

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

RIN

Support person present: No.

1. My name is RIN. My surname at birth was RIN. I prefer to be known as RIN. My date of birth is 1971. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. We lived in Glasgow at the start of my life. I lived with my big brothers and my little brother and my mum and my dad. is five years younger than me, is two years older than me and is three to four years older. is not my dad's son and he was my half-brother. My mum had two kids to a previous partner, but they took her first baby away because she wasn't married and she didn't have a lot of support. Back in those days, that's what they did.
3. My mum was brought up by nuns. She was abandoned with all her siblings on the island of Tiree. She went into care from being a newborn baby and spent her childhood with the nuns. I don't know what religious order they were from, I just know she was placed in Edinburgh. My mum never spoke a lot about what went on. The only time she would speak about it was when she'd had a drink, which was quite a lot unfortunately when we were younger. It was harsh for her. She had to scrub floors with toothbrushes in the middle of the night. She was beaten with chains and stuff like that. My mum had it hard as a child.

4. My mum's name was [REDACTED] and my dad was [REDACTED]. My mother was as 'hard as nails'. She never showed any love to us, not to me and [REDACTED] anyway. [REDACTED] was very protective of me. [REDACTED] was her favourite, as was [REDACTED]. At Christmas they got toys, and me and [REDACTED] got nothing. My mother did struggle with life. She was an alcoholic and my father was beating her up. He was beating me and [REDACTED] but he wasn't beating [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. We were living in Possilpark in Glasgow, in a place for homeless people. Life at home was a nightmare. The beatings were absolutely terrible. My father was a very sick man. He wasn't mentally good at all. I'm not sure if there was any social work involvement at that time.
  
5. When we were in Glasgow, we went in and out of care. The first memory I have of being a young kid is [REDACTED] standing right beside me and I was sitting on this big, bench table. There were loads of kids around me. He was trying to get me to eat a red apple. My mother told me I was in a children's home when this happened. We went from living in the homeless place in Possilpark to [REDACTED] in Drumchapel, Glasgow. We were left alone on our own a lot in the flat. I was getting sexually abused so badly there. There were three sets of people who were abusing me. My granddad and my mum's friend [REDACTED]'s sons. One was called [REDACTED].
  
6. We eventually left Glasgow and moved up to Alness. My dad always blamed me for us having to leave. I think there was some kind of trouble but I can't remember what. My dad was in the Territorial Army (TA) and he used to go away training. We used to get beaten up when he came back, it was horrendous. Everybody knew what he was doing because it was a small village, and everybody knew everyone else. Somebody in Alness reported my mum and dad for leaving us home alone. There was a social worker involved with us then.
  
7. I said to my brother that our dad was going to end up killing one of us and it probably would have been me. My mother had taken me and my brother to social services in Alness with black eyes, bruises, and burst faces, quite a few times. Time and time again, the social workers would tell her she had no proof my dad had done that to

us. She got no help from them at all. We told them he wouldn't stop until he'd killed one of us and a social worker laughed it off. She was on duty that day, rather than being allocated to us.

8. After that, me and [REDACTED] ran away because we'd had enough and we couldn't take it any longer. I was aged seven or eight years old. We hitchhiked into Inverness and went to the train station. We were so small, we slept in the lockers that you left your luggage in. Then we jumped on the train. We hid under seats and got all the way to Glasgow. We got to [REDACTED]'s house in Drumchapel, we didn't have any money to pay for the taxi and the police came. [REDACTED] was horrified. They arrested us and put me and [REDACTED] in a cell together. I was petrified and crying because I knew that one or both of us would die. We told them why we were running away and how the beatings were too much. Nothing happened to my dad as a result of what he'd done to us. My dad got off with it time and time again, but he was away from the house for a while and he was in a jail at some point.

#### **Coulhill Children's Home, Alness**

9. After we ran away, me and my brother [REDACTED] went into care. The first care home I went to was in Alness. There were two in Alness, one was in Firhill and one was in Coulhill. I ended up in Coulhill Children's Home. I was aged eight. [REDACTED] went to Firhill [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED]

10. Coulhill Children's Home [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. My dad was threatening me and [REDACTED] when we were in the children's homes in Alness. He told us we'd better tell the staff that he didn't hit us, which I ended up obeying. He said he would kill my mum if I did. He said he'd start beating my mum up and he did and then he started beating my brother [REDACTED] up. What hurt me the most was my mum picked up the phone and called the police, but she wouldn't do that when he was beating me and [REDACTED]. I've had a rocky relationship with [REDACTED].

11. [REDACTED] went to Firhill after we'd said we wanted to stay together and not be split up. The social worker told us we were going to be staying in the same town, in Alness. I told them they may as well put me back into my mum and dad's house. They said we'd both be fine as there were staff who would watch over us. I didn't doubt them at all at the start and I thought it would be alright because the social worker said it would be. [REDACTED] I don't think my father liked us being in those homes anyway, because he couldn't tell lies to the other people in the village or in the pub.

### **Routine at Coulhill Children's Home**

#### *First day*

12. I was taken in a police car from Glasgow to Coulhill. It was late at night when I got there. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- 13.

[REDACTED]

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### **Leaving Coulhill Children's Home**

18. I wasn't in Coulhill for long and [REDACTED] wasn't in Firhill very long either. I kept on running away because I didn't want to be near to my father. He was threatening me and he was a nasty man. [REDACTED] was more of a dad to me than my real dad was. I think the reason for me being moved from Coulhill was because I kept running away

and, because I was so young, I was putting myself in danger. I can't remember for certain now. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

### **Kinmylies Assessment Centre, Kinmylies, Inverness**

19. The next place I went to was Kinmylies Assessment Centre. I was coming up to nine years old. I got taken by an emergency social worker called Sue and I was her first case. The assessment centre was near Craig Dunain hospital in Inverness. It was night-time when I first went there. No one explained to me why I was going there. I'd been to a few children's panels, especially after I'd been on the run or if I'd got in trouble when I was on the run and got charged by the police. I don't know if a panel decided I should go to Kinmylies. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Time in Foster care whilst in Kinmylies Assessment Centre**

52. I also went to foster parents while I was in Kinmylies. I can't remember what age I was but I was pre-teen. It was probably before I ran away for a year and lived on the streets in Aberdeen. I did end up getting brilliant foster parents, but they emigrated to Holland. They wanted me to go with them but my father refused. I stayed in touch with them when I was in care and after care. They kept horses and had a riding school. They were a lovely couple. They lived in [REDACTED] and they were the only people ever, in my whole life, to show me any love or care. I did them dirty. I stole all their glue and stole £20 from them. I would say sorry and she said I didn't need to apologise. It was horrible what I did. They were so good to me. I couldn't believe I had some peace. That's all I wanted.
53. I got to know local girls that were coming to go riding and they invited me to a party. There was one hundred percent proof rum and vodka. I ended up with alcohol poisoning. I woke up about four days later with a drip in my arm, in my bedroom at my foster parents' home. My foster mother's friend was a nurse and her husband was a doctor. My foster mother wanted to help me and she knew I was really messed up for a kid. I told her some details about my life and she was horrified, but I'd talk like it was nothing.

