

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GCE [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GCE [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1972. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I have four siblings. My older sibling was born a boy and was named [REDACTED]. He has changed gender and is now called [REDACTED]. She is one year older than me. I have three other younger sisters. Their names are [REDACTED], who was born in 1978; [REDACTED], who was born in 1981 or '82; and [REDACTED], who was born in 1983. [REDACTED]'s full name is [REDACTED] but she's known as [REDACTED].
3. My father's name is [REDACTED]. He was a violent man. My mother was terrified of him. She met him when she was only fourteen and he was twenty-two. My mum's mother died when she was only twelve, so she was quite vulnerable. After I did counselling, I sat my mum down and explained to her that the fact my father had gone near her at that age, made him a paedophile and there was no reason to have expected him to change. He should actually have been charged for having a relationship with my mother, and that's before he moved on to any of his other victims. I don't have a single friend from childhood who didn't witness him standing in my house wearing only his underpants and touching himself. His behaviour became normal to us.
4. I went into Bellshill Children's Home in 1984, but before that I spent time in foster care and also stayed with my mum in Women's Aid homes because of my

father's violence. My father always found us in the Women's Aid places and we would then return to live with him.

5. I went into foster care following an incident one night when I was six years old. We were living in [REDACTED] in Holytown at the time. My father broke into our house, got us all out of our beds, and frog-marched us in our bare feet to a burn where he put us into graves which he had dug for us. The burn ran through the town and was about a mile from our house. My grave is still there. It's less than a mile from my own house now. My father had a weapon, but I can't remember what it was. I'm sure I've blocked it out. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I were all taken to the burn. [REDACTED] was just a baby in my mother's arms. My other sisters weren't yet born.
6. That is one of my first memories as a child, being sat in a hole which had been dug for me. We were there for about an hour while he played with our heads. He was telling us that if he couldn't have us, nobody could. The police then came. The neighbours would have heard what was going on and called them. There must have been about a hundred police there. I remember seeing them high up on a hill behind him and then they all closed in. The records I've managed to get a hold of say that this happened in 1980, but that's wrong. It was [REDACTED] 1978.
7. My father is a psychopath. [REDACTED] is the only one of us he didn't actually physically, sexually or mentally abuse.
8. I've blocked lots of things out from my childhood. I'm hoping to get my full social work file to go through it with my psychologist.

Foster carers, Wishaw

9. I was put into foster care with [REDACTED] after the incident at the burn. I was there for a few months. I don't remember the names of the foster carers. The house is

in Wishaw, near [REDACTED] Wishaw General Hospital.
There's a school [REDACTED].

10. The foster carers had kids of their own and had adopted a wee boy who was disabled. He basically sat in a buggy all day and was ignored. The man went out to work during the day and lay on the couch at night drinking purple cans of Tennent's Super Lager. The foster mother was a bit timid. She didn't stand up to him. I've tried to block out most of what happened there.

Physical abuse by the male foster carer

11. I can remember [REDACTED] being battered really badly by the man. [REDACTED] had forgotten about it until I mentioned it to her. That really upset her. I told her that I wasn't the only one who was assaulted in that house. [REDACTED] was assaulted for not doing something they wanted him to do, but for me it was always about food. [REDACTED] was a whiny child. He had a high-pitched voice and could set off those key-finder keyrings just by talking. We used to call him [REDACTED] after the cartoon character. That was the man's reason for picking on [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was gay and it was obvious; he was effeminate as a child. The man called him a wee poof and all sorts of things like that. He was only seven at the time. It wasn't a very nice place to be. I have really tried to block out most of what happened there.
12. I've always been a really fussy person with food. I couldn't eat porridge and still can't. The man used to try to feed me porridge every day. I think it was really just an excuse to assault me. It wasn't as if from one day to the next I was going to start liking it. He used to pick me up by my face and try to force the spoon into my mouth. He cut my lip and broke my tooth on one occasion. His wife didn't try to intervene. She didn't intervene when he hit his own kids either.
13. I wasn't allowed anything else if I didn't eat the porridge. He would say that I was getting "Fuck all" until I ate it. I still wouldn't eat it. I just went without food. I could go three days without food. He used to leave it sitting out with a big skin

on it. Getting hit became a daily thing for me because of how I was with food. I wouldn't eat tapioca or anything like that either, and he seemed to always pick that food group – food like wallpaper paste. That was the kind of games he played with me. I really think it was just an excuse to skelp me.

Living at home, [REDACTED], Holytown

14. I was returned to my mum because the foster carer had been assaulting me. My father was in jail for a few months when [REDACTED] and I first went back, and then he returned to live with us. I think he had been jailed because he had been carrying a weapon when he marched us to the burn. I don't think it was for anything he did to us.

