auntie HRF, SNR, would get the
24 children together if she thought they'd been up to no
25 good, and gives an example when she was 12 or 13 and was

1 caught smoking, and she seems to have had a discussion
2 with her at that point. And she also says that at other
3 times SNR [REDACTED], Aunty HRF [REDACTED], would take a group of
4 children to her office and sometimes, she says, you
5 could have your say about whatever it was, but at other
6 times SNR [REDACTED] would simply say, 'Don't be daft', or,
7 'Don't be stupid'.

8 She goes on to say that she never went, or
9 'Jennifer' goes on to say that she never went to any
10 member of staff and said 'I'm not happy about
11 something', she would just go in a strop, as she puts
12 it.

13 She says Aunty HRF [REDACTED] would always just ask what had
14 happened, never why it had happened, and she said:

15 'You would try to tell your side of the story, but
16 it just got to the point where you were always in the
17 wrong.'

18 She said she saw other children being beaten, and
19 she names two examples. She said:

20 'If you didn't see it, you would hear it. I heard
21 my brother being beaten. I don't know what he had done.
22 I heard him swearing and yelling as he was being
23 slapped. He would have been about 10 or 11 and I was
24 around 8 or 9 at the time.'

25 She mentions another female resident who wet the bed

1 and says, 'Jennifer' says, she saw her getting beaten up
2 by Auntie HRE for that, who slapped the girl all over
3 her body.

4 She then speaks about her brother, the one who's
5 deceased, and says he was sexually abused by another
6 staff member, Auntie PZO:

7 'He told me about it [she says] after he had left
8 the home. He told me she took him into a room and he
9 lost his virginity to her.'

10 She thinks that he left the home when he was 15 or
11 16, but would have been at high school when this
12 happened.

13 And then she recalls an occasion when she was on the
14 top landing where the dormitories were, and where Auntie
15 HRF's room, or bedroom, was located, at paragraph 51
16 and she says:

17 'The door to her room was open and RKE was
18 being abused by Auntie HRF. He was lying naked
19 on her bed.'

20 And she says he would have been at high school,
21 about 14 or 15. And she goes on to say something about
22 RKE, but I think that's based on things she's been
23 told.

24 Then she goes on, at paragraph 52:

25 'Children were violent to other children in the

1 home. RKE had quite a temper. He could be
2 quite aggressive.'

3 'Jennifer' says he would pick up her sister by the
4 throat and throw her. She says:

5 'There was no male staff and the staff who were
6 there found it difficult to control him. At that time,
7 there was a difficulty getting people who were
8 qualified, capable of caring for children in care. Some
9 of the kids became staff, which was strange, as they had
10 no formal qualifications.'

11 And she gives examples, three examples, and one of
12 the examples she gives, she says, was a child who used
13 to bully other kids and then became a member of staff.
14 She says:

15 'She would punch the kids, pull their hair, call
16 them names, or throw things at them. This would happen
17 when there was no other staff around and there was
18 nobody you could go to and talk to about stuff like
19 that.'

20 She said, she then deals with leaving
21 Widowers' Children's Home and said when she was getting
22 ready to leave, she did have a social worker.

23 But in essence, I think, while she describes what
24 happened, she says:

25 'Thinking back, it could have been done a lot

1 better.'

2 No one even took her to her father's house.

3 She says she was glad to be away from the care home,
4 but her home life wasn't great. This is at
5 paragraph 55. She left school without qualifications.

6 She has a section on life after being in care. She
7 said she didn't stay long with her father as he was
8 always drunk and ended up staying with a cousin.

9 But the point she is making at the top of page 13,
10 paragraph 56, is:

11 'There was nobody there for guidance as I was
12 entering adult life.'

13 And then she says that she stayed with her cousin
14 until she was 18, fell pregnant and then got her own
15 house. She then describes meeting her partner.

16 No, sorry, she said she fell pregnant aged 18 and
17 got her own house.

18 LADY SMITH: Yes.

19 MR PEOPLES: Then she met her partner when her daughter was
20 about 18 months, and had two more daughters with that
21 partner, and then split up from him.

22 She then met another partner, with whom she was
23 together for about four years, and fell pregnant again.
24 She says he was an alcoholic and so they split up, and
25 then she said after that she was together with her then,

1 her current partner at the time of the statement.

2 She said she started back at work when her children
3 were at school. And indeed she tells us she now works
4 as a carer.

5 LADY SMITH: I see that.

6 MR PEOPLES: And dealing with impact, she says at
7 paragraph 60:

8 'My time in care did have an impact on me. From my
9 experience in care, I didn't want to discipline my kids.
10 It was difficult for me to discipline my kids. If I had
11 to punish my kids, I felt bad about it. It's affected
12 the relationships I have had. At the home, I never
13 heard anyone say "I love you", even from the staff who
14 were nice. I think you were looking for someone to love
15 you, looking for a happy ending, but that wasn't how it
16 was meant to be.'

17 And then she describes difficulties she's had,
18 including some outpatient treatment in the early '80s
19 when she had panic attacks and wasn't functioning well.
20 And she says at 62:

21 'The main impact upon me was in relation to my
22 education.'

23 And that's a point that several have made; that they
24 could have done much better had their education been
25 attended to properly.

1 She talks about records, and again, it's the same
2 theme, I think, as before. The records, she's not very
3 happy with them. She says it looks like a bad
4 photocopy. They've got her date of birth wrong, as well
5 as some other details. And she says:

6 'At first, the local authority said they didn't have
7 records, but eventually provided them.'

8 As for lessons to be learned, she says having
9 a keyworker for when she was in care would have been
10 a good thing, especially as she got older, going into
11 secondary school:

12 'Having someone you could turn to would have made
13 all the difference.'

14 And she has signed that statement on 17 December
15 2018, with the usual declaration.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

17 MR PEOPLES: Can I move on to another statement? I'm
18 conscious --

19 LADY SMITH: Yes, we start a statement, or?

20 MR PEOPLES: Would you prefer to take a short break?

21 LADY SMITH: Is it better to have a short break just now and
22 then go on to the next statement?

23 MR PEOPLES: Yes, we've got two statements left.

24 LADY SMITH: We'll fit those in, in the time left.

25 We are just catching up with names, and some of

1 a Jack the lad, but she loved him. He wasn't cruel to
2 her, or to her siblings. She says, however, her
3 relationship with her mum wasn't good because she was
4 cruel to all of the children. She physically and
5 mentally abused them.

6 I'm not going to rehearse all of that, but she gives
7 an account of quite serious abuse of herself, and she
8 gives some examples. I can give one; her mum burnt her
9 feet with a hot poker, but there are other examples of
10 what she did.

11 So she says, in summary, she says at paragraph 6
12 that the children weren't looked after properly:

13 'We weren't going to school or anything. We were
14 like tramps. I had to steal food for my brothers and
15 sisters. We were left at home alone a lot.'

