

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PLN

Support person present: No

1. My name is PLN my date of birth is the 1964. I am 53 years old. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I wish to tell you about the institutions and times I was in care in Scotland. They are: Cambusnethan Independent Living Unit, North Lanarkshire, in either 1978 or 1979; Bellshill Children's Home, North Lanarkshire from 1979 to 1980; and New Stevenston Independent Living Unit, North Lanarkshire from 1980 to 1982.
3. I am now resident in Scotland and have lived in Edinburgh for the last 25 years. I am a single man. I have no children. I work as a games master for an events company and I am also an artist, a podcast maker and a photographer.

Life before going into care

4. My mother died when I was fourteen years of age. My father was called but was known as . I was an only child. My parents split up when I was about three or four years old. My mother took me and moved down to England. I think that my father stayed in Scotland.

5. I suffered from night terrors until I was eight or nine years old. I received treatment for it. My mother was working as a nurse and a midwife but spent most of her time working in private care homes. She became a matron of one of the homes.
6. My mother married again which turned out to be a disaster. Her second husband was a monster. My mother suffered from a heart problem and subsequently died from a heart attack. My mother and stepfather had split up a few weeks before she passed away. My stepfather went back to the family house and took all the possessions and money that were there.
7. The night my mother died I went to live with some uncles and aunts who lived in Coventry. I only stayed there for a few weeks and then had to move on. I never learned why I had to move on but I know that my trust fund which amounted to about £20,000 managed to disappear during that time.
8. From there I went to live with an aunt and uncle in Wishaw. That didn't really work out either as I was having to share a bed with a toddler who was continually wetting the bed. I was going to school every morning smelling of urine.
9. It was then decided that I would go back to live with my father in Wishaw. He was sharing a small council house with my grandmother. My father was a stranger to me. I had to share a room with my father and a large fish tank which kept me awake. The room was smaller than a prison cell. I still have bad dreams about that fish tank.
10. I joined the Salvation Army when I arrived in Scotland and was due to become an officer and a candidate. This never materialised because of what was about to unfold between me and my father.
11. The physical abuse started straight away. My father was six foot five inches tall and was a [REDACTED] at the local baths. He used to physically

assault me because it was a way of getting back at my mother. He was egged on by my grandmother who felt the same way and who didn't like me. My grandmother would also assault me. I can't remember my grandmother's name.

12. I was having to wear my father's hand-me-down work uniform from the swimming pool as clothes as I wasn't given any others to go to school with. I was living on food that I wouldn't feed to a dog. I was told that in order to wash I would have to go to the swimming baths.
13. One of the teachers at the school offered to put me up in a caravan which was in her garden to allow me to study for my exams. I mentioned this to Carol Baillie who was the officer in charge of the Wishaw Branch of the salvation Army. Unbeknown to me and believing that she was doing the right thing she arranged a meeting with my father and told him what the plan for me was. When I returned home my father beat me up and that same day he started to sexually assault me. He only stopped when he heard my grandmother coming back into the house. I realised at that point that I only had a couple of choices. I had to kill him or get away. I knew that the streets were not paved with gold so my only option was to put myself into care.
14. That night I went to an aunt's house in Wishaw. My father learned about that and was not at all happy. The next morning I went to Wishaw social services and asked to be taken into care. I was about 14 years old. I explained everything to the social services apart from the sexual abuse. My aunt was part of the meeting on the end of a telephone and she spent the whole time at the interview saying what an evil person I was.
15. At my request I was placed in care and sent to the Cambusnethan Children's Home. I think that is what it was called but I can't be sure. It was Victorian-built house which had become a children's home. I was to remain there for a few weeks.