15. All three of us were back with my mum. I'm not sure how long we stayed there. Sometimes we were in foster care or with Women's Aid. My father used to find us in the Women's Aid places. I remember being in hotels in Motherwell and Strathaven and he found us there. He used to climb up drainpipes and come in our bedroom windows and terrorise us. You'd be lying sleeping and all of a sudden you'd feel him grabbing a hold of your hand with one hand and covering your mouth with the other, which would stop you breathing. He would whisper in your ear "It's okay, it's only me". But, it wasn't okay at all. Your heart would speed up and then slow down and then you would pass out. He made us pass out in our beds repeatedly. It happened hundreds of times. We were conditioned into believing that that was normal life. I don't actually know what he did to us when we passed out. It was actually safer for him to be living with us. At least you knew then where he was, and when he was coming. As an adult, I now have a problem with the fact that he always found us. None of my mum's siblings or anyone else in the family knew where we were; only the social workers knew.

Foster care – Mr and Mrs [REDACTED], Shotts

16. We got put into foster care because my mum had to go into hospital to get sterilised. I don't remember exactly when that was. I was placed there with [REDACTED]. She was only about two or three at the time. The couple had a son and daughter. I don't think we were ever told the foster carers' first names. We were only there for a few weeks.
17. The couple had a big back garden where they kept geese, ducks and bantams. There were hundreds of them. The [REDACTED]'s daughter was jealous of [REDACTED], so she locked her outside with all the birds and they pecked the life out of her. She was terrified. The girl was about fourteen or fifteen. I battered her for doing it. I don't remember her name. Mrs [REDACTED] was livid with her daughter. I ran away with [REDACTED] the first chance I got because I was worried that she wouldn't be safe when I was at school. I don't remember anything else happening at the [REDACTED].

Living at home, [REDACTED], Bellshill

18. I went back to live with my mum and dad after the [REDACTED], and was then assaulted by my father. The paperwork I've got shows that my father was done with a schedule one offence on [REDACTED] 1984. I think that was the assault on me. He grabbed hold of me by the hair and back of my trousers, and then ran me into a room where he hit me off a stone wall. When I came to, his trousers were undone and he had a belt in his hand which he had been using to lash me. I was covered in blisters from my knees to my neck. My mum had been putting a washing out and ran upstairs to help me when she heard the sound of the belt. She put a towel soaked in freezing cold water on me, and I passed out again with the shock of the cold.
19. The next thing I remember is being in the police station. My mum had taken me there. The police physically removed me from my mother and took me into a room with about twelve men, where they put me on a bed like a hospital trolley and faced me to the wall. Two of the policemen then pulled my dress up over

my head, pulled my underwear down and took photos. After that, I was taken to Bellshill Children's Home. I'm sure my father also got done for a schedule one offence on [REDACTED]. He whacked his face off the latch on the side of a door. He nearly lost her eye. He had to wear an eye patch for eighteen months.

20. My younger siblings went into foster care and [REDACTED] then joined me in Bellshill. He had been in another children's home before that.

21. My mum was never called to court when we were taken away from her. She didn't even know that she was entitled to a lawyer. I really don't think that's right. She was never made aware of her rights. My mum thought that she had put me under a 'place of safety' order for six weeks only to keep me safe. She thought she could take me out of the home at any point. She didn't know there was a court order stopping her from doing that.

Bellshill Children's Home, Bellshill

22. I was in the home for three or four years. The head of the home was Edward Stanton. He lived in a flat attached to the home. He was a paedophile and was convicted years later. So, as a result of being assaulted by my father, I was taken off my mother and put into a home which was run by a paedophile.

23. When I first went in, I was under a 'place of safety' order to keep me safe from my dad. It felt like I was being held prisoner as they wouldn't let me out of the home. They eventually relented and let me go out running with some other kids.

24. My key parent was Kathleen Irvine. I am still in contact with her now. She's like a second mum to me. I was treated fairly well by most of the staff. Kathleen and her husband John took me home with them for the weekend once when I wasn't well. I had a high temperature and didn't feel safe in the home. I wouldn't let Kathleen leave me and I kept saying that I didn't feel safe. Because I was in such a state about it, John then demanded that the home got the terms of the

insurance changed so that they could take me home with them. I'm also still in contact with another member of staff called Tom Japp.