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*Physical assault by police in Inverness*

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

We went to the police headquarters in Inverness as that was the last place they'd look for us. We were messing around in a police Land Rover and I think they felt we were going to steal it. We never got it out of the car park. How can a nine year old and an eleven year old drive a car away?

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The police punched the living daylights out of us in the police station. I had a black eye and a burst lip and my face was quite a mess. I couldn't breathe. They stripped me down to my knickers and my vest. It was men that did this. They beat my brother up badly and stripped him down to his boxer shorts. Then they put on the cold air in the cell. They beat us so badly there was an investigation into what happened to us. It took two years. That's what my mum told me later. She said the officers were suspended and maybe one got sacked. No social worker ever told me personally what happened.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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We were going into shops and stealing cigarettes. We were being menaces. We ended up in the 'Crown' area of Inverness. We were snooping round people's gardens to look for places to hide out. Somebody stole some dry cleaning fluid and we started sniffing that, so we were all wasted. I don't think I was even ten years old. In someone's garden we found this nice, sheltered seating area in the shape of a pyramid. We found a buried, fancy camera and a box containing champagne bottles. We took the bottles and drank the alcohol. After the alcohol we went a bit crazy. One

of the boys went into a house and two big Rottweiler dogs chased us because the boy left a door open.

58. We ended up down at the islands in the River Ness, near to the castle. There was a girl in the group who was going up to people and asking them for money, we told her to stop it because the police would get called. She tried to steal an old woman's handbag. A lot of police arrived and surrounded us in the town centre. I was behind a building that is now McDonald's in Inverness, it was a building site at the time. I was climbing over the fence and an officer pushed me over. I landed on my arm and wrist. I kept saying to them that they'd hurt my wrist and they were dismissive of me. The officer dragged me by my clothes across the pavement. The girl who stole the lady's handbag tried to blame everything on me. I couldn't grass on her. I kept telling the police that I had done bad things, but I would never do that to somebody, especially not an old person. I admitted I would steal out of shops.

59. The police took us back to Kinmylies Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later



60. There was an emergency children's panel held about us in the police station in Inverness and my brother got sent to a List D school in the Edinburgh area. He was transported directly from the police station. That was one of the times that the two of us were split up. We were in a bad way after what the police officers did to us. I don't

know why they put my brother down there. Maybe they just wanted us out of their way, or out of the way of the police.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

I was aged around eleven or twelve. We went to Aberdeen and we lived on the streets for a year. We turned ourselves into punks, lived with punks, and buzzed glue all the time. We were missing children, we were featured in [REDACTED] and we were on [REDACTED] a few times.

62. There was a girl in Kinmylies called [REDACTED] who was originally from Aberdeen. Me and [REDACTED] were good friends with her. [REDACTED] knew a lot of the punk rockers from Aberdeen down at St George's Cross. She said she knew some people who'd take care of us and she told us where to go and what to do. Myself and [REDACTED] hitchhiked from Inverness to Aberdeen. It took us a couple of days.

63. We went to St George's Cross and asked for a guy called Alfie Lowe, who was a punk rocker. The people we spoke to were quite cagey at first, but we met up with him and he took us under his wing. He lived in squats like big old factory buildings with a group of other people. We were told that the police were looking for two young girls from Inverness and we needed to change our appearances. We shaved our heads and I had a Mohican. We were walking past police officers and they didn't see us. I was arrested twice by the police and gave [REDACTED]'s name, I was kept in the police station let out after six hours.

64. We were living in the squats, we went to a homeless shelter called the '147 Club' for showers and food, and to a homeless hostel on West North Street in Aberdeen. We used to sneak into the hostel because we got to know a lot of people who hung

around St George's Cross. They were buzzing glue and breaking into factories. We went with them and, because we were small, they could pop us in through small windows. Once, the police put dogs in and Alfie Lowe knocked out an Alsatian police dog. We took it with us. The dog wouldn't let anybody near me and protected me. We lived in the squat for quite a while. I can't remember most of it because I was out of my face on glue and waking up in some risky situations. Me and ██████ looked after one another and Alfie had someone with us who looked after us. I don't know how old Alfie was, but probably only in his twenties.

65. It came to an end because the others got us a house to stay in, after a traumatic event at the squat. There were two girls in a relationship and one of them was pregnant. I can't remember where the house was, but I lived with the two girls. I was very bad with the glue and shaking all the time. I think I took mini seizures. Alfie got really concerned about me and he grassed me into the CID (Criminal Investigation Department). It took the CID more than a day to get to me because of the Alsatian dog. A vet had to come and sedate it and take it away. Eventually the CID got me and they took me to the police station.
66. My father was going crazy. He wanted to know what I was doing because he had me down as a prostitute, but we survived because we knew all the homeless shelters. We'd go there for food and showers. It was nasty what the police did. I was held down by male police officers and they examined me down below to see if I was still a virgin. My granda abused me for years so of course I wasn't a virgin. It was at the police station and not at the hospital. I had that done to me more than once.
67. This time period is confusing for me. ██████ Secondary Institutions - to be published later ██████ to Aberdeen twice with ██████. One time, the police found me because no one wanted to see me dead and have that on their conscience. The other time, we were trying to steal clothes from a shop. We were off our faces on glue or gas again. We were giggling, bringing attention to ourselves, taking the stuff and having no respect for anyone. The shop owner phoned the police and we thought we could get out through the toilet window, but there was a big bar on the window. ██████ sat on

the toilet cistern and it burst; the whole thing shattered and flooded the room. We got arrested that time.

68. My social worker, Brian Dingwall, tried to get me into a trauma unit. Social work refused point blank at the time because it was very expensive and they didn't think I was worth it. I was trying to take my own life and self-harming.