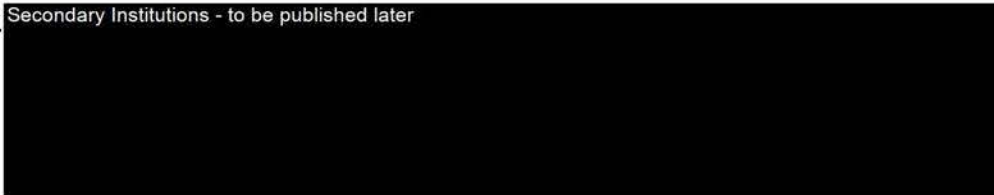
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Cambusnethan Children's Home

16. [Redacted] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [Redacted]
[Redacted] Secondary Instit The staff told me from the start that it was only a temporary measure until such time as they were able to find a suitable placement.
17. [Redacted] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [Redacted] the day I came back from school to find a policeman in the lounge who wanted to speak to me. He had lots of silver braid and I thought at the time that he was high ranking. I went out to the garden with him. He started to get right in about me saying that I was to stop saying things about my father who was a very well respected member of the community. He also told me that my father and him were at the same [Redacted] [Redacted] together and that if I continued with the allegations against my father I would be put away for a very long time in Barlinnie Prison.
18. The policeman told me that he wanted me to speak to my father and that an arrangement had been made for my father to come and speak to me. My father did come along and we went into the garden for a chat but I kept walking away from him. After twenty minutes my father left and I thought at that time I would be going to the jail as the policeman would come back and I would be taken away. It was to be the last time I saw my father.
19. I had been at the home for a few weeks and was now looking forward to some sort of future. I was dealing with two senior social workers known as the Gray brothers although they were not related. I think that their names were Alistair Gray and Malcolm Gray and they were quite senior. I think that they were part of Strathclyde social work but they were based in North Motherwell.

20. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



21. Malcolm Day was head of social work and a meeting was arranged with him. I was told at the meeting that they thought I should go into Bellshill Children's Home. It was a unit where I would be sharing a flat for people over sixteen and I could develop my social skills. I think I had just turned sixteen at the time and I remember that they promised me a council house when I was old enough, providing I went to the children's home first. I am not very good with dates and times.

Bellshill Children's Home, North Lanarkshire.

22. My move to Bellshill Children's Home was a nightmare from start to finish. I shared a flat with a guy called [REDACTED] and he was an out-and-out glue sniffer. The abuse of alcohol throughout the home, and in particular Buckfast, was rife. I was to remain at Bellshill for about a year.

23. I was one of the older boys in the place so there were no issues with bullying. I must have been sixteen as I had left school and was being funded. I was getting an allowance from North Motherwell social services which you had to live on. You had to be sixteen to be allowed to live in the flat and technically you were self-sufficient but under the supervision of the home.

First day at the home and first impressions.

24. I remember being taken by my social worker from Cambusnethan to Bellshill. I knew that it was happening and was quite happy with the arrangements which had been made with the Gray brothers and Malcolm Day. I remember being taken in Angela Curren's own car.

25. I thought that this was the start of my life and I was laying down roots. I was into heavy metal music and had long hair and clothes covered in patches that were fashionable at the time.
26. I remember arriving at the home and seeing other kids looking out of the windows. At the front of the house were the staff offices, a lounge and the boys' independent flat. There were also boys' bedrooms. I was introduced to Mrs GCH who was SNR. I also met some of the other kids. It was the start of the punk era and the kids were loud and proud.
27. I remember thinking that the home appeared to be more like a Glasgow pub as it was chaotic and messy. I was introduced to my flat mate who I recall smelled strongly of glue. I learned that the flat I was going into had two rooms. There was also a female flat which also had two rooms. That flat was occupied by on her own. I thought that the first day was fine and I felt quite settled.
28. I don't know much about the routine that the younger kids were subjected to as I was much older. I think that the age ranges for the children went all the way from toddlers to sixteen year olds. I suspect that the toddlers were only emergency placements. The residents were mixed sexes. There were shared rooms of about six children of a single sex in each room. There was a communal dining room. There was a rear garden.
29. I would estimate that there were about 50 children resident. Mrs GCH was SNR SNR and she lived there with her husband who local List D school. It was explained to me that I was there to learn how to live independently and after I was old enough and was ready to leave I would be getting a council house.