Routine

25. I shared a room with three other girls to start with. It was a big room with metal-framed single beds. I then got my own room when I was about thirteen.
26. We had a shower room, toilet block and bathroom with a bath. I liked running. I used to go out for a jog in the morning and was first in the shower every morning. Nobody supervised any of that. You didn't have to shower every day. Some of the kids didn't.
27. Every kid got pocket money and you could also get extra recreational money if you were a good child. I was a good child. I did everything I was supposed to. I got recreational money to go to the pictures, swimming and horse-riding. I could walk into that office and get money for anything I wanted; apparently I was one of Ed's favourites. I also got money for clothing whenever I wanted. We wore our own clothes. Our initials were sewn into every item of clothing we owned.
28. We were split into three different groups. [REDACTED] was in the same group as me. We had the same key worker. There were about eighteen people to a group. There were two groups of school-age kids and also a teenage unit in the home. The teenage unit was separate from us. We weren't really allowed in it. They could do what they wanted in that group. You ate with your own group. We got breakfast, lunch and dinner in the home. We walked back from school to the home at lunchtime.
29. Kathy and Erica were the two cooks. I would eat anything Kathy made, but Erica was a lousy cook. I used to do sports on a Friday and had a dance class after school. After having done three or four hours of sport, I would go home to a small salad, a few chips and some cold meat which Erica had made for me. That was no use to me. I used to throw it onto the floor. I never really ate

anything she made. She used to make things like oxtails and spaghetti bolognese covered in parmesan. They used to order takeaway food for me. I suffered from malnutrition and anaemia in the home and the doctor, whose name was Dr McKibben, told them that they had to give me more food. He said that they had been given a thoroughbred in perfect condition and that they had caused me health problems through not feeding me right. I used to get steak three times a week at home, but I didn't see a steak for two years in there. I didn't have any such health issues when I was living with my mum, so it was decided that I was to go home to my mum's to be fed as she had obviously been feeding me right. Tom Japp used to take me to my mum's for food. He used to eat there too. He and my mum are still friends.

30. The social services actually defrauded the social security department so that my mum could get money to feed me. I have provided the Inquiry with a letter showing that they wrote to the social security department saying that I went into the home and came back out again in 1987. That wasn't true. I went in there in 1984. According to the letter, I got out the home before I went in.

31. You didn't have to follow any religion in the home. If you wanted to go to mass with the Catholic kids, there was no problem with that.

32. People got punished for doing things like dogging school or running away. I tended not to get punished. I went to school and did what they wanted. One of the punishments was to clean the corridors with a toothbrush. I never had to do that.

33. I don't think anybody ever came into the home to inspect the place. I don't remember anything like that happening.

Birthdays and Christmas

34. We got about £25 on our birthday and £50 at Christmas, but I got a lot more. Kathleen and John spent a lot of money on me, and my family also bought me things. I was well-treated materialistically. It was normal care I didn't receive.

Group meetings

35. Group meetings were held to deal with problems. For example, you could call a group meeting if something belonging to you went missing. Anyone could call a group meeting, but you couldn't have one without a staff member present. I called a meeting once because there was a smell in my room and I couldn't work out where it was coming from. It turned out that a girl in the room had been hiding her pants under her pillow. That was discussed in front of the whole group. It was humiliating for her. I can't understand why adults allowed that to happen.
36. If a kid was out of line, the staff would call a group meeting and use the rest of us to bully them. It was ritual bullying. [REDACTED] was bullied for cutting himself, running away, and being gay. [REDACTED] started cutting his arms [REDACTED] in the home.
37. There was a book for group meetings. Minutes were taken by a staff member, and everybody's names were written in the book. The staff member on duty for the group attended the meeting. They had to sit there and take part like the rest of us. Ed Stanton was in charge of the home and the rest of the staff did what they were told. It was his idea to hold group meetings. Kathleen had to attend the meetings if she was on duty. That's just the way it was. It was almost like a children's panel for the kids in the house. You'd get to sit there and slag off someone for whatever they had done and it would all get written in the book. You were allowed to tear into people. It was mob justice.

38. Sometimes, they'd pull us all into a group meeting and tell us that we weren't getting any recreational money because of what other kids had done. At one point, there were three kids who were doing dirty protests and wrecking their room. We were told that we weren't getting any money because they had caused so much damage and it had to be paid for. Those kids were dogging school, running away and 'behaving inappropriately'. That's the term they used when they told us that they were writing in poo on the walls. They were 'behaving inappropriately', so we had to be 'inappropriate' to them. We were used to make those weans jump into line. Every child in that home was manipulated into bullying those weans.
39. I have a real problem with this now. Those kids had managed to take their metal beds and wardrobes apart. The wardrobes were like kindling and the beds were reduced to metal spars. They didn't have a hacksaw, hammer or any kind of tool, yet they managed to do that. They also shredded their pillows and mattresses. You would wake up to the smell of poo and pure chaos. The staff would be going mental and then they'd pull those kids into a room with a pile of other kids who had just lost their privileges. Obviously there was a major problem with those weans, but nobody tried to find out what was going on. It was a massive cover-up. Instead of bringing in a psychologist, doctor or somebody who could help them to understand what was going on, they used peer pressure to break those weans. They punished every other kid to make sure those kids were punished. We were used to bully and intimidate those kids into submission, into behaving.
40. All of the staff would have known what those three kids were being punished for. The staff who had been at the meetings passed the information on as part of the handover when the shifts changed. At times, the staff would just shut the big fire doors and go away for a cuppa while those three weans were getting bullied senseless. The staff made it worse for them and so did we. I'm surprised none of those weans killed themselves.