### **Raddery School, Black Isle**

69. The next home I was put into was Raddery School on the Black Isle. I can't remember what age I was when I went to Raddery, or my first day, but I wasn't yet a teenager. Social work took me up there to visit before I moved there. I didn't want to go to Raddery, but it was either there or go to Perth and some girls' boarding school.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Leaving Raddery School**

82. I can't remember where I went to next after I left Raddery School.

### **Merton Hall, Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Galloway**

83. I was placed in Merton Hall at some stage and for the purpose of this statement I am assuming that's where I went next.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Kerelaw secure unit, Stevenston, Ayrshire**

111. I was in Kerelaw's secure unit twice. I went to Kerelaw and then Redheugh and then back into Kerelaw. I was in Kerelaw for quite a while. At one stage, the authorities flew me to Glasgow with a police officer in plain clothes and I was handcuffed. This was after I'd run away from Merton Hall again and they caught me somewhere. When they caught me, they put me into a home in Aberdeen for a couple of hours and I escaped out of the window. I ran away before being caught again. Then they took me to Kerelaw.
112. I hated it in the secure unit. You weren't allowed to have your own shoelaces and every door was locked. It was properly locked down. Kerelaw was a jail for children. It's where I met a boy who became my partner and the father of my two oldest kids. His name is [REDACTED] and he was known as [REDACTED]. We were also in Redheugh together at some stage. [REDACTED] was already in Kerelaw when I went there. There were two or three units and every unit was different. All of them were part of the secure unit and every unit was a further step to freedom.
113. There were guys called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on the staff at Kerelaw. [REDACTED] was one of the best guys I've ever met in the whole system. He was brilliant. He was always happy and he'd go out of his way to make you laugh. He was the only one there that was good. He was an older guy. He was also a fair guy and would say, "If you take the piss with me, we're going to fall out and then you're not going to like me very much." That was because he was going to have to do certain things to me that I wouldn't like. He wasn't one for restraining people.

## **Routine at Kerelaw secure unit**

### *First day*

114. When you first go into Kerelaw, they put you in a shower and give you head lice lotion. You have to put it on all your pubic hair and under your armpits. Sometimes, they'd get you to shave your pubic hair. They said they didn't want any diseases in there. I told them I wasn't doing that. They told me if I didn't do it myself, they would do it. There was no way they were going to come into the shower to do that to me.
115. They said if I had to shave, they'd have to watch me because I'd self-harmed. I refused to shave and I took the lotion to use myself instead. It was either shave and a man would be there to supervise or put the lotion on. It stung like hell, but they didn't care about that. They didn't care if it was a male member of staff on duty, if they had to give you anything, they'd just come in and give it to you.

### *Other residents in the secure unit*

116. I met a girl called ██████ in the secure unit. She'd been adopted. She was being groomed and prostituted. She was a lovely lassie. Her pimp used to come up to Kerelaw and up to the window. He was trying to get her out and was threatening the staff. Me and ██████ were the only girls in the secure unit. I was in there with lifers. Some people had killed other people. I was just a run-away. I can see now why the authorities did it as I could have ended up losing my life at some point. There weren't many children in the secure unit. It was just me, ██████, ██████, and couple of other boys.

### *Sleeping arrangements*

117. I lived in a tiny room with a wooden box as my bed. There was a very thin mattress on it, with a thin pillow and thin duvet. There was a wooden table and a wooden box as a stool. There were bars on the window. There was a buzzer next to my door and a very small window in my door. I was locked in my room all the time. The

environment was very controlled. There were certain times to get up and certain times for school, for meals, and for leisure.

#### *Washing and bathing*

118. There was privacy in the showers depending on who was on staff that day. EUM never once walked in on me. He would chap the door and tell me he had something to give to me and he was going to open the door and put it in the room. He was alright like that, but other ones weren't. You weren't even allowed your own shampoo in there. Staff had to give it to you.
119. You weren't allowed to have a brush or deodorant. You weren't allowed to have a toothbrush in your room and you could only get it at controlled times. Even your clothes were put away in a cupboard.

#### *Schooling*

120. EUM was telling me if I did things right, I'd get allowed out to go to the open school, on the premises. EUM was my key worker for a while. I did things right and I got out to the open school for a while. It ended up that I could come and go when I wanted. I was the only one that could come and go from secure as they trusted me. There was a girl in the school called [REDACTED]. I got to know her very well and we ended up good mates. I'm still friends with her to this day. She was a day pupil.
121. I stayed in the secure unit but I'd have my lunch down at the open school. The school was full of boys and a lot of the boys would show off in front of the lassies. They liked to be hands-on and play fighting and that was annoying. Things were going well for me and I was hoping to get out of Kerelaw.

#### *Healthcare*

122. I never self-harmed in Kerelaw, you got searched and it was hard to smuggle anything in there to use. I suppose I could have got something in there to use, but I

didn't want to. I kept my head down and tried to keep a low profile and do what I was told, so I could get out. I hated the place and I had to be well behaved to get out.

123. There was no one speaking to me about puberty, having periods, or sex education. If I had my period, I would ask one of the female staff for something. There were only two female staff working in my unit so I had to ask them when they were on shift, or you'd go without. There was no sex education at all. That was the case in all the homes I was in.
124. I think I was on medication, as I didn't have issues with bed wetting or I'd grown out of it by then.

#### *Leisure*

125. When I wasn't in school, there were no activities for us to do in the secure unit. You were in there as punishment and you weren't getting leisure activities. You were lucky if you could get pen and paper.

#### *Running away*

126. I ran away again from Kerelaw. There was a disco held in the open school. I was allowed to go and my friend [REDACTED] was coming in for it. A couple of days before the disco I asked her to bring in some vodka and she refused because I would get into trouble. I told her I was going to run away and I would hitch a ride to Aberdeen, but she didn't like the sound of that and wanted me to go to her house in Ardrossan. [REDACTED] asked her mum if I could go to her house and her mum agreed. I was there for three months.
127. [REDACTED] did bring in some vodka to the disco. While the disco was on, I ran a mile down the road. I went to [REDACTED]'s house on the bus as she'd given me money for the bus fare. Her mum and her sister were in the house and [REDACTED] told me what stop to get off at. The family looked after me, all through Christmas as well.

128. [REDACTED] was still going to school and the staff knew I was at her house. They sent the police a couple of times, but they never even searched it. After three months I got caught. I'm not sure where they took me or if it was back to Kerelaw. There were one or two children's panels but I can't remember a lot of panels when I was in Kerelaw.

#### *Discipline*

129. The staff gave you points depending on your behaviour and they could reward you if you were good. They had this system in the secure unit, not in the open school. I don't know if there was a punishment system in place because I wasn't behaving badly there. You were locked up so what else could they do to you? They just didn't let you play pool.
130. You might have to go to your bedroom at 4:00pm, as soon as you were out of school. I was put to my room early a few times. The staff left you in there, in another part of the building by yourself, and you were locked up until the next day. They'd come to your room to give you your dinner when they felt like it, but it was usually cold by the time they got it up to your room.