Routine at Bellshill Children's Home

30. There was easy access to the home over a back fence and in a back door which could be opened with a kick. All the local boys knew this and you could come back to the flat to find a whole load of strangers. People were using the flat to abuse solvents and drink Buckfast. I didn't like the solvents but I was into drinking Buckfast. We devised ways to smuggle the Buckfast into the flat.
31. I remember that they used to allow the other residents of the home to sleep out in the back garden in tents that had been erected for the boys. The boys sleeping there were all ages. These were just glue and Buckfast parties. The attitude of the staff was that they knew where you were so they didn't have to worry about you. They knew exactly what was going on. Some of those boys were only eight or nine.
32. There was no one there when I first arrived to give me advice or help. I was literally dumped by the social work department and told to get on with it. Angela Curren did nothing for me to get me started living there.
33. The only real advice I got from the social work department came after I had attempted suicide by cutting my wrists. I was talking to my flat mate [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s social worker. He told me that in future if I was committing suicide by that means I should [REDACTED] and that way I would be more successful. I don't know what his name was.
34. There was a twin tub washing machine in the flat which we could use. You basically had to wear the clothes you had till they rotted off your back.
35. When I first arrived at the flat I had 75 pence to my name. I recall I bought two cold sausage rolls. I didn't know what to do with them so I tried to deep fry them. I have not been able to eat them since.

36. There was no real routine as I was left very much to my own devices. I could come and go as I pleased. I learned that my flatmate [REDACTED] was a Scottish [REDACTED] champion. When he was not sniffing glue he was very good at his sport. There were constant visits to my flat by the younger boys who used the flat to sniff glue. I would get into trouble for letting them in but they knew how to get in when I was not present.
37. I had my own washing facilities in the flat with a bathroom. It was a popular place for the glue sniffers as there was an extractor fan to take away the smell. I recall one day we were caught by the staff as we took tins of beer into the flat. They took the tins of beer off us and told us they would be reporting us to the social work. We went into the flat and located all the empty alcohol cans and bottles. We then littered the surfaces in the flat with the empties.. We were not in the least concerned about a chat with the social work department. What could they do?. We didn't care as they were the enemy. As it happened they did nothing but shake their heads and leave.
38. Whilst I was at Bellshill I worked for the first couple of weeks at the local co-op store. I wasn't there for very long. I also used to give some of the kids at Bellshill homemade tattoos. I was always good at art so I used to compromise with the younger kids and do ink drawings on them instead.
39. We had a strange relationship with the local population of Bellshill. They all knew that we were kids from the home. Some of them would spit on us while others would give us food. I could never figure out what that all meant.

Incidents during my stay at Bellshill

40. I remember one new year I was wandering about the home in a drunken state. I had been drinking Buckfast and vodka. Everyone in the home from the age of eight upwards was "spangled". Most of the senior staff were also drinking.

41. I spotted [REDACTED], one of the other boys, going into the girls' room. I was going out with one of the lassies that stayed in the room, [REDACTED]. I went to the room and saw [REDACTED] getting into [REDACTED]'s bed. I pulled him out and took him to the back garden where I gave him a few hits. I seriously believe that I stopped a rape as [REDACTED] was unconscious with drink.
42. Every time I came back to the flat there would be a load of other people there sitting sniffing gas and glue. I came back one day to find my flatmate's sister sniffing some gas. I can't remember her name. I remember [REDACTED] threatening to set her on fire. He put his lighter near her. She went up in a fireball. I remember attacking [REDACTED] who was laughing about it. Fortunately the only injury was a slight burn to her lip and the hair on the back of her head was singed. [REDACTED] was always in trouble with the police.
43. The girls at the home were in and out of the place all the time. [REDACTED] who was about sixteen, was covered in tattoos. She was quite a buxom girl and you would see her being picked up by big flash cars driven by business men. The cars used to pull up outside the staff offices. She would be taken away for the weekend to various hotels. She used to wear a cardigan to cover up her tattoos. I am sure that the staff at the home must have known exactly what was going on. She made no secret of what she was doing. [REDACTED] was doing what she could to improve her life and get out of the home.
44. The staff knew that I was growing cannabis in the flat. They were happier knowing I was taking cannabis because it kept me a lot calmer than drinking Buckfast.
45. I recall that when I moved into the home one of the members of staff was murdered in a place nearby. I cannot recall all the details. I know that this member of staff was very popular with all the girls. If the girls did run away the local police would show them the spot where this member of staff was murdered. I presume it was to put them off running away. We were always

the home by the police. There was a well-known saying. "God made bastards, big and small, and the Bellshill police got them all".