Abuse by Edward Stanton

41. My key worker was responsible for providing me with all my toiletries at first. Ed Stanton changed that after a while so that we all had to go to him when we needed any toiletries, including sanitary towels. It didn't make sense. All of a sudden he needed to know when we had our periods. One day when I went to get sanitary towels from him in his flat, he had a video camera set up in the hall recording me asking for them. I went to Kathleen and went mental about it. The same thing happened to other girls that day and they reported it too. We all reported it to the female staff member who was on duty that day. We were told that they would deal with it and that we weren't to mention it again. If it had been a kid who had done that, we would've had a big meeting about it. But, because it was the head of the home, it wasn't to be spoken about.
42. Ed Stanton was a big fat man. He was like a beach ball with arms and legs. When I went into that home, he all of a sudden became dead sporty and liked to go swimming with us three or four times a week. He took me and about eight others. I remember the [REDACTED] sisters, wee [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] being there. There were about four [REDACTED] girls in the home. I think [REDACTED]'s second name was [REDACTED]. We were taken to the Dolan Baths in East Kilbride, the Magnum Centre in Irvine, and to Wishaw and Bellshill. Ed Stanton never swam, even although he always got changed into his swimming trunks. He just leched over us.
43. He would stand me at the side of the pool and bend me over in front of him as if he was teaching me to dive. He did it with all of us, but he paid particular attention to teaching me. He did it every time we went swimming. He used to stand behind you and rub himself. Back then, you didn't realise what he was doing. I don't know why the other people in the swimming baths didn't do anything. There were lifeguards and other members of the public there. They must have thought he was a dad or something.

44. He used to take wee [REDACTED] into the baby pool and sit him on his knee. I now understand that there was something wrong there. [REDACTED] would be sat there frozen, with a look of pure shock on his face. He did that with wee [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as well. She was around seven or eight.
45. I was really close to wee [REDACTED]. He used to love being cuddled. He'd lie up and cuddle with me and watch TV. He was a few years younger than me. He was like a wee brother. He was really close to my mum too. He used to sit on my mum's knee and get a cuddle when she came to visit me at the home on a Thursday. His mum had abandoned him in a lift and nobody visited him. He was one of the kids who had absolutely nobody. [REDACTED] started to draw away from everybody. There came a point when you tried to touch him, he would flinch and jump through the roof. It wasn't right. My mum said to Kathleen and other staff members that she was really worried about [REDACTED]'s behaviour. His personality had totally changed. I think she suggested that he should see a psychologist. I now believe that the ones who had nobody, were the ones who Ed Stanton abused the most.
46. Ed Stanton also took us walks round Lanark Loch and Strathclyde Park. He'd take his favourites everywhere. He took us camping one time. I can't remember if there were any other staff there. The problem I have with that now is that I think he gassed us. He had a calor gas burner to heat his hot chocolate and I think he left it on in a communal room which led to all the bedrooms in the tent. We were all asleep by eight thirty. It doesn't make sense: a load of kids from a children's home were asleep at that time, instead of being up all night carrying on. Also, when we got up the next day we all had a sore head and just didn't feel right. He was trying to blame the food we had eaten, but I think he did something to us. As an adult, I have been in a house where's there been carbon monoxide poisoning because of a dodgy fire. You get a sore head, feel nauseous and there's a taste in your mouth. I had the same kind of sore head the day after we camped out. All of those kids came back from camping not well, and we all had the same symptoms. We were all vomiting on the way home. Nobody ever questioned Ed Stanton's explanation about why were all ill.

47. On one occasion in his office, he had me on his leg and was using it to dry-hump me. He said he was comforting me. A member of staff walked in and just walked back out and closed the door. It was one of the office staff. I'm not sure if it was Kathy Mulgrew or Betty. I don't remember Betty's surname.
48. I didn't give evidence at Ed Stanton's trial and I don't know anybody who did. I think he just groomed me. I think I'm quite lucky because I had my mum who came to visit me and I had a good relationship with her. From what I can remember, I don't think he actually put a hand on me apart from when we went camping. I think something happened to all of us that night. I have flashbacks.
49. Wee [REDACTED] and another wee boy called [REDACTED] stick out in my head. [REDACTED] had nobody either. He was one of the kids who did the dirty protest. He was severely bullied in the home by the other kids. Those two kids were the most vulnerable in the home. I had a parent who came and visited me, and I had Kathleen and Paul. I had people I could talk to. Those kids had nobody.