16 And she also tells us at paragraph 8, and I'm not
17 going to go into detail, but that she was sexually
18 abused by two neighbours. And she says that after she
19 disclosed this to a teacher, things happened rather
20 rapidly, and very shortly afterwards she was in a home
21 with her siblings, or taken into care.

22 Initially at paragraph 10, this is a bit like the
23 previous situation, that the brothers and sisters are
24 split up for a short time, but they are reunited in due
25 course at Widowers'. But 'Shannon' and her sisters were

1 in a home called Templedean Hall in Haddington for
2 around nine months. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

3 [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

4 She then tells us about her time at Widowers'
5 Children's Home from paragraph 24 onwards and I will
6 perhaps just give some dates that we have from records.

7 LADY SMITH: That would be helpful, thank you.

8 MR PEOPLES: The records indicate that 'Shannon' was
9 admitted on [REDACTED] 1968 when she was aged 10,
10 I think that's right.

11 LADY SMITH: Yes, that would -- yes.

12 MR PEOPLES: And she left on [REDACTED] 1975, when I think
13 she would be aged 18, or thereabouts.

14 As she says, her brothers, sisters and herself, they
15 all went to Widowers', and there was a girls' dormitory
16 with partitions, sectioned off into cubicles. She said
17 there was a separate boys' dormitory at the other end of
18 the building. There was a big girls' dormitory with two
19 beds and a big boys' dormitory with four beds. It was
20 a much smaller place than her previous establishment,
21 and accommodated around 25 children. There was quite
22 a lot of coming and going, she says, but some children
23 were there for a long time.

24 And again, at paragraph 25 she makes the point that:
25 'My dad paid money to the council for us and then

1 the council paid the home.'

2 And she mentions the existence of a committee in
3 charge of the home and she also tells us about the staff
4 members she can recall, and again we've got the familiar
5 names, including HRF [REDACTED], who is SNR [REDACTED], Auntie
6 HRE [REDACTED] is mentioned again, and various other names too.

7 She does say that when she left, which would have
8 been 1975, only Auntie HRF [REDACTED] of the people she mentioned
9 remained. She says there was quite a high turnover of
10 staff, and I think that's been borne out.

11 LADY SMITH: It's been quite clear, yes.

12 MR PEOPLES: I think I can say, having looked at the minute
13 book that was produced, it's confirmed by that that
14 there's a lot of changes of staff on a regular basis.

15 LADY SMITH: Yes.

16 MR PEOPLES: She goes on to deal with routine, and she says
17 that:

18 'After what happened on my first night, I was never
19 able to sleep properly.'

20 I'll just leave it at that, but she does then tell
21 us why that was the case. I don't think I need to read
22 all of that at this stage, but clearly, it was
23 an eventful first night.

24 LADY SMITH: Yes.

25 MR PEOPLES: She goes on to deal with food at paragraph 30,

1 and clearly she was unimpressed by the food served up in
2 the home. She said:

3 'The food was like something out of "Oliver Twist".
4 It was disgusting. Mrs RHV would cook with a cigarette
5 hanging out of her mouth.'

6 I think we've heard that before.

7 LADY SMITH: We've heard about that before.

8 MR PEOPLES: Yes. She says, at paragraph 32:

9 'If you didn't finish your food, you got it at the
10 next meal. For example, if you didn't eat your porridge
11 in the morning, you'd get it for dinner. If you didn't
12 eat it then, you'd be force-fed. We were force-fed
13 quite a lot.'

14 Then she talks about schooling from paragraph 33
15 onwards, and at paragraph 34, again, we're back to the
16 same theme:

17 'We weren't given any support at the home. I don't
18 remember having a table to sit at to do our homework.
19 Nobody supervised us doing our homework.'

20 And at paragraph 35, that said, she does say that
21 she did well at school, at high school, and got six
22 O-Levels. She said she did want to stay on at school,
23 but because she had to leave the home, she wasn't
24 allowed to do so. She says when she was at Widowers',
25 she would have stayed at school all of the time; she

1 would have even slept there:

2 'I absolutely hated being sick and off school,
3 because that was when things happened.'

4 Holidays. She says:

5 'We were sent away to random people for holidays.'

6 And she talks about an occasion when she went to
7 Eyemouth with a young couple who were nice, and that was
8 a happy occasion. And then the following year she goes
9 to Wales with another resident, and after that she said
10 she refused to go on holiday again and we'll see later
11 on why she says what she says there.

12 She also said she went abroad to Norway with Guides,
13 and she went to other parts of Europe with the school.

14 Birthdays. She says there was cake and presents at
15 teatime. However, on Christmas, two separate Christmas
16 days, 'Shannon' tells us she was locked in a laundry
17 cupboard for the whole day, and she says every Christmas
18 somebody was locked in a laundry cupboard.

19 As for leisure time, she says, she talks about this
20 occasion called a Pound Day, where people would come and
21 donate food, toys and clothes, at paragraph 41.

22 LADY SMITH: Yes.

23 MR PEOPLES: She says she enjoyed those days because they
24 were something different:

25 'We got some treats like cakes. Because there were

1 other people about, we knew we were safe.'

2 And then at 42 she says she would play football.

3 She had gerbils and a cat. She said:

4 'We didn't get to watch TV very often, but sometimes

5 we were allowed into Aunty **HRF**'s sitting room to watch

6 "Top of the Pops". There were good times, but they were

7 overshadowed by whatever else was happening.'

8 So we do have, I think, all of them saying that

9 there were good memories and good times, but clearly,

10 she puts it in the way of, well, what's standing out are

11 the bad memories.

12 LADY SMITH: Yes, somebody talked about the bad outweighing

13 the good.

14 MR PEOPLES: The good, yes, so it's the same point being

15 made.

16 LADY SMITH: But being fair to recognise what was good.

17 MR PEOPLES: Well, clearly there was quite a lot of things

18 to do compared with some of the places we've heard

19 about, in that sense.

20 LADY SMITH: Yes.

21 MR PEOPLES: But obviously there were other problems.

22 LADY SMITH: Mm-hmm.

23 MR PEOPLES: She talks about pocket money, saying her own

24 grandparents would give her pocket money. She says the

25 staff would steal it. If possible she would hide it and

1 she says she would use it to go through to Glasgow on
2 her own. She would go to watch Celtic at their football
3 stadium and she said:

4 'They didn't [I think she means the staff didn't]
5 care where I was all day. We could walk out of the home
6 at any time we wanted.'

7 So again, there's a lack of supervision and
8 structure, a point being made by 'Shannon'.

9 LADY SMITH: Yes.

10 MR PEOPLES: She says at paragraph 44 that:

11 'Auntie HRE was quite cruel to some of the
12 children, but she was okay with me and my siblings
13 because she was having an affair with my dad.'

14 So...

15 And going on, she says that the mother, that I don't
16 think she cared for, at paragraph 45, would visit very
17 occasionally:

18 'But we were classed as not really having a mother.'