Food

46. You had to buy and prepare your own food from the allowance you received from North Motherwell social services. I recall on one occasion when North Motherwell social services took on Maggie Thatcher's Government and refused to pay our allowance as they felt it should be paid by the social security department. Social security in turn disputed this and it resulted in us not getting any money to live on. We were caught up in the dispute.
47. It was only when the sixteen year olds living at the home told Malcolm Day that they would go to the press with regard to what was happening that it got sorted out. It lasted a week and we were living on hand-outs from neighbours and sympathetic staff at the home. I recall one of the staff members, RBN, suggesting that we go into town and beg.
48. I spent most of my living allowance on Buckfast but would also buy food that would last like loaves of bread.
49. I never had occasion to run away as I could come and go as I pleased. Some of the other kids did run away from time to time. I know that the younger girls were not keen on running away as they would be subjected to an internal examination when they were brought back. I suspect that this was done to deter them.

Staff

50. The staff were terrible. Mrs GCH was SNR and RBN was the assistant. RBN was mad as a brush. Mrs Gibson was night staff along with another man. I had very few dealings with the day staff but did deal with

the senior staff. Some of the staff lived at the home and the staff cover was 24 hours a day.

51. There was another very large man who used to do the "pin down". This was when one of the boys had to be restrained and put on the ground. This member of staff was particularly big and would lie on top of you pinning you down. I am unable to remember his name.

Birthdays and Christmas

52. I remember at Christmas time we were all taken into the lounge to celebrate. The three people who were all over sixteen and living in the flats were invited to come down for presents. They asked if they could use my stereo to play music. The young ones all got presents and then we thought it would be our turn. Mrs ^{GCH} said that we were over sixteen and didn't qualify for a present. It was another humiliation in front of everyone. I think that Mrs ^{GCH} intended for me to react and take back the stereo. Instead I swore at her and left. She accused me of being too sensitive. We were not invited for Christmas dinner.

53. I can remember one New Year when all the staff were pissed and people climbed into my flat to have a glue and Buckfast party.

54. I don't remember any birthday celebrations.

Visits/Inspections

55. I used to get visits from Malcolm Day, head of social work, who would arrive at the home on his motorbike and then change into his suit. He had promised me that I would be allocated a council flat and I constantly reminded him of this. On these visits to the home he must have noticed the chaos round about. I also got the odd visit from my social worker Angela Curren.

56. On one of the occasions I again challenged Malcolm Day about getting a flat. I challenged him in front of other members of staff at the meeting. He told me that the only way I would get a flat was to get a girl pregnant. He then laughed in my face along with the rest of the staff. There is no way to describe what I was feeling.
57. All my family lived down in Coventry or Nottingham in England and so I didn't receive any visits from them. I didn't see my aunt [REDACTED] and Uncle [REDACTED] who lived in Wishaw and who I had first stayed with when I arrived in Scotland.

Suicide attempt in Bellshill Children's Home

58. A couple of days after the meeting where I was humiliated, I was at a very low edge. I bought a bottle of Buckfast which I drank in one go. I then [REDACTED] [REDACTED] slashed both my wrists. My suicide note was "fuck you all" written [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on the wall of the flat. I didn't want to make a mess for my flatmate [REDACTED] so [REDACTED].
59. When I came to I saw all these lights and I remember being happy because I thought that I was dead and it was all over. After a short time I realised that I was still alive. I was lying in hospital recovering. I think that the hospital was Monklands Hospital. I was very angry as I was alive. I was angry with Malcolm Day for all the false promises. I was angry with my father. The doctor tried to [REDACTED]. I was on my own and there were no members of staff from Bellshill with me.
60. I walked out the hospital and persuaded a taxi driver to take me to my father's house in Wishaw. I started to throw small stones at his windows. My father came to the window and I threw a half brick through the window. I wanted to kill my father and was shouting names at him. The police were called and I ran off. I made my way to a friend's house who I knew from the Salvation Army. His name was Sergeant [REDACTED]. I was shouting through his letter box but not getting a reply.