Abuse by other staff

50. [REDACTED] had a relationship with a member of staff called GCP [REDACTED] actually believes it was a relationship and that this person is not a paedophile. [REDACTED] was fourteen or fifteen and GCP [REDACTED] was in his twenties. I've said to [REDACTED] that this man was paid to look after her, not sleep with her but she still believes that it was a normal home and that she was in a normal relationship. It's up to [REDACTED] if she wants to tell people what went on with him. I witnessed some things. He used to take her and other kids to football matches. I saw them holding hands and kissing while walking to the matches. Looking back, I'm astounded that he got away with this. It's not as if it was done secretly. It was in plain sight. I don't know if GCP [REDACTED] did anything to any of the other kids. I imagine [REDACTED] wouldn't have been the only one. As far as I'm concerned, that GCP [REDACTED] was a paedophile. Obviously I knew what he was, so I kept out his road. I didn't have any kind of relationship with him at all. [REDACTED] and the other kids' heads were warped into

thinking it was a normal relationship. Living in that home warped all of our heads. I don't think anybody would have come out of there and gone on to a normal relationship. We were all set up to fail.

School

51. I was at Bellshill Academy. I didn't pose any problems at school. I got on with my work and got along with my teachers. I enjoyed being away from the home. I was one of the kids who made the home look good on paper. Because of that, I got to go horse-riding, swimming and do pretty much most things I wanted. They used to throw money at me. If I walked in and said to Ed give me a tenner, I'd get it. That was because I made them look good on paper. Other kids had problems getting money out of the petty cash.

52. The system worked for me. I knew how to play it. I did what they wanted to keep them off my back. All the other weans couldn't figure it out as quickly as I did, and they weren't as lucky as me. I was getting As and Bs at school. When I went into the home, I had missed that much school they told me I wouldn't get an 'O' Grade. I actually got to sit an extra 'O' Grade. I realised that you couldn't beat the system, so I learned to play the system. Those kids who were doing the dirty protests didn't learn like I did. They fought the system. If you do that, the system breaks you.

Contact with parents

53. My mum got access with me every Thursday. She came to the home as I wouldn't go to her house. When I started to go to her house to be fed, I used to phone first to make sure my father wasn't there.

54. Social workers were trying to make me go for access with my father when I was in the home and I kept telling them that, under no circumstances, did I want to be in the same room with that man. Whenever I said that, they would tell me that it was the same as a tooth being taken out by the dentist. They would say

"When a tooth is removed, the place where it was removed from closes over, and it's the same when we take a child from a family. You will fit back in, it will just take time to make the space". That's what they used to say to me when I was saying things like I would end up in the jail because I would kill him.

55. I used to tell them that if they sent me home, I would be held prisoner and abused for the full weekend. I continually said that I didn't want access and I didn't have any until the social work department changed things. In one of the social work reports it says 'GCE [REDACTED]'s access will go ahead as planned". They planned it, not me. I was then forced to go for access. It can be seen from other social work reports that I was very clear that I didn't want access.

Contact with siblings

56. My mum used to bring my siblings to see me at the home sometimes. [REDACTED] was with a foster carer called GCF [REDACTED] at one point. She was brought to the home to visit one Thursday and my mum noticed her buttocks were covered in pin-point bruising. Social services said it was an allergic reaction to antibiotics, but my mum didn't believe them and took [REDACTED] to her own doctor, whose name is Dr Ferguson. He said that she had been pushed down with force onto a hard pile carpet. GCF [REDACTED] admitted at a children's panel that she had assaulted [REDACTED]. She was then removed from her care.

Contact with other people outside the home

57. At one point I saw a child psychologist called Gordon Trahar. He was the head of Child Psychology in the North Lanarkshire area. I didn't really speak to him or build any kind of relationship with him, so social services just let it go. They never tried to get me another psychologist who I could maybe have worked with. It was the same for [REDACTED]. He was cutting his arms and they didn't try to get him any alternative help.