#### *Restraint*

131. Restraint was another feature at Kerelaw, but there wasn't a lot of it there. There was a woman on staff who was okay. She didn't hurt any of the kids and neither did [REDACTED]. The other ones did. There was this one called [REDACTED] and he'd walk past you and kick you or he'd call you 'Tramp', depending on his mood. He could be very grumpy. [REDACTED] was a big guy and he stank of drink all the time. We'd try to get out of his way.
132. The chairs were made with foam and they were useless. It was so you couldn't hurt yourself or the staff. I jumped over them to get away from [REDACTED]. The secure unit wasn't too bad. [REDACTED] used to take me for my phone call every week so I could phone my mum. He gave me a roll-up to smoke in the staff section, in the middle of the unit. It was best to just get your head down and do your time in there.

## **Abuse at Kerelaw secure unit**

### *Art teacher – George - and another male teacher*

133. There was an art teacher called George who went around with his male friend who was also a teacher. I can't remember his name. I hated George. The second man grabbed you by your pressure points, for no reason. He had me by the hair once as well. They always grabbed your shoulder, it really hurt and it could hurt for days. They put residents in a headlock. There's not much you can do when somebody's got hold of you by pressure points or two men have got you in a headlock. They might grab your arm and hold it up your back. There'd be no reason for it. It would happen in the school. They both make me think of a young boy with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) who can't keep his hands off people and who gets some sort of kick out of seeing other people in pain.
  
134. George knew I had an alcohol problem. He wanted to draw me in his art class and I refused, but he was persistent. He said if he could draw me, he'd bring me some vodka. He brought in vodka shots for me and I let him draw me. It was because of George that I ran away. He wanted me to go to his house. The guy was a creep and a paedophile. His friend was the same. Many a time he grabbed at me and it was more like groping. There wasn't anyone I could tell about what George was doing to me. It wouldn't have been worth it, when I was getting out of the secure unit during the day to go to school and I was aiming towards leaving Kerelaw. George would corner me. He'd try to grope me and try to get me to go in the cupboard in the classroom with him. If I'd given him the chance; he would have had intercourse with me. He and his friend would have done it in a heartbeat. His friend was doing the same as what George was doing. He also had wandering hands. They both never should have been working with kids.
  
135. It's not normal that a teacher drags a child into the boys' toilets and kicks the door shut. Not one of the staff came to check that child was alright even though the child was screaming for him to get off them. That's what happened to me with George. I

was threatened that, if I said anything when I got back to the secure unit, I wouldn't get back to the open school.

136. I wasn't aware of anybody else going to George's own house. I knew what he was doing with other people but it was never done in front of me. He would grab and be hands-on with other people, with a lot of the boys. George told me nobody would bother if I turned up dead and we were the dregs of society.
137. George used to constantly draw pictures of me. I told EUM that I didn't like George. I said George was always trying to draw me and he had asked me to go to his house, so that he could draw me naked. EUM started laughing and told me not to talk rubbish. EUM finally caught on when I was in the unit and he could smell vodka on me. At first, he thought it was my friend who was bringing it in and I denied it. Then EUM worked out it was George who was bringing it in. With hindsight, I think EUM knew there was something wrong about George and his friend. There were so many staff about the school, somebody must have picked up on his behaviour but turned a blind eye. Maybe they were worried about their jobs.

#### **Leaving Kerelaw secure unit for the first time**

138. I went to Redheugh after the first time I was in Kerelaw secure unit. The children's panel asked me to choose between Redheugh and a girls' school in Perth. That's when I chose to go to Redheugh.

#### **Redheugh Adolescent Unit, Kilbirnie, Ayrshire**

139. Redheugh was a nightmare for me. That place should have been shut down a long time ago. The staff didn't care what you did in there. When I first went to Redheugh everything was alright and I liked it. I did a lot of activities and workshops. I can't remember what the activities were, but I enjoyed them and they happened through the summer months. The school was okay and I told myself it was an alright place

for me. There were a lot of kids in Redheugh and I couldn't remember half of the ones that were there, just the ones that I was close to. There was [REDACTED] and a girl called [REDACTED].

## **Routine at Redheugh Adolescent Unit**

### *Schooling*

140. I was going back to Kerelaw open school but I tried to avoid the art class. I hid in the boys' toilets until someone grassed me up. The staff would drag me to the art class. I tried to avoid George.

### *Bed wetting*

141. I shared a room with another lassie. She didn't like it because I wet the bed. That had been an issue all the way through my time in care. I'd got medicine to stop me wetting the bed and I was always asking for the medicine I needed. The staff never got it for me. Nothing was done about it and the staff didn't care. I had to strip my bed and take it down to get laundered. I was frustrated with myself because I was wetting the bed all the time.

### *Inspections*

142. There was an inspection in Redheugh. The staff knew that the inspectors were coming. We were forewarned not to tell them what the place was really like and what went on in there. You weren't allowed to talk about how the staff behaved with you. The staff put on a show for them.
143. There were young men who came to the back gate at Redheugh, who I will speak about later in my statement. I was warned that, if I told the inspectors about the young men who came to the back gate, they would come down hard on me. I was to tell the inspectors that we had a strict routine and staff were very attentive to our

needs. They were worried about me talking to inspectors. I heard one of the staff said wouldn't it be easier if they took me out when the inspectors were there. The woman who took me to the hospital was there, with other staff members. I will talk about going to hospital when I was at Redheugh later in this statement.

144. At the time, I was more interested to find out who the people were and why they were coming into Redheugh. I thought maybe they were coming in for me and I was wondering what I'd done wrong. I was thinking it was maybe because of my drinking. I didn't trust the staff. I saw a woman with a clipboard in the corridor where the bedrooms were. I was told not to go up there but I did anyway. The staff would normally run after me to drag me back but they didn't that day. I asked her what she was doing and a staff member told me to go downstairs and stop being rude. Me and the other residents were speaking about who these people were because nobody knew who they were. Nobody asked to speak to me when they did come.

#### *Reviews and children's panels*

145. The staff in Redheugh knew what was going on anyway. I felt like there wasn't any point telling anyone my side of the story as nothing would change. I never came across a member of staff who would do something for me and put across my point of view. As soon as an issue would go to management, you'd never hear about it again. The staff just wanted to have an easy shift and they didn't want to put in any hard work for anyone.
146. At children's panels, as a teenager, it was always about the bad things you were doing. The woman who took the notes at the panels, I knew for many years. She was at a lot of my panels. She was alright. I was asked what my point of view was at a panel once or twice. I just had my social worker at panels to represent me; I never had a legal representative. I had Brian Dingwall as my social worker for many years early on and several emergency social workers when I ran away and they came to get me. The other social worker I remember being involved with me was Bill Forbes, through my time in Kerelaw and Redheugh.