61. I then decided to make my way to [REDACTED] to put an end to my life. The police finally caught up with me on route to [REDACTED]. They took me back to Bellshill Children's Home. It was the early hours in the morning. I was taken back to the flat. I wasn't taken back to the hospital. There was no more medical care or offers of psychological help.
62. I was in the flat a short time when Mrs GCH [REDACTED] came into to see me. She had a bucket of hot water, carbolic soap and a scrubbing brush. I was lying on the settee. She insisted I got up and cleaned the carpet. She was shouting at me and I was shouting at her. I eventually got really upset and broke down. I told her about everything that had happened to me involving my father. She listened to me and after I had finished telling her my story her only words were "You'll need to get the fuck over it now, get up, and get the carpet cleaned."
63. I started to clean the carpet but my wounds which were [REDACTED] opened up and the blood pumped out. I was making more mess. She told me to go to the bathroom and clean up. I managed to stop the bleeding and came back through to the lounge. She had already left.
64. I stayed in the bedroom for the next three days. A lot of the other kids came to see me but I told them to fuck off and leave me alone. Things then went back to normal which was the usual chaos involving drink, drugs and solvents. It was just another shovel of shit being heaped on my grave.
65. My suicide attempt must have caused ructions within the social work department because Malcolm Day, who was head of social work at Motherwell Civic Centre, turned up again at the home. There was a meeting with my social worker, Angela Curren, supervised by Malcolm Day.
66. I was very depressed and hoped that I would be successful with the next suicide attempt. Malcolm Gray told me that he had a solution and that was to

move me to a brand new state-of-the-art independent living unit at New Stevenston.

Medical care

67. I did attend the hospital when I had a suicide attempt and there was medical care available should we need it. There was one doctor's visit for a health check. I also remember one psychologist who came to see all of the residents. He asked some very strange questions like "What would you do if you were walking in Bellshill and you saw a ship coming towards you?". I think I told him that I would shoot it with my tank. I never saw him again in all the time I was there.

Abuse at Bellshill Children's Home

Staff

68. I remember being called to a meeting in the common room for all the kids. The staff were trying to wind up all the kids to turn against one girl who the staff didn't like. They were trying to get the other kids to assault her and make her life a misery. I can't remember either the staff names or the name of the poor girl who was to be bullied. It was the way the staff were.

69. Mrs **GCH** was a bad woman. She used to play with everyone's heads. She would use the likes of the clothing allowance, which all the children were entitled to, as a threat. If you didn't behave in her eyes you wouldn't get the likes of a new pair of shoes and she would hold back the allowance.

70. Mr **RBQ** was married to Mrs **GCH** and lived in a flat with her and their children in the home. He was equally as bad as his wife. He **██████** nearby List D school nearby and had a reputation for being a tyrant. On one occasion I was standing outside the staff office talking to other residents when Mr **RBQ**

came out of the office. He was shouting and swearing and he slapped me across the face. There were lots of stories about him hitting other kids but I didn't witness any of those incidents.

71. RBN [REDACTED] was a member of staff. I was slapped in the face by RBN [REDACTED] the first time that I met her. I was sitting in my flat with one of the other residents called [REDACTED]. RBN [REDACTED] came in and was obviously unhappy that I was alone with this girl. She slapped me and I turned on her asking why she had done it. I was swearing at her. She seemed quite impressed that I had reacted in this way and I had no further problems with her.

72. One of the other members of staff was a huge man and I cannot remember his name. He used to pin the children to the ground to get them to calm down. He would wrestle them to the floor and then lie on top of them until they stopped resisting. I saw that happening on several occasions.

Instances of abuse

73. It was literally a "hands on" children's home. The staff would come into the television room and hit all the children sitting there to get them to tidy up. My age protected me. It was mainly the younger ones that got slapped. There was constant slapping of children for no apparent reason. The staff would also punch the younger kids in the arm to give them a "dead arm".

74. There was a lot of what I would call emotional abuse. The staff would play kids off against each other. The staff all had their favourites and they would use them. It was the way that the staff tried to control the home. They didn't realise that they were never in control.