Contact with social services

58. My social worker was [KTJ]. He was in Bellshill social work department. I didn't have a good relationship with him. He was going to hit me at a children's panel one time because he was trying to make me do something I didn't want to do. I think he was trying to make me have access with my dad. He never went back to another panel after that. There are things that make me think that [KTJ] [KTJ] and my father were in league with each other.
59. [KTJ] was my social worker the whole time I was in the home. He used to drive us to places. His driving was harem-scarem. He would go into the fast lane in the motorway and cross his legs as if he was sitting in a meeting. I nearly died about ten times in his car. He was also []'s worker. In fact, he was the worker for umpteen kids in that home. That's another thing that bothers me. Normally in a kids' home, two siblings might have the same social worker, but most other kids will have a different one. I don't know why he had so many kids in that home.
60. There was social work involvement in my family before I went into care, but I wasn't allowed to speak to them. My father threatened me; he would have killed me if I had spoken to them. He made it clear that we were not allowed to speak to those services. He took me back about twenty times to the grave he had dug for me and said to me "It's fucking dug, and I'll use it". The fear of that, and being woken up in the night by him was always with me. It's only when I got a hold of some of my records that I realised he had been up at the social work offices speaking to them. He had told them how manipulative we were. He tried to justify his behaviour and give excuses. According to him, he assaulted me because I manipulated him into it. He told the social workers a load of rubbish. The fact of the matter is that he beat me because he is of lower than average intelligence and that's how he deals with things. I wasn't allowed to speak to social services because of him, yet he was talking to them and feeding them his

story. He had control of the whole situation. He had control of them and everybody else.

61. My dad also told the social work department stories about my mum. Apparently my mum was drunk one time and was found on top of a massive shed. I think my dad and [KTJ] made that up. My mum has such a terrible fear of heights so I know that's not true. That's one of the things that makes me think my dad and [KTJ] were in league together. [KTJ] also got my mum into his office and got her to say that she was the disciplinarian in the family. She did discipline us, but she did so in a correct manner, not by giving us a battering.

62. My father used to stand in front of social workers with just his pants on touching himself, and nobody said a single word to him. None of the adults ever told him to go and put trousers on. Apparently that was just normal behaviour for him. He could do whatever he wanted. I'm still not sure if he was part of a paedophile ring with social workers. Social workers used to take me out of school and strip-search me. It happened at least six times. I think it happened the first time when I came out of foster care in Wishaw. After that, it was done every so often. [KTJ] [KTJ] was the person responsible for it. He was the one who told the social workers to do it. To pull a kid out of school and remove their clothing is grooming to me. Sometimes it happened in the social work offices and other times they took me to Motherwell precinct under the guise that they were taking me out to buy a school uniform or something. I was allowed to keep my underwear on sometimes. They didn't ask me any questions; they just looked at me. I don't remember if any photographs were taken. There were never any medical professionals or parents there. There was always just one female social worker and me. I remember one of them was called Megan. I don't know her surname. I was in my teens when it happened, apart from that first time when I was only six or seven. By the time I was in my teens, I was getting stripped for PE at school with the rest of the kids so they could just have asked the school if I had bruises, if that's what they were looking for. The thing is my father had no access to me at those times so I don't know what they were checking for. They didn't explain it all.

63. My mum didn't have a clue that that had been going on until a few months ago. She was really upset when she found out. I now know that it also happened to [REDACTED], my wee sisters, and to other kids who were under social services. [REDACTED] remembers being in the social work offices with Dave Ramsey, ^{KTJ} [REDACTED] and a few other male workers while she stood with just her pants on in the middle of them. I know about it happening to other families because I've spoken to them. I am now of the opinion that Bellshill social services did that routinely to kids.

Children's panels

64. I went to children's panels but I never told them or any social workers about Ed Stanton. What was the point? He was the person in charge. He was a trusted person. They had their own 'ideas' as to why we were in that home. I was classed as an 'undesirable' child because I was in a home. I wasn't classed as the victim. I was classed as unruly. It was me who was the problem, not people like Ed Stanton. It was the same for the rest of the kids. You didn't talk about the people in positions of trust and power. Who was going to listen to us?

65. I did tell the children's panel that I didn't want access with my dad and didn't want to return home. They would have seen that in the social work reports as well.

Decision to return me home

66. I was sent back to live with my father when my behaviour in the home started to give cause for concern. It's written in one of the reports that I was giving "cause for concern". I was being treated by a child psychologist, was in a kids' home where kids were doing things like dirty protests, and I was waking up to pandemonium in the home. The kids were wrecking entire rooms and writing messages in poo on the wall. Even although all that was happening, they decided my behaviour was giving cause for concern because I wanted to be

back living at home. They came up with that even although I was quite clearly telling them that I didn't want any access with my father.