### *Family contact*

147. In that summer period at Redheugh, my cousin drowned [REDACTED]. My cousins were a lot older than me and my brothers. The man on the staff who told me about my cousin dying thought it would be funny to tell me in front of all the kids at the dinner table. He said he had a bit of bad news for me and I asked him if he wanted to go somewhere so he could speak to me. He replied, "No, I can tell you here. Your cousin died yesterday." I asked what happened to my cousin and the staff member didn't know other than he'd died and I should phone my auntie. He wouldn't let me phone her for about three hours. The way the staff member did it was so callous, with no privacy. After that I went to stay at my auntie's house in Dumbarton for the funeral. I met my mum and dad there as well.
148. I was close to my cousins before we moved away from Glasgow. I had some phone contact with my auntie and a visit to her house before my cousin died. My auntie came to Redheugh, to see what it was like. My auntie wanted me to go and stay with her for a weekend to take me out for a bit and spend time with my cousins. I managed to get an overnight at my auntie's house, rather than a weekend.

### *Running away*

149. I met [REDACTED] in Redheugh and we were good mates. We decided that we'd run away. I don't know why, it was just something we decided to do.

### **Abuse at Redheugh Adolescent Unit**

150. There was a girl in Redheugh, I can't remember her name, she was from the same place where my auntie and cousins stayed in Dumbarton and she knew them. Everything was going okay at Redheugh until she introduced me to a couple of the 'boys' who lived in the village. I say 'boys', but they were aged between 23 and 27. There was a little country road that ran past the back gate and they came to hang around. They were mods who lived in the village and rode Lambretta scooters. They

were older guys who wanted to hang about with younger kids. Looking back, it wasn't right. These boys started giving us fags and we thought that was cool. They let us smoke in Redheugh.

*Abusive behaviour by other children*

151. With the girls, there was always someone who had to be 'top dog'. I got bullied by a lot of the girls in Redheugh. I ended up fighting with a lot of them. I wanted them to leave me alone. The bullying among the girls was really to do with the boys who were hanging about at the back gates. I was the new girl and I was taking away attention from them. The lassie I shared a room with had fist fights with me about my bedwetting because she called me names, and said I smelled and made the room stink. I told the staff to get me out of that room or move her out but they said there was no other room. I had no choice so I had to stay. Things started to go downhill after that. The other girls started to gang up on me because I wet the bed. It made me feel ashamed.
152. It wasn't just bullying, they were ganging up on me and beating me up. I told the staff and not once did I get taken to hospital. The staff didn't bother about what the other girls were doing to me. The staff were around when I was being beaten up and they just butted in when they thought I'd had enough, but by then I was seeing stars. There were five lassies laying into me and kicking me in the head when I was on the ground. I could hold my own and I had to learn to fight. When I got up from the floor, I swore to every one of them that I'd get my own back, and I did.
153. We used to get clothing grants every three months and I bought a long cardigan and leggings for myself. I hadn't even worn them and I saw this girl wearing my clothes. I told her to get my clothes off. That was the kind of thing the other girls were doing to me all the time. She wouldn't take my clothes off so I said I'd rip them off her. I battered her. I wasn't proud of it. She went to hospital and she was unresponsive. I was charged with GBH (inflicting grievous bodily harm) and I think I went to a children's panel, but I don't know. You can keep pushing someone but I'd taken a lot of bullying by that stage. The staff didn't do a thing about it and told me to sort it out

myself. The police and the children's panel weren't interested in the lead up to this incident happening. I'd done it so I was a bad person, and that was it.

*Abuse by local men*

154. I was drawn away from the girls in Redheugh and towards this group of guys who came to the back gate. They were being my friends. It started off with them giving me fags. They had their ulterior motives. These boys were coming to the gate and giving us bottles of rum. I can't stand the smell of it now.
155. When it came to a Friday or Saturday morning, I would get my pocket money. I would disappear and no one would see me until Monday or Tuesday. I stayed with those guys and they fed me alcohol and passed me from one place to another, until they were finished with me. I'd show up at Redheugh drunk or I'd turn up through the night. I ended up in a relationship with a 26 year old guy, who was known as [REDACTED]. Those guys groomed the hell out of me. I was passed about from guy to guy. The staff knew exactly what was going on and none of them did anything to stop it happening. I don't think the staff ever reported me missing. I used to stay at [REDACTED]'s house on some weekends. His mother was an alcoholic. I was so drunk that I would have blackouts. I'd wake up in strange beds, in strange houses with different guys.
156. I was going missing from Redheugh every weekend. Sometimes I'd go back very drunk and stinking of sex because I'd been put through so many guys in that one weekend. The staff wouldn't say anything when I went back after the weekend, other than that I smelled and I was drunk. I'd be told to go upstairs to get a shower or a bath and get into my pyjamas and that was it. The staff didn't care where I'd been and they didn't ask. They knew exactly where I was because I told them I'd been at [REDACTED]; I told them what was happening and I was blazing drunk. I gave up telling them because what was the point? Even if I didn't want to go with [REDACTED], one of the guys would come to get me. One of the guys sneaked into my unit to get me out. It was easier to go because they wouldn't go away and they'd be there the whole time.

157. One of the female staff clicked on that I wasn't on any contraceptive. This woman thought she had worked out my periods. When I did get my period, I was having serious bleeding to the extent I was nearly haemorrhaging. Thinking about what was happening to me, I'm not surprised. This female staff member tried to tell me that I was pregnant. I told her I wasn't pregnant; I was bleeding because it was my period. She was insistent that I was miscarrying and that woman put me in a hospital.
158. I was on a maternity ward where women were losing their babies and I wasn't even pregnant. I told her I didn't want to go to the hospital and she said if I didn't, they'd get the police to take me. I knew if the police took me, I'd end up in the cells. I never saw my social worker, Bill Forbes. I can't remember talking to Bill in that time about anything like that. Bill didn't know half the stuff that was going on.
159. The staff in the hospital asked me if I thought I was pregnant and I told them I wasn't. It was the female staff member who was telling them I was pregnant. They wanted to know why she was saying that and I told them to ask her themselves. I was told when I went in there that I wasn't to say anything to the hospital staff about what had happened to me and for them to ask the woman from Redheugh instead. I read in my medical file not long ago that I'd said I was pregnant, and that infuriated me as I'd never said that.
160. This woman told me I had to claim it was one of the boys in the school that I was seeing and he got me pregnant. She told me she didn't want to hear me saying I was going with [REDACTED] and he was giving me alcohol because that didn't happen. I can't remember who this woman was, but she had white hair. She was maybe in her fifties, but I've no idea of her age. She might have been one of the senior staff as she was calling all the shots, telling me what I had to say and what happened and what didn't happen.
161. This went on for months, to the extent that I ended up an alcoholic, and the staff did nothing. The woman said no one had come to visit me, nobody had given me anything, I was buying the alcohol myself or I was getting other people to buy it for

me and drinking it. I was doing all this to myself. Looking back, she was just trying to prevent herself from being in trouble and saving her own job.