19 She said she would visit her grandparents at the
20 weekend and would go by herself.

21 At paragraph 46, she said:

22 'I wasn't a big fan of the social work department
23 because they used to try and make me see my mother.
24 They used to come now and again. I'm not sure how
25 often.'

1 And then she has a section headed 'Abuse at
2 Widowers'', and she deals firstly with her first night
3 at Widowers' from paragraph 49 onwards. She says:

4 'The first night we arrived [I'll read this slightly
5 short, this paragraph] I was force-fed. Someone held my
6 nose and made me eat scrambled egg.'

7 At paragraph 50 she says:

8 'I was ill later on that night because I'd eaten
9 egg. I got up because I was sick. I came out of the
10 dormitory and a pillowcase was put over my head. I was
11 taken to a room, possibly the sick room. My pyjamas
12 were taken off me. I think there were two or three
13 people there, touching me everywhere.'

14 She goes on to say what she thinks happened, but
15 effectively she's saying they were masturbating on her,
16 I'll put it short. I don't really need to read it all
17 out.

18 LADY SMITH: That's all right.

19 MR PEOPLES: She said the cover remained on her head the
20 whole time that evening. She thought she was going to
21 drown when she had to wash, because the cover had got
22 wet when she was being washed. She was then taken to
23 bed and told that her brothers and sisters would be
24 killed if she told anyone.

25 So that's how she recalls her first night.

1 She said:

2 'Even at that age, I knew that whatever had happened
3 was wrong. From that night on, I don't think I've ever
4 slept properly because of the fear of it happening
5 again. I think there were males that had access to the
6 home at nighttime. All of the staff in the home were
7 women, apart from Mr RGM.'

8 She said when she woke up the next day:

9 'The pillowcase was gone but I'd been sick all over
10 my bed. I was pulled off my bed and screamed at by
11 a member of staff. She said, "Now we'll have to change
12 your fucking bed". I remember saying that I told them
13 I was allergic to eggs.'

14 She said:

15 'The following night, I was worried it would happen
16 again, but it only happened once.'

17 She then says at 53, paragraph 53:

18 'Periodically, one of the girls would be taken out
19 of the dormitory. We would speak about it amongst
20 ourselves. I only ever saw [and she names the person,
21 one girl] being taken out. She says she was taken out
22 by one of the committee members. I went out after them
23 and [she] got put back in the dormitory.'

24 So she doesn't -- really able to take that
25 particular occasion very far.

1 And then she deals with bed-wetting, 'And the way
2 they've treated bed-wetters was awful'. I'm not going
3 to read that because again, I think it's based largely
4 on what others have probably said to her.

5 LADY SMITH: Yes.

6 MR PEOPLES: But it is in line with what it appears people
7 were being told and what people said happened to them.

8 But she says at 55, if staff found out they'd wet
9 the bed, they'd be pulled out of the bed. And the point
10 she makes there is also that the staff were young, 15,
11 16 years of age, they weren't capable of dealing with
12 it:

13 'Nothing was done to help them stop wetting the
14 bed.'

15 To stop the children, I think:

16 'When Auntie RHJ started working at the home, they
17 were hit over the head by her wooden sandal. She would
18 hit their legs and backsides when their skin was still
19 wet. I remember you could still see the imprint on
20 their skin. They couldn't sit down.'

21 And she tells that she actually saw that happen to,
22 and she names two female residents.

23 LADY SMITH: And again, we've got the reference to wooden
24 sandals.

25 MR PEOPLES: Yes, yes, it's quite often mentioned.

1 LADY SMITH: The same ones, yes.

2 MR PEOPLES: And then she goes on to deal with:

3 'If the children got sweets, [she said] Aunty HRF
4 would keep them in her office in a tin. After school,
5 we'd be lined up in the dining hall. Some of the sweets
6 were foostie because they'd been there so long. She'd
7 go along the line. She said [one of her sisters]
8 wouldn't get a treat because she had wet the bed. On
9 one occasion I gave my sweet to [a small boy] and I got
10 beaten for it.'

11 She then has a section headed 'Physical abuse' and
12 says:

13 'Auntie RHJ came in as SNR when
14 Auntie HRE left. I was about 12.'

15 That would be around 1970, if she is right on her
16 dates and age.

17 LADY SMITH: Yes.

18 MR PEOPLES: She says:

19 'She was a huge woman with an American accent. At
20 first she was amazing, because she was new and she would
21 play with the younger ones, and teach them songs and
22 things.'

23 And then she goes on at page 14, paragraph 57:

24 'But as time went on, she became violent. We were
25 all terrified of her. She had Scholl's sandals with

1 a wooden base. We could be walking along the corridor
2 and for no reason she would hit us. I had a dent in my
3 head from it. She used to nip us under the arms and at
4 the backs of our legs. She would hold on really tight
5 and we would end up with bruises.

6 'I hated wearing tights. I was a tomboy and wanted
7 to play football all the time. We were made to wear
8 tights to cover up the bruises on our legs. I used to
9 put football socks on under my tights. When I got to
10 school, I would take the tights off. My primary school
11 teacher noticed all the bruises on my legs. She told
12 her colleague, and also one of the committee members at
13 Widowers'. Afterwards, I had the absolute shit beaten
14 out of me by Auntie RHJ. I was struck all over my
15 face, head and body with the Scholl's sandal.'

16 She goes on, and this is going back to the Christmas
17 occasions:

18 'One Christmas I was locked in the cupboard for the
19 entire day and I didn't get any presents or food. It
20 was because I got caught changing a boy's bed. A couple
21 of years later, I was locked in the laundry cupboard
22 again by Auntie RHJ. I was with a couple of other
23 children [one of whom she names]. We were still in our
24 pyjamas. If we were heard talking, we were taken out
25 and beaten and then put back in again. We didn't get

1 any food or presents that Christmas either.'

2 At paragraph 60, she says:

3 'Auntie RHJ hit my younger sister over the head
4 all the time.'

5 And says that she used to get headaches when she was
6 a teenager. And I think she relates her early death --

7 LADY SMITH: Yes.

8 MR PEOPLES: -- to some of the violence that she experienced
9 in the home.

10 At paragraph 61 she said, of Auntie RHJ:

11 'It was like a game to Auntie RHJ. Sometimes
12 she'd throw up the sandal, flip it, catch it and hit us.
13 Other staff assaulted the children, but not to the same
14 extent.'

15 She does say that another aunt:

16 'Aunt RGS was always nipping us. Most of the
17 staff were really young. When I got up to 15, 16, I was
18 the same age as the staff taking care of us. They
19 obviously had no experience of looking after children.'

20 She then speaks about another auntie at
21 paragraph 62:

22 'I think Auntie PZX had mental health problems.
23 There was something not right about her. She was
24 sadistic to all of the children. There was an old
25 laundry with deep sinks which had lids with clips on

1 them. She used to put us in the sink, put the lid on,
2 and go out the room and bolt the door. Sometimes she
3 would put hot or cold water on us. She did it a lot to
4 the little ones.'