75. There were kids as young as seven or eight who would be "pissed out their brains" by abusing alcohol or glue. They would allow them to stay in tents in the back garden so they were out of sight and mind.

76. There was a day when I was still living at Bellshill but was about to move into the New Stevenston Independent Living Unit. I had been going back and forth to do some painting and decorating at the new flat. I was stopped by the police and they accused me of being on the railway line. I told them that it was not me and that I had been painting in my new flat. I was covered in paint and smelling of turpentine. I showed the officers the flat I was decorating. They then took my details and I told them that I was still resident at the Bellshill Children's Home. They came back a while later and told me that the Bellshill Children's Home didn't know me.
77. It took about an hour to sort out, but Mrs GCH had done this deliberately to cause me hassle with the police. I was taken back to the home and had a verbal row with Mrs GCH in her office. I swore at her and told her that I wanted nothing more to do with the home or the social work department. I moved out and went to the new flat where I slept on the bare floorboards.

Leaving Bellshill Children's Home

78. I was given the option to go to the unit at New Stevenston.. This was decided by Malcolm Day, head of social work, and my social worker Angela Curren. It was agreed that I would be there till I was eighteen and then I would be reassessed.
79. It was a way to get out of the Bellshill Children's Unit so I jumped at the chance and accepted the move. I left the home early as Mrs GCH was playing with my head and doing her best to upset me.
80. I couldn't believe when I was leaving Bellshill that a year earlier I was about to join the Salvation Army. Before that I was a mummy's boy and had a trust fund and was on course to go to university. Here I was now a very angry, hard-drinking, young man with scars on my wrists from suicide attempts. What had happened to me to cause this? I was an animal created by the system. It

didn't matter what they said to me, I knew that they didn't care it was a constant fight.

New Stevenston Independent Living Unit

- 81. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- 82. [Redacted]

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

- 83. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- 84. [Redacted]

85.	Secondary Institutions - to be published later
86.	
87.	
88.	
89.	
90.	

Leaving New Stevenston Independent Living Unit

91. I was speaking to a girl who worked with the community service volunteers and she told me about a friend of hers that had a flat in Edinburgh which was empty. The previous tenant had paid a month's rent in advance. I was now nineteen years of age. It was another opportunity. It was during the Festival in Edinburgh and it seemed a great place to live.

Reporting abuse

92. The first person I told about the abuse was Mrs GCH and she did nothing about it. I also told Angela Curren and she did nothing about it. I had a session with Malcolm Day and he was also told. He used to come to the Bellshill Children's Home and saw everything that was happening.

93. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Once the secret was out about what happened to me I have had no problems talking about it.

94. In 1998 there was a case in the media about Sister Alphonso who was at Nazareth House. I made contact on the internet with survivor groups. I tried to get legal help for assistance to investigate Bellshill Children's Home. I had decided not to go down the compensation route but instead to try and get some credibility by not looking for money.

95. I ended up speaking to 42 different lawyers in Edinburgh and Glasgow. They were all interested until I said that I didn't want compensation. The only legal firm that agreed to take me on couldn't represent me as there was a conflict of interest with North Lanarkshire social work department.

96. In 1998 I decided to tell my own story on [REDACTED]. I started a [REDACTED] called "[REDACTED]". It was all about my experiences

at Bellshill Children's Home. There were various survivor groups forming as a result of the Sister Alphonso case but I think at the time the [REDACTED] was one of the few outlets for survivors. I was getting a lot of contact from members of the Catholic Church who were abused. I was also getting a lot of messages or e-mails from the clergy of the Catholic Church who were not pleased with what was being said about them.