162. Later, I was going blazing drunk to Barlinnie Prison because [REDACTED] was in jail and he wanted to see me. His mother and her partner were taking me in the car down the motorway. They couldn't get me into the jail because the prison officers said I was just a child. I think [REDACTED] had me written down as his girlfriend. He wrote to me from Barlinnie and staff in Redheugh gave me the letters. When I ended up back in Kerelaw again, all my letters had vanished. I suspected that would happen because that female staff member told me these things didn't happen. When all this was happening, I was a teenager of maybe fourteen.

### **Leaving Redheugh Adolescent Unit**

163. I was withdrawing from alcohol because I was constantly drinking at weekends and through the week when I was in Redheugh. The staff knew I was drinking and I didn't hide it from them. The staff would come down to the back gate now and then, just to see if I was still there. They knew all the guys were there. Never once did any of the staff tell me to get in the building, tell the guys to leave, or report them to the police.
164. The staff decided they had to do something with me, because I was either going to get pregnant or something was going to happen to me. I would vomit every morning and I was shaking with alcohol withdrawals. The staff didn't want that on their conscience, so they decided to send me back to Kerelaw. They couldn't have put me into secure without the children's panel agreeing to it but there was no panel hearing unless they had one without me. If there was a panel and they said I was going back in there I would have fought back against that.
165. One day I did go into the open school at Kerelaw. There were many days there was no chance I would go to school and there were some days I would go. I was asked to go to the secure unit to ring the doorbell as there was a message or something like

that. When I got there, it was a trick, and they dragged me in the secure unit and that was me back in secure care.

### **Kerelaw Secure Unit (second stay)**

#### *First days*

166. Nothing was different about Kerelaw from the first time I was in there. On the first day, they checked me in and put me in the shower. I started vomiting and shaking and peeing myself. I was withdrawing from alcohol. I was seeing things and I was in a bad state. This happened in front of other kids and staff didn't want them seeing me like that, so they put me in a cell.
167. There were cells they could lock you into if you kicked off. They can turn down the heating or switch it off or on, whatever they wanted. I was left in there, in my own excrement and urine. They didn't get me any medical attention and got no one out to see me. Staff tried to get me to drink water but every time I drank water, I threw it up. They didn't give a damn about me.
168. Some of my memories of this are quite fuzzy. One of the staff, I don't know who, said to someone else, "Its alright she won't die and, if she does, what will be will be." That's stuck with me. I'd never been in such a state and they left me to go cold turkey. I could have died and they'd be responsible.
169. When I told my mother about it later, she never knew about it. She spoke to my social worker, Bill Forbes. He told her it didn't happen and I was making it up, so she didn't believe it had happened. My social worker called me a liar, as he would have been told about something as extreme as that. If they didn't know about it, then to social work it didn't happen. In fact, Bill didn't know I was put in a cell and left to rot. The staff in Kerelaw had to do something with me. They couldn't get a doctor to me as too many questions were going to be asked about why I was addicted to alcohol and left without being supervised.

170. I was in the cell for two to three days. After that, Kerelaw was back to the way it always was. I wasn't allowed out or allowed to attend the open school this time because I'd run away. I was in Kerelaw secure until I left when I was sixteen, to go back home to my mum and dad's.

#### *Family contact*

171. My mum and dad were told they could come down for a weekend. They said my mum and dad could stay, with my wee brother, in one of the wings that wasn't being used anymore. My mum, my wee brother, and my father came to Kerelaw but my father never came to the unit to see me. He couldn't get himself out of his bed.

172. I didn't have any other visits with my family in Kerelaw, or from my brother [REDACTED]. I wasn't allowed any contact with him. We were kept apart for a long time and I don't know why, because he wasn't a bad influence over me. The staff didn't do what was good for the child, it was always what was good for the staff and what suited them.

#### *Staff*

173. When I went back to Kerelaw the second time, the art teacher George was still there. He didn't have any contact with me because he worked in the open school and I wasn't allowed in there. He didn't work in the secure unit.

#### **Leaving Kerelaw Secure Unit for the second time**

174. Altogether, I was in Kerelaw for two years, from the age of fourteen to sixteen, with a summer at Redheugh in between. When it came to my sixteenth birthday, I left Kerelaw and went back home. I never looked back to Kerelaw. I was glad to see the end of it. Bill Forbes asked me if I wanted to stay in Kerelaw secure unit voluntarily until I was eighteen. I thought that was a crazy question to ask. I told him I was getting out of there as quickly as possible and not staying a day longer than I had to.

## Reporting abuse while in care

175. I never reported what happened to me in care to the police, when I was in care. I couldn't because of the way the police had treated me in the past in Inverness. Seconda

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Inst There was no point in reporting abuse as it got you nowhere.

## Life after being in care

176. I went back to living with my mum and dad. When I left Kerelaw secure unit, [REDACTED] was put into the open section. I fell pregnant while [REDACTED] was still in Kerelaw. He was still fifteen and I was just sixteen. [REDACTED] came to live with me in my mum and dad's house when he left care and turned sixteen. There's only a couple of weeks between our birthdays. When [REDACTED] moved in with us, which I was horrified and taken aback by, my mum gave me the bedroom in the house on the ground floor. Me and [REDACTED] were allowed to sleep in the same bed. My mum and dad were still together at this point, but in the middle of splitting up.
177. [REDACTED] started drinking a lot of alcohol, from the minute he got up in the morning to the minute he went to bed. He started beating me up, I was carrying twins and I lost one. I was in and out of hospital a lot. There was a lot of domestic violence. I got a house not long before the baby was due and I moved in there. He ended up setting my house on fire. It was a bad relationship and I did my best to get away from him, but my dad was of the opinion that I had to stay with him because of the baby.
178. At the start, both me and [REDACTED] wanted our own family more than anything. We wanted something that we could love and look after and do things the right way. I got offered a job in riding stables in Newmarket because I wanted to be a jockey and I would have started off being a stable girl. I turned it down to stay and start a family. I wanted to prove a point to everybody that I could do it, and I was going to do it differently to how my mum and dad did it with us. Everything went wrong. I had [REDACTED] when I was seventeen and he was only three months old when I fell

pregnant with my second child. [REDACTED] then left me for a woman who was ten years older.