67. I think the social workers responsible for returning me back home were [KTJ] [KTJ] and Dave Ramsey, who I think was [KTJ]'s boss. Social services knew my father was a violent man. They also knew that [] was going home for access and baiting him. It's written in the records that he was trying his hardest to make my dad assault him. I did it too when I went back. They knew that [] and I were putting ourselves wilfully at risk in order to make him snap and prove that he was a psycho. In one report it says that "GCE [] and [] present as being happy with their family life". They tried to make out we were happy; that's their words, not ours. The records show that my supervision requirement was terminated in [] 1987 to allow me to go back home.

Life after Bellshill Children's Home

68. I was basically kicked out of the children's home and sent back home. They didn't have space upstairs in the teenage unit for me or [], so rather than going to the local council to try and find us somewhere safe to live, they just gave us back.

69. My dad went back to his normal violent ways. The only physical contact we ever got from him was violence. There were never any cuddles or any kind of emotional stuff. [] [] in front of him and had to go into hospital to get it removed. We were only home a couple of weeks when he did that. That's hardly the behaviour of someone who was happy with family life.

70. My mum was a good parent. She never hit me. She got my dad charged for every assault on me that she knew about. My mum never actually knew half of what was going on in her house.

71. After a few months, I presented as homeless and moved into a homeless flat. [] moved in with me.

Records

72. I've provided the Inquiry with some of my records, which include some social work reports and reports from the children's home. That's all I've managed to get so far. They were stolen for me by someone who used to work in the social work department.
73. I applied to North Lanarkshire Council in 2010 for my full file, but still haven't received it. I've tried everything to get it. I've had help from Sandra Toyer from In Care Survivors Service Scotland, and I've also been in touch with a lawyer and the Information Commissioner's Office. Sandra was told by the data protection officer at North Lanarkshire Council that if there's any hint of any kind of wrongdoing, the files are automatically pulled and sent to their lawyers. So, even although I paid the administration fee to get my file in 2010, I'm not allowed to get it because I was assaulted in care. My sister [REDACTED] hasn't managed to get her records either. She was told that she was assaulted in care so she can't have them. They actually said that to her.
74. In March 2015, Stephen Henderson and Gerry Campbell took me into an office at Bellshill social work department and told me that my file had accidentally been destroyed. I recorded them on my phone and I've still got the recording.
75. I now know that they were lying to me because I went to the police in December 2016 to report both my dad and Bellshill social services, and the police have now obtained my file. Gail Sillin, who is a police sergeant at Bellshill police station, walked into the social work offices and got it handed to her straight away. As far as I know, she got the file in its entirety. It looks to me that they're withholding stuff to attempt a cover-up. I don't know what they're trying to cover up. The only thing I can come up with is that they don't want it to come out that they took all those kids out of school and strip-searched them.
76. Social services also kidded me on that they would hand my file over to my psychiatrist so that she could go through it with me. I've provided the Inquiry

with a letter dated 23 March 2016 from North Lanarkshire Council telling me that they would pass the file to her so that she could read it to me and then shred it, but that's still not been done. That letter is yet more proof that my file hadn't been destroyed.

77. I did get to read my file a few years ago in an office at Bellshill social work department, but I was told that it was not allowed to leave the office or ever be in the public domain. According to them, I'm not allowed to share my story with the Inquiry as that would be putting it in the public domain.

Impact of experiences

78. I suffer from sleep problems. I wake up about ten times a night and look around to see where I am. I have to make sure I'm safe before I go back to sleep. I can be woken out of sleep by somebody walking by and casting a shadow over me. When something like that happens, I sit bolt upright in my bed. It frightens the life out of people. I've had input from psychological services a few times as an adult because of sleep problems.

79. I've been diagnosed with PTSD. I have flashbacks and nightmares about being taken out of school and strip-searched. It astounds me that they got away with that. To take a kid out of school and remove their clothing is grooming. It distorts in your head how the real world should be; it makes it normal for kids to have their clothes taken off them by adults.

80. I have flashbacks and bad dreams about what we did to those kids in the home. It really bothers me that they used me to abuse those kids. We were used to play with their heads and cause even more damage to them. Before the dirty disputes, those kids did actually have friends in the home but they had nobody afterwards. They got told all day by us and the staff that they were dirty wee bastards. I also threatened to beat them up. I actually feel physically sick whenever I think about it or wake up from a nightmare. Those kids will have more psychological damage than the rest of us as we were used to put the boot

in when they were at their lowest. I've seen wee [REDACTED]'s sister and I've said to her that if [REDACTED] ever wants to talk, he knows where I am. He's still suicidal over all this. I've never had any physical contact with him. I've only spoken to his sister. I'm aware that just looking at me might cause damage to him.