5 And she names several people who would gather
6 together to lift each other up to unbolt the door, and
7 release the children.

8 She says of another resident, paragraph 63, and we
9 have heard evidence about this resident, was a resident
10 who was beaten up constantly by staff; this is 'Isa'.

11 LADY SMITH: Yes.

12 MR PEOPLES: She said:

13 'They tried to make her cry, but she wouldn't cry.
14 It got to the stage when children were doing it too.
15 Because the staff were doing it all the time, the kids
16 all picked on her too. When I got older, I tried to
17 stop the other kids from hitting her.'

18 And then she said:

19 'When I got to the age of 14, things changed a bit
20 because I was able to stick up for myself and I also
21 avoided being in the home.'

22 At paragraph 65:

23 'I told Aunty HRF what was going on. I also told
24 a policeman called RDY, but I didn't know that he was
25 also abusing some of the boys.'

1 I think that's again something she has learned or
2 been told after the event.

3 LADY SMITH: Yes, yes.

4 MR PEOPLES: She then goes on to talk about the reason why
5 she didn't want to go on holiday again, because of
6 a holiday in Wales. And she says that when she was
7 about 11 years old, she took a train with another female
8 resident to Wales, and she was told on the journey by
9 the other resident that the other resident had been
10 sexually abused. But she said she, at that stage, was
11 more interested in ponies and seeing ponies, and going
12 on holiday.

13 But then she says at paragraph 67 she, and indeed
14 her companion from the home, thought that the people
15 that they went to stay with were part of a Satanic cult.
16 They were there for about two weeks and on three
17 occasions she said:

18 'They put me on a cold table in a white gown. They
19 were chanting things. I had a chicken held over me, its
20 neck was cut and the blood dripped on me. I wasn't
21 sexually abused but I got locked in a cupboard and
22 separated from [her companion], who was a year younger.'

23 She said, however, she does say, perhaps on
24 a different note, that she'd got to ride ponies when she
25 was on this holiday, and she said that that, at least

1 for her at the time, was more overpowering than what was
2 happening on the table. And she says:

3 'We never spoke about this to any adults.'

4 But she said after Wales, she refused to go on
5 a holiday again.

6 I think someone else said the point about people
7 would take them and they didn't think they'd been
8 vetted, or it wasn't clear how they were vetted, and
9 while she didn't have a problem --

10 LADY SMITH: It would be happenstance. I mean, there was
11 somebody talking about having gone to another family,
12 through knowing somebody else in the home.

13 MR PEOPLES: Yes.

14 LADY SMITH: But there's no evidence of any checks having
15 been made.

16 MR PEOPLES: No, no.

17 LADY SMITH: As was the habit at the time.

18 MR PEOPLES: And then, she then turns to the home's doctor,
19 and she says at paragraph 69:

20 'It didn't matter what we went to the doctor for, we
21 always had to take our top off. We would go along to
22 the doctor's surgery. We had to strip naked. It was
23 only ever touching. I remember him poking at my boobs
24 and touching me down below.'

25 And then she also talks about the minister in the

1 local church and said that he had a manse [REDACTED] from
2 the church and would give the girls sweets and fizzy
3 juice, which was something they were never given in the
4 home. She says:

5 'There was always more than one of us there in the
6 manse. He would get us to take our tops off. He would
7 touch us. He used to say that if we told anyone, we
8 would go to hell.'

9 And then she turns to another person who, I think we
10 have heard his name before, HRK [REDACTED].

11 LADY SMITH: Yes, yes.

12 MR PEOPLES: He lived with his wife in a cottage in the
13 grounds of the home, and she says at paragraph 71 that
14 HRK [REDACTED] abused her in a storeroom. She said that
15 the children called it the gym, because it had an old
16 vaulting horse within it, and there were tortoises that
17 used to hibernate in this particular room over the
18 winter. She said:

19 'The first time it happened, HRK [REDACTED] told me
20 that one of the tortoises was coming out of hibernation.
21 We went in and both the tortoises were still sleeping.
22 It was quite a big place full of rubbish. He took me
23 over to a mattress with a cover. We sat there talking
24 about animals that he had had. I love animals. He was
25 talking to me one minute and the next minute I was

1 naked. I remember fighting with him and trying to pull
2 my vest down. He removed my t-shirt and I remember my
3 trousers being down at my ankles. I was raped and he
4 also touched me on my breasts and down below with his
5 hands. He made me lie down on the mattress and
6 ejaculated all over me. He told me he did it with his
7 daughter, and it was a thing that dads do with their
8 daughters. He said that, because I didn't have a dad,
9 he'd been asked to show me this.'

10 She says it happened several times. And she also
11 says that one day the storeroom, or this gym door, was
12 open, and she said three girls, including her younger
13 sister, were in there with HRK :

14 'All were fully clothed.'

15 She says:

16 'I don't know if anything would have happened if
17 I hadn't walked in. I think seeing him with the younger
18 girls gave me more determination to tell an adult. I'd
19 already told Aunty HRF but she didn't believe me, so
20 I told Mr RGM what he'd done.'

21 I think Mr RGM was his wife's father.

22 LADY SMITH: Oh, right.

23 MR PEOPLES: If I remember. And she says:

24 'Not long after that [after she told Mr RGM], HRK
25 HRK left the home and I never saw him again.'

1 And I think we know from other records that
2 Mr HRK and his wife split up and there came a point
3 when his wife became SNR and stayed in
4 the home, not in the cottage.

5 LADY SMITH: Okay, thank you.

6 MR PEOPLES: She then goes on to deal with a male resident
7 that we've heard evidence about:

8 RKE was two years younger than me [she
9 said], but he was massive. Even at aged 9 or 10, he
10 towered over everybody. I remember him being the only
11 boy in the home shaving when he was about 12. RKE was
12 Aunty HRF's favourite, he always got to sit next to her
13 chair. She would run her fingers up his neck.
14 I remember seeing him coming out of her room naked.
15 I never, ever saw any other child in Aunty HRF's room
16 because it was always locked. There was something
17 strange about his relationship with Aunty HRF, and it
18 allowed him to abuse everybody else.'

19 She says:

20 RKE abused boys and girls, but mainly boys later
21 on.'

22 And she said that, at paragraph 76, going on about
23 RKE, that he was a boy who would beat her up until she
24 got to the age of 14 or 15 and he became a bit scared of
25 her. She said the beatings, I think, started when she

1 was about 12:

2 'There were times when I would go for months with
3 constant black eyes from fighting with RKE . I got up
4 one night to go to the toilet. RKE tried to kiss me
5 and touch me over my pyjamas. The next day I fought
6 him. We had a proper fist fight. I think he knew
7 I wasn't going to put up with it. I didn't trust him
8 and I never allowed myself to be alone with him.
9 I never went to the toilet during the night again.'

10 And then she says:

11 'I was never abused by RKE in the way that
12 [another resident that she names] was.'