179. I struggled for a long time. I noticed when [REDACTED] got to two years old that there was something not quite right with him. I could see to all his physical needs but not his emotional needs. I found the doctors to be very dismissive of me and my concerns, and they told me my instincts were all wrong given the way I was brought up. I gave up with the doctors after a while and went to social services. I thought I could trust them but the system totally let my son down. I intend to give a second, separate statement to the Inquiry about my experience of my son [REDACTED] being in care.
180. I was hankering for that family unit so badly but I didn't make the best of choices with partners. My next partner was very controlling. He took money from me and left me struggling. By the time I was twenty years old, I had four children under the age of five. In the middle of that, [REDACTED] was coming down to my house. He was smashing windows, coming into my house, and vandalising mine and my partner's cars. It was stress after stress.
181. I'd reconnected with my brother [REDACTED] when we both got out of care. Me and my brother were very close and we'd go to one another's houses every day. [REDACTED] started drinking alcohol Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] that continued with him for all his life. It's what ultimately killed him. He did a lot of bad things through drinking. His wife put up with a lot from him.
182. I had to get away from Alness to give my own children a chance. First thing in the morning, I would hear a bang to my door and there would be people walking into my house demanding I put the kettle on and make them a brew. By 9:00am there would be six or seven people in my house when I had four young children to get ready in the morning. The friends that I have now, we all meet up in the town and have lunch, they don't come into my family unit. My kids have to come first and I learned that the hard way.

183. After I left Alness, I was in bad relationships and in and out of Women's Aid. It wasn't good for my kids. I moved to Inverness and I got a house in the middle of winter. The snow was really deep. I had a baby in a buggy and the two oldest ones, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. By this time [REDACTED] was in foster care and on a journey to come home.
184. I met a man who locked himself in my house with me and my kids inside, for twelve days. He beat me every day, raped me, beat my kids, and nearly killed me. It took years to go to court and he did eventually get sentenced in court. There is so much trauma involved in this event that I don't want to go into detail about it. The trauma is with my kids to this day.
185. I left my kids with my mum to give them a normal routine and so I could sort out my housing. I was getting help from police and Women's Aid. My mother and her boyfriend, who was my ex partner's father, lied to social services. I lost my children and everything over it. I didn't get my kids back. Life got worse for me after that and I tried to take my own life a few times. Everything that was precious to me was taken away. There are things in my social work records that meant nobody was listening to me. Nobody cared. The only social worker that cared about me was Brian Dingwall at the start.
186. My older kids went to live with their dad and I never got to see them for five years. For a long time, I was drinking alcohol when I was aged between 23 and 25. I drank spirits solidly for three months. One day I went to court for non-payment of my TV licence. I was steaming drunk. I swore at the judge and I got locked up. I was having blackouts, I wasn't eating, and I was very thin. I was in a lot of pain sleeping because I had no muscle mass. A doctor came to my house to give me morphine shots because I was in so much pain. My friend, [REDACTED], was the only one who sat me down and asked if I was going to keep doing this. He knew what had happened to me and that it was hard, but he asked me what good was I doing my kids. A light bulb came on and I got off the drink and got myself a job.

187. Around this time, I had been stalked by the little brother of a girl my brother was seeing. The boy was aged about sixteen and he jumped me when I was pregnant and beat me up. I had to go into Women's Aid to get away from him.
188. I was working in a restaurant. That was where I met [REDACTED] and he is now my husband. We've been married for 28 years. Within eight weeks of meeting we got married. He is the sweetest, nicest guy and I'd never met anyone like him. He used to ask me why I was flinching when he sat next to me. We got on so well and it's been a brilliant relationship.
189. I did go to college around the end of 2002 to do nursing. I was straight with the tutor and explained I could hardly write my own name without spelling it wrong. She said that was fine. I went out to a care home on work placement. I was seeing things that weren't right and it got closed down later. The management let me go because I wouldn't allow things to be hidden. I felt there was a lot of neglect of older people.
190. After I left the nursing course, I was thinking I was going to be a loser all my life but I liked working on nails, so I started doing acrylic nails. I paid thousands of pounds to do nail courses and went to college to get NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications). I got qualified and started doing people's nails, charging £10 to get the practice that I needed. I thrived at it. I used the spell checker on my phone and laptop and that's how I learned to spell. This was around 2004 and 2005.
191. I spoke to a man at a business enterprise organisation about running a business. It took a few sessions with him, but I got the gist of it. He was so proud of me when I put together a business plan and he was very complimentary about it. I applied to the organisation for a business grant. I was given a cheque for £3500 and put my own money into it, and I fitted out a new salon. I did so much research about the shop and the area, but nothing was ever said about the brothel upstairs from the salon. I lost clients because of the brothel and the anti-social activity. The shop ran for a year and eventually closed around 2008. I was trying to keep myself positive and started a nail business from a market and did that for three or four years.

192. Then, my mother became poorly. I hadn't spoken to her for many years but I thought it was sad that my younger kids didn't know their grandma. My mum never showed me love and I never got a cuddle or a kiss from her. I was so different with my kids. I was so affectionate with them and I am to this day. I gave my mum a chance for the sake of my children. She ended up moving to live with me and my family, and I looked after her until she died. She was so different with my kids. She wanted to see my brothers before she died but they didn't come until she died. No-one came to her funeral except me and my kids.

### **Impact**

193. Many years later my daughter was being groomed by local gangs and I went to the local authority for help. I didn't get help for six months, until they actually believed me. They took me to court to try to take my children from me. Social work was using my past against me when it wasn't about me. They were accusing me of neglect and telling me what had happened to me in the past. In the end, it split my family up. My daughters had to move out of my home with my husband. I don't know if that's all based on what was contained in my own care records.

194. What happened with my daughter put a massive strain on my relationship with my husband. We don't fight or argue. We talk about everything and we have a good understanding of each other. If I had money, I would divorce him so he could get married to someone else but he doesn't want to do that. It's not a romantic relationship now, sometimes he'll give me a kiss on the cheek. The romantic side of our relationship ended five years ago, after social work put so much stress on us. I went to them for help and it was made out to be my fault.

195. I don't let my past get to me because, if I did, I wouldn't get anywhere. I speak about it but I don't let my past eat up any more of my time. My life is in the here and now. It's already taken a lot away from me. It does get to be too much sometimes and I keep an eye on myself. I've learned to do this through the years. I have my younger kids and other things to keep me going. A lot of bad things happened to me and

there's a lot of bad people in the care system. There's a lot of people who didn't care and all they cared about was keeping their job. Kids come out of the care system more traumatised than when they went in and they come out with more abuse from the care system.