81. Being told by social services in 2015 that my records had been accidentally destroyed made my mental health much worse. It caused me to have a nervous breakdown. I went to see a psychiatrist after that. Withholding information and covering things up makes it worse for me.

82. The psychiatrist, Dr Bashir, referred me on to a psychologist as he felt that she had better credentials than him to provide me with the help I need. He also thought that it would be better for me to see a woman, as getting treatment from a man might make things worse for me.

83. I also suffer from lupus, which is an autoimmune disease. I've lost [REDACTED] [REDACTED] because of it. I don't think the stress I've been under has helped either. I'm also deficient in iron and vitamins B12 and D. I tried to get on the sick, but they say there's nothing wrong with me. I've also tried to get PIP and ESA but they say I'm not entitled. I've been to three tribunals since March 2015. I was told at one that I was a liar, and that I didn't have PTSD and hadn't been in Bellshill Children's Home. I had to go into a room with a doctor and prove that I was one of those kids. Putting me in situations like that stresses me even more. I also can't cope with being in front of a panel of people. People don't understand how that affects me. They think I'm having a nice day out.

84. My ability to form relationships with other people has also been affected. It's been a long time since I was in a relationship. All I do is give other people my sleep problems, and I want to fix my problems not give them to someone else. I don't trust people. I don't actually like people that much. I prefer animals; they don't let you down as much. My relationship with my kids' dad broke down because he drank. As far as I'm concerned, if you drink, you're volatile and I don't want to be around that. I broke up with him just before the millennium and

I've been on my own since. It's easier being on my own. I've got some good friends and I don't mind being on my own.

Treatment and support

85. I have been seeing the psychologist since I was told that my records had been accidentally destroyed. I see her every couple of weeks. Speaking to her helps at times, but she says that the sleep problems probably can't be fixed because I awoke from my sleep to pandemonium in childhood, and I learnt to sleep in a particular way to keep me safe. It's like I'm on a knife-edge. The behaviours have gone on for a long time now. My full family has sleep problems.

86. Speaking to Sandra has also been beneficial. I don't see her often but she is at the other end of a phone if I need to talk to her. I can phone or text her.

Current life

87. I have two adult sons, who are both good kids. [REDACTED] is a chemistry graduate. He finished university last summer, but he's going back again this year. [REDACTED] is a supervisor in a warehouse and an in-house trainer. There's never been any involvement from social services in their lives. I don't trust Bellshill social work department.

88. My father has no access whatsoever to me or my kids. He wouldn't even be able to identify my kids. None of my siblings have contact with him.

89. I'm not in receipt of any benefits at all. My son has paid for everything for me for the past two years. He pays my rent and my keep. The benefits agency tried to get me to engage with welfare rights, but having to deal with them and Bellshill social work department isn't good for me. It makes my mental health worse. The welfare rights person didn't even stick up for me when the doctor at the tribunal said that I wasn't one of those kids from Bellshill Children's Home. I've provided the Inquiry with two letters written by psychologists. They confirm how the abuse

I suffered as a child now affects me. I can't use them for anything, not even employment support. Nobody seems to think they're of any value. The jobcentre wouldn't even take them from me or photocopy them.

Reporting the abuse to the police

90. I went to the police in December 2016 and reported my dad and Bellshill social work department. I want the social work department to be investigated as well. I asked the police to get my social work file to see if they could actually charge them for what they did to me. The police said that they would need to work through the file systematically and they'll get back to me once they get what they're looking for.

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91. I think the Inquiry should put an advert in one of the papers asking for all the kids who were strip-searched by Bellshill social work to come forward. I know that it was normal practice for them. It happened to loads of kids. There's six years between me and [REDACTED]; there's ten years between me and [REDACTED]; and there's nearly twelve between me and [REDACTED]. That practice was in place throughout all those years and they still haven't moved on. They're still taking kids out of school and removing their clothing. They're still grooming kids, and it's still wrong. Things have to change. They shouldn't be allowed to take kids out of school. There also needs to be an advocate in the social work building who watches what they are doing.

92. I would also like to see something done about social services hiding files when they've done wrong. That has to stop too. They bend the data protection laws to suit themselves.

93. Social services wrote in a report about me as a child that my behaviour was giving cause for concern. You shouldn't just write that and do nothing about it. If you have to write those words about a child, then there is a problem and

something needs to be done. You have to talk to the kid: ask them what's wrong and find out if there's anything you can do for them. Sometimes, because of what's involved, they don't want to ask the right questions. They don't want to embarrass themselves. I don't know why they kept it a secret that I was being taken out of school to be strip-searched. There should be no secrets. Kids need to be told that you do not keep secrets, especially when it's an adult who wants you to keep the secret.

94. 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.. GCE

Dated.. 25/4/17