13 She says:

14 'When I was in the big girls' dormitory with this
15 other girl, he would come in and do things to her. He
16 raped her. It started when I was about 12. When he
17 came into our dormitory, I would hide under my bed
18 because I was absolutely terrified of him.'

19 She said:

20 'I can't remember how long it went on for, but then
21 his attention went onto the boys. He was in the big
22 boys' dormitory with my brother [and others].'

23 She said all the boys that she names were abused by
24 him:

25 'He had so much power in the home. It was as if he

1 had a licence to do what he wanted.'

2 Now, some of that may be based on what she has been
3 told, I think, but it is in line with things that have
4 been --

5 LADY SMITH: It does fit with other evidence.

6 MR PEOPLES: It does fit with other evidence.

7 She then turns to another auntie, Auntie PZO :

8 'The boys' dormitory was a big long dormitory. At
9 the bottom there was a cubicle, which was
10 Auntie PZO 's room. When I was 13 or 14, a male
11 resident [that she names] came to tell me and [her
12 roommate] that Auntie PZO was doing things to him.
13 The boy was the same age as me.'

14 Her roommate and 'Shannon' decided they would sneak
15 into the boys' dormitory, she tells us:

16 'The cubicle wall didn't go all the way up to the
17 ceiling, there was a space at the top of the wall. One
18 of the boys' beds was up against the wall. We waited
19 until we saw the boy and Auntie PZO go into the
20 cubicle. We took a turn to look over. The boy was
21 naked on the bed. I got caught looking by
22 Auntie PZO . The next night, Auntie PZO came
23 into the big girls' dormitory. She took me into the
24 cubicle. The boy was already there [the one that we've
25 heard about]. She tried to make me and the boy do

1 things to each other. She wanted us to have sex. She
2 did this a few times. Eventually we did it. We didn't
3 have sex, but we were kissing. She would use our
4 siblings against us.'

5 She said she told her roommate:

6 'And we decided we weren't going to tell Aunty
7 HRF.'

8 She then says that Auntie PZO would take
9 'Shannon' and the boy out and be nice to them:

10 'She'd take us ice skating, to the pictures and to
11 see her family. I don't think any of it would have
12 happened if I hadn't put my head over the cubicle. The
13 boy and I would go back to the cubicle, maybe it was
14 because she was nice to us. One night she took me into
15 the room and the boy wasn't there. The fact that
16 a woman can do something like that to a child is beyond
17 comprehension. What she did to me was terrible. She
18 would take items and put them inside me.'

19 And she describes the sort of items that she says
20 were put inside her. She said:

21 'I was completely traumatised by this and still have
22 problems down there to this day.'

23 She then has a section dealing with reporting of
24 abuse, and at paragraph 83 she says:

25 'I told Aunty HRF about HRK abusing me,

1 but she didn't believe me. I then told Mr RGM .
2 I never saw HRK after that. His wife stayed at
3 the home and became one of the aunties.'

4 And then she said:

5 'When RKE touched me, I told Aunty HRF .
6 She did nothing. He was her pet and I think that's why
7 he got away with so much.'

8 And then she also says at paragraph 85:

9 'I told social workers what was happening with
10 RKE , but nothing was ever done. I told a nice
11 male social worker. Afterwards I never saw that social
12 worker again. I told everybody I could about
13 RKE .'

14 And she says her friend and roommate also did.

15 She says:

16 'There was a policeman called RDY . He was meant
17 to be around a lot to try and keep boys on the straight
18 and narrow. I told him what was happening at the home.'

19 And that he is, again, the one that she's heard
20 something about since.

21 LADY SMITH: Yes.

22 MR PEOPLES: Then she said at paragraph 87:

23 'It got to the stage when we just didn't tell anyone
24 anything. As we got older, we would talk amongst
25 ourselves. We stopped telling people in authority

1 because nothing was ever done. A lot of the abuse was
2 swept under the carpet.'

3 And then she says:

4 'It was an ideal heaven [I think "haven", perhaps,
5 is the word --

6 LADY SMITH: Yes.

7 MR PEOPLES: -- for paedophiles.'

8 Leaving Widowers'. And we know from the records
9 that, according to the records, it was [REDACTED] 1975.
10 She says:

11 'When I was 16/17 I just did my own thing at the
12 home.'

13 And she left when she was 17, and then she has
14 a section on life after care, and I'll take this fairly
15 short. But she had an unhappy early life after care,
16 because she said she did get a job in a stables in the
17 Borders and says that she was abused there by a male who
18 tried to rape her. And she then returned to the
19 Edinburgh area and she seems to have been interested in
20 horses and riding, and said that during that period of
21 her life, she was living in a cold caravan for
22 three years and, at that time, she got involved with
23 a gay guy called John Wilson, who had stables, who
24 flattered her a bit because she'd never had
25 a relationship before. She says when she was 21 she

1 ended up staying in his mobile home and he would beat
2 her up.

3 Now, I think we know who that John Wilson is. It's
4 not a coincidence. I think it's clear from the
5 description and the location that that's a person that
6 we've heard evidence about before.

7 LADY SMITH: Who has a certain nickname.

8 MR PEOPLES: 'Sticky Wilson'.

9 LADY SMITH: 'Sticky Wilson'.

10 MR PEOPLES: And he's got convictions for offences against
11 children, including, I think, in stables.

12 She then goes on to say she's worked on and off for
13 most of her adult life and she tells us about these
14 things, and that can be read for ourselves.

15 As for impact, if I can just turn to that at this
16 stage, at paragraph 96, she said:

17 'I got really involved in drugs for a while.
18 I think it was just to try and forget what happened in
19 the home, to hide the pain. I was taking a lot of
20 cocaine and drinking a lot. It was a crazy time.
21 I didn't see my family for about 15 years. I just
22 couldn't cope with seeing any of them.'

23 She said she's seen psychologists off and on, and
24 she has self-harmed. And she says it's all do with the
25 home, that's Widowers':

1 'I get counselling just now, but I only have one
2 session left.'

3 She says at paragraph 98:

4 'Over the years, I have tried to kill myself a few
5 times. I can go about my life, but the abuse always
6 comes back to hit me in the face.'

7 She also says at paragraph 101, and I'm not going to
8 go into the detail, but she has had physical health
9 problems as well, which she tells us about in that
10 paragraph. And she attributes some of them to things
11 that happened in the home.

12 At paragraph 102, she said:

13 'I've had so many different addresses, I've never
14 had anywhere I can actually call home.'

15 At paragraph 104:

16 'I've never been able to have a relationship because
17 of what happened to me at Widowers'. Any time somebody
18 gets close to me, I just can't cope with it. I hate
19 people giving me cuddles. Even to this day, I'm
20 suspicious of people and I always think they want
21 something else.'

22 At paragraph 105:

23 'I wanted to have children. I love children. I was
24 too scared that what happened to me might happen to
25 them, so I've never felt able to have children.'

1 Paragraph 106:

2 'Even to this day, I don't sleep. I've never been
3 able to sleep after the first night at Widowers'.'