196. Social work always tell me I do not trust them because of what happened to my son [REDACTED]. They throw my past into my face. I have the same conversation with every social worker I meet. I tell them to be upfront and honest with me but they have me down as aggressive, and I'm not. When it comes to my babies and when I know that I'm right, I will push my point across. Social workers can't visit my current home by themselves. It's just nonsense.
197. I had to teach myself to read. I had to work because I had kids and I was getting turned down for jobs because I didn't have the qualifications for it.
198. My own physical health is bad now. I have COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). There are four stages of COPD and just now I can't get rid of CO<sub>2</sub> gases from my system, leading to high blood pressure. I don't know how much longer I have to live. I want to put everything into my kids. I've made it clear to them and to my husband that I don't want to die in England, I want to be in Scotland.
199. Being in care has had an impact on the relationships I have been in. When you're in care they say you're not allowed to have relationships but the staff don't care, so they let you go ahead and do it anyway. There was no guidance from the adult staff like you would have from a parent. If I had proper guidance in care about relationships, things might have been a lot different for me, and for a lot of kids. Staff were too busy trying to cover up their own wrongdoing. It was all about them and not about the kids.
200. Social workers were telling me I wasn't a good mum. When my son [REDACTED] was born, Agnes Gillespie said she wanted me to put my kids up for adoption. I said I didn't want to. She put me down and said my kids would be mentally scarred. My

boys are mentally scarred because social work supported my ex-partner's father in keeping custody of them.

201. I think about my time in care a lot. The scars [REDACTED] are a constant reminder and I wear [REDACTED] all the time. There are some triggers. I mainly think that I'm horrified that I did the things I have described in my statement, and that I was allowed to do these things. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

[REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later I often think about what happens now and it makes me wonder if anything has changed in the care system.

202. I went back to Kerelaw one time as an adult. My former partner, [REDACTED], is from Kilwinning and that's where his family lived. When I was in the area, I went up to somewhere I could see the Kerelaw building. I didn't go in the building. I felt sick when I saw the Kerelaw building because there is a lot more to what George and his friend did to me than I have included in this statement. I'm aware that George is in jail now.

203. I told my friend [REDACTED], from Kerelaw, about George some time back. She said I'd got it wrong. She was disbelieving of me and said George didn't do those things to me. She didn't believe me because she thought he'd been prosecuted about what he did to boys, and not girls. Then a while back she phoned me again and apologised for not believing me and what she'd said about George.

### **Treatment/support**

204. I've not had support or counselling about the experiences I've detailed in my statement. I have tried but the counselling I've been offered is not appropriate for me. For me to find the right fit in counselling would require a lot of money and I don't have that.

## **Reporting of Abuse**

205. I have not reported my abuse in care since leaving care, I couldn't face another court case. The court case I was a witness in broke me. I was in the witness box for days and I have PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) because of it. I felt harassed by the police and they wouldn't leave me alone for three years, asking me to give a statement.

## **Compensation**

206. I've never applied for or received compensation for what happened to me in care. I applied for Criminal Injuries Compensation after the court case about the incident in Inverness. A man phoned me to get a statement and was asking me to describe being raped. That broke me. I was in a bad way after that and I would not apply for compensation for that reason.

## **Records**

207. I've asked social services a few times for my records because of what happened to my son [REDACTED], but they refused to give them to me and I've never seen my own records. I can ask for them now, through the Freedom of Information Act. For many years, I thought there was no point in opening up memories of events from me being a child and I was best to leave it be. Then I wanted to know. I also know the things social workers put in their files are not always accurate. I found that out the hard way when [REDACTED] died after being in care.
208. When the English local authority wanted to take my daughter into foster care, social services in Scotland refused to give my records to the court in England. The authorities in England had to get a court order for a social worker to go to Scotland to read my files, and the Scottish authorities would decide what records they could look at. The social worker told me she had never read anything so horrific in her life. She

said I definitely needed my files for the court case and the details about what happened to [REDACTED].

209. The English social worker told me that they had cut up a lot of my records and put them in my children's files, so they'll be hard to trace. She couldn't believe what she was reading in the records and that a system has allowed them to do that. She said there were a lot of opinions written in them, and second hand opinions. The social work in Scotland is back tracking and covering up everything that happened with my son [REDACTED]. A social worker called Karen Morrison told me she'd be happy for me to look at my file, but I'd have to have a counsellor with me while I was doing it. Whatever is written there is bad, but that was probably to do with my mum and dad. My kids went to live with their dad but he put them in care because his partner was beating them up. I then got my kids back.
210. There is a lawyer in Glasgow who is pulling my records for me. He's told me that he's managed to get hold of some records that he's quite happy with. He's having a problem with getting my files from Glasgow City Council and Highland Council. I am confused about what he is doing for me.

### **Lessons to be learned**

211. Staff should listen to the kids in care. I don't know how much restraining is used now, but it needs to be looked at. I understand that staff need to protect themselves but a lot needs to change in the system. Back then staff didn't speak to me. I had a key worker but I felt they were there just to get clothes and make appointments for me. They should offer guidance to the kids. There was none of that when I was in care.
212. Staff should not judge kids but believe what they tell the staff. They should not hide the fact that kids have been groomed and stop just trying to protect their own jobs. When I was in Redheugh the grooming was covered up and the staff were dictating to me what to say to other people.

213. There should be vetting of staff. There are staff who sexually abuse kids in the care system and they should be looked at more closely. If there are complaints going in, they should be looked at and not just dismissed by their managers. I can imagine a lot of kids have been overlooked. Especially in Kerelaw, a lot of staff knew what was going on with George and his friend.
214. A lot of staff in Kerelaw turned a blind eye to what George and the other man were doing and that's how they got away with it for so long. The staff should be obliged to report a lot of what goes on, but then they're treated like whistleblowers and their own management turns on them.
215. When I think back to how the staff treated me in Kerelaw, I could have died in that cell when I was withdrawing from alcohol. They should have taken me to hospital and got me medical attention, but they chose not to. When I was in Redheugh and I was taken into hospital because the staff member thought I was miscarrying, it was obvious to me that a child of my age being put round so many men to have sex with them was going to have very heavy periods. I was having blackouts because of the alcohol I was drinking. When things like that happen, the staff should be on to it and have an obligation on them to report it right away. That was one of the worst times of my life.

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

216. I hope that by giving a statement to the Inquiry, I can help change the care system to protect other children now and in the future from going through things I went through. I hope that kids now don't come out of care and have to live with the impact right into their twenties and longer, carry the scars into their fifties and sixties, and have poor health issues from substance misuse.

**Other information**

217. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed RIN .....

Dated 10.2.2026 .....