97. One of the survivors was going to a meeting with the Catholic Church and was terrified. [REDACTED] I suggested that all the survivors go to their safe places, put a stone in their hands, and think about what this particular woman was facing. When she was at the meeting there were people from all over the world, including New Zealand, who were sitting with stones in their hands. The woman later told me she also had her stone in her hand. She felt that this was her bedrock and it got her through that interview. She held her ground and told her story that day to the Catholic Church officials.
98. In 1998 or 1999 I reported the matter to the police. I wrote out a statement and gave copies to my local Edinburgh councillor, Kingsley Thomas. I knew that he had a background in social work. I sent one to North Motherwell social work department, another to Windmilhill police station in Motherwell and the final copy to the Scottish National Party (SNP).
99. I felt that the SNP they would be the best organisation to deal with the statement I had made. I felt that previous dealings with other political parties had not been satisfactory. The content of the statement was pretty much what I have told the Inquiry today.
100. In response to the statement Kingsley Thomas replied back that the issue was a Motherwell problem and not an Edinburgh one. North Motherwell social work said that it was a police matter and that I should talk to the police. The SNP were very keen initially. A senior SNP member was due to speak at a conference and wanted to use the content of the statement. This didn't happen and so I contacted them. I was told that they had not had enough time

to investigate the content of the statement. They also said that "child abuse was not their bag". I suspect that the only reason they showed any interest was to attack the Labour Party.

101. I can't remember the name of the female politician from the SNP but I think that the male person I was dealing with was called something like Williams or Williamson. When they told me it was going no further I asked for my statement back. I was told that there was a problem with that as it had been mislaid and the office cleaner had thrown it out. They said not to worry about it as it would have been mislaid securely. This is what they thought of my life in care - "it was thrown out securely". I found this very hard to take on top of being told that the abuse I had suffered was "not their bag".
102. The police dealing with the complaint were at the Woman and Children's Unit at Windmillhill police station. The policewoman dealing with it, whose name I can't remember, told me that she was interviewing all the witnesses including my family. I spoke to these people and they told me that they had never heard from the policewoman. When I confronted her about this she lost her temper with me.
103. I was interviewed at home by a police officer who appeared interested at first. He came from Windmillhill police station. When I mentioned the visit by the senior police officer to me at the home in Cambusnethan the officer put down his pen and that was the end of the interview. I did learn that they had spoken to my father and he had denied everything. I suspect it was the [REDACTED] influence.
104. There was nowhere left to go with my complaint. I had asked specifically that the police at Motherwell and Wishaw did not investigate the complaint because of all the [REDACTED] connections. I was told that this couldn't happen as it had to be investigated by the Woman and Child Unit at North Motherwell. I later learned that this was not the case and it could have been looked at by other police officers.

Life after institutional care

105. When I moved through to Edinburgh after my period in care I started to change for the better and was getting involved in art work. I developed a virus called Bornholm disease . It is similar to multiple sclerosis and means that I have no means of dealing with lactic acid. Every so often I will have chest pains called "the devil's grip" which can be very debilitating.
106. I was house-bound for two and a half years. I could get out of the house but I found it very hard. I was a self-taught artist and was getting very involved with art. I was not sure what to do with my art till someone gave me a computer. It was 1998 and I noted that there was no online art festival.
107. I contacted a number of other artists online and suggested to them that we have an online art festival as part of the Edinburgh Festival. I only had six weeks' experience of designing web pages. Within a few weeks I had 500 web sites and 5,000 artists contributing. It was recognised as the largest online art festival. It was a non-commercial enterprise. In 2000 we had 3 million views. We had artists exhibiting from Hong Kong and Burma.
108. I was still signing on and drawing social security. I contacted Edinburgh District Council to see if they were able to help with funding the festival. They couldn't help but they stole my idea and now have a large online arts festival.
109. I also worked as a volunteer with an online charity for older people. I helped them to develop the IT. I worked with them for fourteen years and was promised I would eventually be given paid work.
110. I had a good reputation in the [REDACTED] for my charity work. The online charity I was working for had a break-in and an iPad was stolen. At the same time I was waiting for results from medical checks. One morning I was

given a letter by my work which identified me as being the person that had broken into the offices. It said that the police had witnesses and had CCTV of me selling the stolen iPad. I was escorted out of the building with all my stuff. I went to the medical practice and was given the all clear. I had to deal with the letter.