4 And going on:

5 'Every now and again I feel dirty because of what
6 happened to me. I can have up to 20, 30 showers a day.'

7 At 108, I think she sums it up that:

8 'I think being in care has ruined my life. I know
9 I was clever enough to do something more. I don't have
10 my own home. I don't have a car. I have nothing.
11 I can't even have a relationship because of what
12 happened to me.'

13 She then tells us about records and says:

14 'I've got some records but I was really upset,
15 because it was an absolute pile of rubbish. It tells
16 you nothing and there are lots of bits scored out.
17 There should be bits about me telling the social workers
18 I was being abused. Every paragraph starts with [and
19 it's her name] "is a bit of a tomboy and likes
20 football". I think everybody who has got their records
21 has been gutted by it.'

22 This is another very familiar theme.

23 LADY SMITH: Yes.

24 MR PEOPLES: And then she says, under 'Hopes for the
25 Inquiry':

1 'The turnover of staff wasn't good. They were also
2 so young and inexperienced.'

3 And then she has the usual declaration, and her
4 statement, 'Shannon's' statement, was signed on
5 1 December 2017.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 Yes.

8 MR PEOPLES: Yes, I think I'll pass it on to Ms Forbes for
9 the final read-in for today.

10 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

11 MS FORBES: My Lady.

12 LADY SMITH: Yes.

13 MS FORBES: The last statement to be read in for Widowers'
14 is from an applicant who is anonymous and is known as
15 'Whitney', and the reference for her statement is
16 WIT.001.001.6397.

17 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

18 'Whitney' (read in)

19 MS FORBES: 'Whitney' tells us she was born in 1966 and
20 then, by way of background, says that her mother died in
21 her sleep of a cerebral haemorrhage before she was even
22 1 year old. Her dad couldn't look after them, so she
23 was put into care. She had two older brothers and a big
24 sister. She went to Clerwood Children's Home first of
25 all, and she says one of her brothers and her sister

1 went to Widowers'.

2 She tells us about Clerwood at paragraph 3 and says
3 she was there about the age of 10 months, and she was
4 there until 1968. She would have been about 2 years old
5 when she left, and obviously, given her age, she has no
6 real recollection of her time there. And then she was
7 moved to Widowers'.

8 And she tells us about Widowers' from paragraph 4
9 onwards, and we know from the records that we've seen
10 that she was admitted there on [REDACTED] 1968. She would
11 have actually been 1 and a half years old, I think, at
12 that point.

13 LADY SMITH: Right.

14 MS FORBES: And then she left there on [REDACTED] 1980, which
15 was a couple of days before her 14th birthday, and she
16 went to another home.

17 So she tells us about Widowers' from paragraph 4,
18 and that, as far as she's aware, it's for motherless
19 children. She talks about there being about 30 children
20 at any one time living there, and they were split into
21 dormitories. There were nine or ten in hers, all girls.
22 She thinks her dad paid for her to be there, but she's
23 not sure.

24 She tells us at paragraph 5 about some of the staff
25 who she remembers being there. She mentions Ms [REDACTED] HRF

1 [HRF] [SNR], [RHJ] and [HRE]. And she says
2 that Ms [HRF] lived there and had her own bedroom,
3 sitting room and office. And they used to call the
4 carers 'aunties'.

5 She says at the end of paragraph 5:

6 'There wasn't a particular auntie who looked after
7 me.'

8 And she goes on:

9 'Some of the staff were just silly wee lassies and
10 it was like they had just left school. They didn't have
11 a clue how to deal with children, and none of them
12 probably had their own children. Some were a bit older
13 and had probably been there a long time. Some of the
14 staff had been brought up in the home as children in
15 care and were now working there.'

16 She says about her first memory at paragraph 7:

17 'I think my first memory of being in the Widowers'
18 Home is getting beaten with a shoe by one of the aunties
19 in the home. I don't remember how long I had been there
20 when this happened, I can't really remember much about
21 my time there before I was old enough to go to school.

22 'The dormitory was horrible because it was set up
23 like a jail and it wasn't very homely. We had covers
24 initially, then later on I got a duvet.'

25 And then she tells us that the staff used to get

1 them up in the morning.

2 Paragraph 9 she talks about food:

3 'The food was okay at the Widowers' Home and as far
4 as I am aware, we got enough food to eat. They used to
5 tell us that if we didn't finish the food that was on
6 our plates, we would get it served to us at our next
7 meal. I don't remember if they ever did do that, but
8 I was sick once because I forced myself to eat
9 something.

10 'We used to raid the cupboards when we were hungry,
11 but most of them were locked so we could only really get
12 anything that was left in the fridge. We got toast at
13 supper time before we went to bed, but if you were being
14 punished for doing something, you wouldn't get anything
15 and would get sent to your bed without it. I remember
16 being in the kitchen and seeing the cook, Mrs RHV,
17 flick her cigarette ash into the custard.'

18 She tells us then at paragraph 10 about clothing and
19 uniform, and she says that they had their own school
20 uniform, and a nice set of clothes to wear on Sunday,
21 their names were sewn into them, but most of the clothes
22 were hand-me-downs. She said also about shoes, that
23 they were secondhand shoes, you never got new ones. And
24 at paragraph 10, she says:

25 'We never got taken to the hairdresser. A barber

1 used to come into the home and cut your hair. We all
2 had the same haircut and it looked like they put a bowl
3 round your head and it was like a statement to the world
4 so everyone knew we were from a home.'

5 She talks about having to wait together in the queue
6 for your turn to have a bath and there being two baths
7 and one bathroom and there being no privacy. She said
8 there would be boys waiting there too. And she said
9 there would be two of them in the bath at the same time.

10 She talks about going to primary school at
11 paragraph 12, at Carrick Knowe, and she says:

12 'The only person I remember from school was
13 Miss RFQ [REDACTED], who was SNR [REDACTED] of the school, and she
14 was also on the committee for the Widowers' Home. At
15 school, she used to take me in her office and slap me on
16 the back of my legs, but I can't remember why. My legs
17 were red. I then went to Forrester High School and
18 I was bullied there by the other children because I was
19 a "homie", meaning I lived in a children's home. Back
20 at Widowers', none of the staff ever sat down and helped
21 me with my homework.'

22 She talks about being sent to the shops at
23 paragraph 13 to get messages, and other jobs in the home
24 would be peeling potatoes, polishing shoes and doing the
25 Brasso on the gate.

1 At paragraph 14, 'Whitney' says:

2 'The boys and girls used to play together with the
3 toys in the playroom. There was another sitting room
4 where the older girls and boys used to go to. I can't
5 remember if there were any books or magazines to read or
6 music to listen to. There was a large area outside at
7 the back of the home where we would play. We had little
8 to play with, and if we were bad, we got nothing. We
9 did get a little pocket money unless we were bad, in
10 which case we didn't get any. We were allowed to go out
11 to the shops nearby but sometimes if we bought sweets,
12 the staff would just take them off us when we went back
13 in.'