111. It was not true so I made my way to the local police station and told them to arrest me. I told them what had happened and they told me that it was just not true and they had no such information or evidence against me.
112. I went back to the charity and told them my thoughts. I was aware that the author of the letter was on prescription drugs that her judgement was affected. I had a gross misconduct entry on my employment records. I could prove that the person seen selling the iPad had a full head of hair and I was bald. The alleged witness did not know anything about it.
113. I complained to Edinburgh District Council who funded the charity but they refused to do anything about it. It was easier for them to allow me to take the blame. It was the same attitude that I had experienced when I was in care. I was now having flashbacks to my time in care. I was hallucinating, seeing me running from my father covered in blood. I was smelling the carbolic soap that I had used to clean up the blood in Bellshill Children's Home.
114. I have also been in contact with the Moira Anderson Foundation and have addressed meetings about my experiences. I was involved with Sandra Brown who wrote the book called "Where There Is Evil". It is a story about a missing child and her fight to bring the father to justice.

Impact

115. I think that the initial trauma I suffered was at the hands of my father, but my everyday life in care after that continued the trauma and there was no respite. Every day in life I think about my life in care. I don't sleep at night.
116. I have major trust issues. A few years ago I had extreme workplace bullying. It was similar to what had happened to me in care. I tried to report it as I had done when I was in care. No one was listening or believing me. It was mirroring what had happened before.
117. I think that I had issues before I went into care, when I was living with my mother. My mother was ill and was showing the signs. When she died I called the Samaritans as I had no-one else to speak to. I was, without doubt, depressed. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions - to be published later
118. I remember talking to Angela Curren and other social workers who promised one thing but never managed to deliver. Since my mother died I was made one promise after another and none of them came to fruition.
119. Not all my life problems are the result of my time in care. I have family problems and other associated problems but the trust issues are definitely a result of my time in care. I was a product of the care background but I was no different to the people I was working with in later life. I felt that I was looked upon as different because I had been in care. I never went to jail. I experimented with drugs but I have put that behind me. My father didn't want me to continue my schooling. He wanted me to start earning so that I could contribute to the running of my grandmother's house.
120. I attended at Windpark medical centre in Edinburgh and spoke to a counsellor there. After I had been going to the counsellor for about three weeks she asked me to stop coming back as she was unable to handle what I

was telling her. I haven't been back. I would now prefer to channel my energies into art projects. The creative outlet is a greater therapy than anything else.

121. There have been wider ramifications as a result of trying to work with survivor groups and setting up various IT sites. They include a broken marriage and relationship breakdowns with close family members. Some of these relationships were damaged as a result of the police enquires.

Lessons to be learned

122. There are some kids in care who will never be reached. There are other kids who are on the precipice who can be talked down if done in the right way. There were kids, like me, who only wanted someone to listen to them and because no-one did I am still paying for this 30 years on.
123. The authorities have to realise that kids in care are not the problem, but the problems kids in care have need to be dealt with. The angry outbursts of children are concealing the pain and suffering they feel.
124. When kids leave care they need to have more than a £20 note in their back pocket. They need explained to them how the world works and how they cope with it.
125. I wasn't beaten black and blue by the staff whilst I was in care and I didn't suffer the same physical abuse that other survivors have, but "not all the bruises are on the outside and not all the scars are visible". The way I was left when I was crying for help has left me with a feeling of being of little value. Other times I feel that I am nothing more than an inconvenience to others.

Records

126. I have not sought out my records of my time in care. I do recall that there was an incident when one of the residents of Bellshill committed suicide. I also recall one of the staff members being convicted of sexual abuse of residents of the Bellshill Children's Home. This was reported in the media.

Other information

127. The attitudes at the time I was in care were that "the kids in care are a problem", and not as it should have been that "the kids in care have problems". We were the lowest of the low. God knows how but I actually managed to get through the care system without getting a criminal record. This was very rare amongst survivors of institutional care. I think that since my time in care I have been having a "unlearning experience".
128. I know what is going to happen in the future of this Inquiry. It will be the same as the last time. The report will be published and the MSPs will wring their hands in dismay. They will make promises and very little will happen. I feel that if any good comes of this, and the stories from the survivors, it should be channelled into a creative project. This may be the only way to stop the suicides that are happening.
129. I would like to give oral evidence to the Inquiry. I have absolutely no problems with anonymity and would be happy for my name to be used at any time.

130. 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..... PLN

Dated..... *SM June 2017.*