14 And she says at paragraph 15, she never went on any
15 trips or holidays when she was there, but she does
16 remember some of the children going to St Monans which
17 she says was another boarding school, but she didn't go.

18 At paragraph 16 she says she doesn't remember
19 celebrating her birthday but she says:

20 'Christmas was good because we used to have parties
21 and I got to see my family. I have only heard recently
22 that it was Hearts Football Club who paid for the
23 Christmas parties.'

24 She tells us about bed-wetting at paragraph 17:

25 'I was scared to go to the toilet through the night

1 because our toilet was quite far away in the basement
2 and you had to go through all the corridors. It was
3 creepy and scary. Near to us was a staff bathroom and
4 we weren't supposed to use it but I did. You used to
5 get into big trouble if you were caught using it and
6 they would shout at you. I didn't wet the bed but one
7 of the other girls [and she names her] who slept in the
8 bed next to me did and I used to have to help her change
9 her sheets. One time I was sick in my bed and I had to
10 clean it up myself. If you didn't change your sheets,
11 you would get battered by the staff.'

12 She also speaks of the Pound Day at paragraph 18
13 where people brought stuff in to raise funds for the
14 home.

15 She tells us at paragraph 19 that her dad must have
16 come to visit but she can't really remember, and after
17 a while he was stopped from coming because he wasn't
18 turning up. Her auntie and her cousins visited a few
19 times. She would get the bus and go home some weekends
20 and stay with her dad, but not very often. And she says
21 her dad more often than not was in the pub.

22 She talks about having social workers at
23 paragraph 21 and says she only saw them once every
24 six months when she had a review and never got a chance
25 to speak to them on her own. She was aware of people

1 coming in for committee meetings to the home, but they
2 never spoke to her as far as she remembers.

3 She had the most contact, she says, at paragraph 22,
4 with her brother, who she names, when she was in
5 Widowers', and she knew that he was her brother. And
6 she vaguely remembers her sister being there, but never
7 really had anything to do with her.

8 At paragraph 23, she says:

9 'I remember being taken out from under a table once
10 to go to the hospital but I have no idea why I went
11 there. I just remember waking up in the hospital.
12 Another time I was put in the sick bay and I was
13 isolated from everyone. There was a bathroom in there
14 and my meals were brought to me. I wasn't allowed out
15 of the sick bay and the staff came in to see me.
16 I think I may have had measles.

17 'There was one member of staff, zPZX, who
18 was nice. She worked two days at the home and then was
19 off for two days. She took us to her house and it was
20 good. She never hit us and she was one of the nice
21 members of staff.'

22 She talks about saying prayers before they ate their
23 meals and going to Sunday School and church every week.

24 At paragraph 26, she says:

25 'There was no one there for us through the night.

1 If you woke up through the night with a bad dream or
2 something, you just had to deal with it. There must
3 have been staff on duty but they must have been away in
4 another part of the building, nowhere near us. If you
5 were messing about, though, they would appear and give
6 you a beating.'

7 She then talks about abuse from paragraph 27:

8 'RHJ [REDACTED] used to hit me and she was the worst.
9 She was a big tall woman with long hair. I will never
10 forget her. Ms HRF [REDACTED] would hit me too and so did
11 almost all the staff, either with a leather belt, a blue
12 leather Scholl's sandal or with their hands. If you
13 were caught out of your bed at night you would get
14 leathered. You could try and put a book down your
15 pyjamas so it didn't hurt but if you got caught, you got
16 it worse. You could also try and pretend you were
17 sleeping so they wouldn't hit with you the shoe.

18 'I think I would have been between 6 and 7 years old
19 when I was put in the basement as punishment. It was
20 like a washroom but it wasn't really used and if you
21 were bad, you were locked in there in the dark. Quite
22 a few of us were put in there at the same time. We were
23 all scared and screaming our heads off. I can't
24 remember what we had done, or how long we were in there
25 for, but it seemed like forever. I was in there a few

1 times. I wasn't put in there on my own.

2 'Sometimes if we misbehaved in the home, Miss HRF
3 would go mental at us. She would shout at us and I was
4 really scared. Some of the staff would call us little
5 bastards and brats. One nighttime, I am not sure what
6 it was I had done, but I was taken into the sitting room
7 by Miss HRF and so was my friend [she names the
8 girl]. She made us both stand with our arms in the
9 crucifix position and holding a book in each hand. I am
10 not sure how long we were standing there but it seemed
11 like ages. Miss HRF eventually told to us go to our
12 beds. She often punished me in this way.

13 'Another time I think I had been caught smoking with
14 [and she names the same girl] and we were called into
15 Miss HRF's office, and to punish us she made us smoke
16 cigarette after cigarette until I felt ill. I wasn't
17 sick but I felt bad. This just happened the once.

18 'One Christmas, they told us that Santa wasn't
19 coming to us because we had been bad. I am not sure
20 what age I was, but I remember sitting there crying.
21 Normally at Christmas we would get all excited and when
22 we woke up in the morning, there would be a stocking on
23 our beds. When we woke up this year there was nothing.
24 I went down to the playroom where we were told that we
25 weren't getting anything that year. After dinner, we

1 did eventually get some presents. That was cruel. One
2 year I remember I got a puppet on a string, it was
3 Pinocchio.

4 'There was a time when I was in the bath where the
5 older ones washed. I was in the bath with my friend
6 [she names the same friend as before] when I was maybe
7 11 or 12 years old and a boy, RKE, came in. He
8 was maybe 7 to 8 years older than us. He told us that
9 he had been told by SNR to come in and wash us.
10 I just remember he touched me and put his fingers where
11 he shouldn't have. This continued for a while. But
12 I am sure [and she names the friend that she] reported
13 it to staff but nothing was ever done about it. It
14 continued for a while and then it stopped. Another time
15 RKE picked me up by the throat and called me
16 a little ferret. He hit me quite often. RKE
17 is dead now. He [redacted] who was in the home [she
18 names her] and I am still in contact with her
19 occasionally. The staff used to see him hitting us but
20 they didn't do anything about it. My brother [and she
21 names him] used to hit me too when I was at Widowers'.

22 'Staff just didn't really bother about us and to be
23 honest, we didn't see them very often. They were busy
24 doing other duties like the washing, ironing and
25 cleaning. There was no discipline.

1 'The number of children dwindled over the last
2 couple of years I was there until there were only two of
3 us left.

4 'Widowers' just wasn't a nice place and I hope it
5 doesn't happen to others. People should be aware of
6 what went on in there because they don't know the half
7 of it.

8 'My time in Widowers' improved as time went by. The
9 number of children depleted steadily towards the end of
10 my time there until ultimately there were only two of us
11 left. My brother and sister had been moved from
12 Widowers'.'

13 And she says that she thinks her sister was moved
14 out when she was about 14 and went to live with their
15 cousins. She's not sure what happened to her brother,
16 and eventually Widowers' closed and she was moved to
17 Polwarth's Children's Home when she was about 14. And
18 then she tells us about Lord and Lady Polwarth's
19 Children's Home, and we know she was admitted there on
20 [REDACTED] 1980, two days before her 14th birthday.

21 She tells us she was quite scared about moving
22 there, and her friend who had been at Widowers' came
23 with her. But she says it was far more homely. She
24 says the staff in general were okay there, apart from
25 one person in particular who she names and she talks

1 about physical and emotional abuse and says that he was
2 a bully.

3 She says that Lord and Lady Polwarth then shut down
4 and she was moved from there to Moredun Young People's
5 Unit and again she says she was probably around 16, and
6 we know from our records that this happened some time
7 around, but after, [REDACTED] 1982. So that seems about
8 right with her dates. But she was only there one or two
9 days [REDACTED] and never came back.

10 She goes on to talk about reporting of abuse at
11 paragraph 43 and says:

12 'When I was at Widowers', I might have said what was
13 going on to the social work workers [and she names them]
14 at the six-monthly reviews, but if anyone did tell them
15 anything, it was just shoved under the carpet. They
16 weren't interested. There was no one else in the home
17 that I could have told or that would have listened to
18 me.

19 'I know that my friend [and she names her] reported
20 to a member of staff what [REDACTED] was doing to us
21 in the bath at Widowers', and it did stop. Staff would
22 often see [REDACTED] hitting me in the home but he just got
23 away with it and they didn't do anything.

24 'The police came to see me some time after my
25 brother died in 1999.'

1 And she says she knows that her brother had been in
2 touch with the newspapers trying to report what had
3 happened to him at Widowers' but they didn't really want
4 to know. The police, she says, came to see her in maybe
5 2000 and she gave statements about her time in
6 Widowers', but she never heard any more about it. She
7 says she's told her GP some of what happened.

8 In relation to life after care from paragraph 47,
9 she says after **Secondary Institutions - to be published later** she never went
10 back into care. She stayed with friends or at her big
11 sister's. By then she was with a boy, who she'd met
12 when she was at Lord and Lady Polwarth's when she'd been
13 skiving school. They then had two children together,
14 a daughter and a son. She was with him for seven years
15 but there was then physical abuse and she ran away. And
16 she hasn't spoken to him for years.

17 In relation to impact, from paragraph 48 she says:

18 'What happened to me at Widowers' Home deprived me
19 of my childhood. There was no kind face that I could
20 ever turn to. There was no love and affection. The
21 staff just weren't interested. They didn't want to
22 listen to us.

23 'After I left care, I had a few jobs but as I got
24 older things started coming back to me in my head and
25 I just couldn't hope. I started taking days off here

1 and there, and then I decided I just couldn't do it.

2 This was probably before I was 22 years old.

3 'Because I had seen Mrs RHV the cook at Widowers'
4 flicking her ash in the custard and make us eat it,
5 I can't eat anything with custard in it now.

6 'I don't really trust anybody anymore. Sometimes
7 I don't want to go out and I stay in the house a lot.
8 I don't socialise very much. I don't really know why
9 that is. I used to get bullied but nothing scares me
10 now, and I have been hardened by what has happened to
11 me.'

12 And then she talks about being in trouble with the
13 police, and even being locked up for assaulting the
14 police.

15 At paragraph 52, she says:

16 'I reckon that if it hadn't been for my daughter,
17 I wouldn't be here today.'

18 She talks about getting involved with drugs after
19 her brother died. And she says it was her children that
20 ended up looking after her, and they were just young.

21 She says she had her first nervous breakdown at 22.
22 She says all the abuse from Widowers' kept coming back
23 into her head. Her children were taken into foster
24 care, and she says she was sectioned and put into
25 hospital for three months. But she got out, got her

1 children back quite quickly after that, and she got
2 help.

3 She says she had another breakdown and got sectioned
4 again in 2003 and she just couldn't cope after losing
5 a baby. She says at paragraph 55:

6 'When I was 30 years old, I was told by my big
7 brother [who she names] ...'

8 That her other brother, who she names had abused
9 her. And she says:

10 'I did remember one time when I woke up at Widowers'
11 during the night and I was in my brother's bed. I don't
12 know if anything happened then.'

13 She says later then she questioned that brother
14 about it one night when she was in the pub, and he
15 turned and walked away, and never denied it. She said
16 that said it all for her. But at paragraph 55, she
17 says:

18 'Two weeks later, he killed himself.'

19 And she blames herself for him doing it and she
20 found him, in his house. And she still has that image
21 in her head. That was in 1999 and she still doesn't
22 really know the truth. She's never really been the same
23 again since she found him. She says at paragraph 56:

24 'I don't sleep well. Maybe a couple of hours here
25 and a couple of hours there. Sometimes I only fall

1 asleep when I should really be getting up. I haven't
2 worked for years. I just feel mentally numb after
3 everything that I have been through. I am really
4 stressed and I have the scars on my head to prove it
5 through scratching.'

6 She says both her brothers are now dead and that she
7 was never close to her sister because they didn't grow
8 up together and she doesn't have anything to do with her
9 now and doesn't think of her as her sister. She tells
10 us, from paragraph 58, she's asked the doctor for
11 sleeping tablets but he won't give her them. She's on
12 antidepressants. At paragraph 59 she says:

13 'Things should be done to stop things from happening
14 to children in the future. They must listen to the
15 children who have suffered. There should be more set up
16 to help children when they leave care.'

17 She says that she did get copies of her social work
18 records, but she said that they were rubbish and not
19 even worth getting and she couldn't make any sense of
20 them.

21 She tells us at paragraph 61 that her brother, who
22 was in the Widowers' with her, who she names, she says:

23 'My brother told me before he died in 1999 that he
24 had had a sexual relationship with PZO, who was one
25 of the aunties at Widowers' Home, when we were actually

1 at Widowers'. He was only a minor at the time, probably
2 about 13 or 14 years of age. He also told me that the
3 staff were abusing him.'

4 'I can't understand why Widowers' let me home at the
5 weekends to stay with my dad. In the social work
6 records, it says that my dad was schizophrenic, but they
7 still allowed me home. My dad was scary, he talked
8 German and he always talked about the war and his time
9 in the concentration camp. He had a nervous breakdown
10 at one point and he was always drunk. He was an
11 aggressive drunk and would smash things up but he never
12 hit me. I did see him hit my brother.'

13 And then she's made, my Lady, the usual declaration
14 at paragraph 64 and she's signed her statement and it's
15 dated 25 April 2017.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much indeed.

17 Just to run through some names, and I may have
18 mentioned some of these before, but there are one or two
19 that are new, I think. We have Auntie RGS, Auntie
20 PZX, Auntie RHJ, Mr RGQ, Auntie PZO,
21 RKE, and Mrs RHV who featured again in these
22 statements. I think I have already mentioned: all these
23 people are people whose identities are protected. They
24 are not to be identified as mentioned in our evidence
25 outside this room. And again, the general request that

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