

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HEP

Support person present: No

1. My name is HEP however when I was in care I was also known with the surnames HEP and HEP. My date of birth is 1983. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born at the Royal Alexander Hospital in Paisley. I have no idea if my dad was ever part of my life as a baby but growing up I didn't know who he was. I had to find out through my own investigations having got his name from my gran. My gran always told us the truth unlike my mum. My mum has had a lot of men and we were told that every one of them was now our dad and that was what we were to call them.
3. My mum's name is and my dad's is. When I was younger I don't know what name we used but I think it was. I don't know if my mum was ever married to my dad so I don't know if she ever used his name. My mum has been married a couple of times and she would change our names at that time. She married this guy but divorced him however she kept our name as for years.
4. We lived in Paisley and the area is known locally as. I believe before then we maybe lived in other houses and originally we came from but I don't remember that. All my memories begin at. I have a half-brother called who is three years older than me. I

have two sisters, [REDACTED] who is just over a year older than me and she is actually my full sister. [REDACTED] has a different father and she is about three years younger than me.

5. The scheme I stayed in, our home, the schools and the children's homes were all places of violence. In our scheme it was all low income families and we were all quite poor. Every second house was a family of alcoholics, it wasn't so much drugs at that time. There were drugs, things like jellies that you don't get now. There wasn't so much heroin then like there is now. It was normal to us to be struggling for food and there would be other folk in the street going through the same. As kids we were very small for our ages and under nourished. Getting battered and hurt came to mean nothing so going through life I think I felt more confusion than fear.
6. My mum was never there and she drank a lot. We were used to being hit with belts, sticks, walking sticks, it was our life from as long as I can remember. I probably cannot explain how violent our life was mainly at the hands of my mum. If you remember the Michael Jackson incident when he hung his baby out of a window well my mum did things like that. There was a lot of serious things happening. There was never any food in the house and things like that. My mum would go out drinking at the weekend and she would be away all weekend. Back in the day single women would get their benefits and it was called a Monday or Tuesday book which were just a book of giro's. They would take them on whatever day of the week they were for and cash them in. Whenever my mum cashed her book she would come back on the Thursday and then she might stay until the Friday. She would go out on the Friday and that would be her until the early hours of Sunday morning. We were looking after each other, sometimes one of her boyfriends might pop in but for the most part we were on our own. One of the reasons we were taken into care was the neglect.
7. I believe I went to Douglas Street Nursery and my records say I was always in damp clothes. I don't know if that meant my mum hadn't put me in dry clothes or if they were wet caused by urine. I was always in dirty nappies and once when the nursery staff went to change me they found four big strap marks across my bum. They followed their procedures and I was taken to a place called the Russell Institute which is a medical place in Paisley. It was proven that these injuries were caused by a belt and

it was four separate marks across both cheeks with an inch between them. My mum said that she would never know who battered her wean because there was a lot of adults who would sleep in our house. I have no memories of this, it is information in my file. Apparently social work went into our house and there was a lot of drunk people sleeping with jackets over them. Our house was just a mad place.

8. My records show that I was in foster care between [REDACTED] 1985 - [REDACTED] 1986. This is likely to be because of the injuries I was found to have. I thought I was taken to foster care for about a month but was returned to my mum after that. I thought the first place I went into care was Beech Avenue Children's Home, Paisley however I recently found out from my records that my timeline is a bit messed up. I was under a Section 37 which I think was for a place of safety. I have no clue of this and because I only received my records in March 2021 the day before my first meeting with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) I am trying to get my head around them. I think because I was in care so much and in different places it makes it difficult to remember the dates when it was so long ago. I think we were taken into care around five times always on some sort of order each time. We would go into care and then get back to mums before going back to care again. It is hard to keep track of dates as there was a lot going on.
9. My records show that I went back to stay with mum from [REDACTED] 1986 to [REDACTED] 1989. They state this was under section 44 (1) (a) although I don't know what that means. I can guess it meant social work were involved. In that time I believe I went back to foster care for a short stay and also to Beech Avenue Children's Home because it is recorded in my records. My brother and sisters were also put in care. The foster care, I think, was because my mum was just about to or had just given birth to my youngest sister and I think it was for neglect. I think for me it was also for physical risk because I had previous injuries. I have no memory of this and I am not sure how long we were in foster care as I haven't had time to check my files.
10. Me, my brother and sisters would be going into school with black eyes and other injuries. There was a lot of violence from my mum and her boyfriends. There was also a lot of verbal abuse and swearing was just part of how she and they spoke to us.

They were all alcoholics and things were really bad. As an example we would be sleeping in our school uniforms for two days in a row and still go to school the next day. We were dirty. There was no affection or nice things said to us. I wasn't brought up used to any adult touch such as cuddles or hugs. We were starving as there was no food so we would either go shoplifting or steal packed lunches belonging to other pupils. My brother and I worked a good system for shoplifting. We actually said we were going out hunting. We were stealing food for the four of us just to survive but it was only sweets and snack type stuff. When we got to school as soon as the first bell went we were in the bathrooms eating the packed lunches as we were that hungry. That caused fights in the playground. Our life was just one of survival.

11. My mum would get odd jobs here and there. She worked in the bingo for a while. It was always part-time and the jobs never lasted for any length of time.
12. We always had social workers. I only remember Grace Cameron who was a bit later maybe around the time we went to Beech Avenue but I believe there was quite a bit of social work involvement before then. My mum had social workers but I don't know their names. Grace was based at Paisley. I don't think social workers were doing a lot. There were occasions when our mum would be threatening our lives and yet we were let back out of care to stay with her.
13. My mum was mental and just crazy. She was a crackpot, like a really disturbed woman. I remember the social workers coming out and they took us away. I was about seven at this time. Social workers were in the house and my mum was basically threatening to kill us because she wanted us put in care. She told the social workers to take us into care and made a lot of death threats towards us. This was all down to her wanting to go out and drink as she didn't see why she should be home dealing with weans when she could be out. Social workers were telling her that they would rather help her to keep her kids at home but my mum was having none of it. She was getting aggressive with them so they have phoned the police. She told social workers if they didn't take us away she would kill us but they thought she was kidding on. Social workers were standing in front of the front door to stop her taking us away. Ours was a tenement flat which was three up and she took us into the bedroom, opened the window and was telling

us all to jump. She was shouting at us saying we better jump and social work were telling her she couldn't be being serious. My mum pointed at me, called me a swear word and said something like 'you go first, you are either jumping or going through it'. I don't know what happened but mum ran off taking us out of the house and locked the social workers in. She forgot her benefit book so she went back to get it about ten minutes later when the police had arrived and that is when we were taken away. I think we went to Chapel House Children's Home for a couple of hours or overnight until a place became available at Beech Avenue.

14. I remember all that happening but it is confusing as I think I went to Beech Avenue twice. I remember being in Chapel House but not living there. I remember being in the living area and kitchen. I have no memories of being there as a resident and I don't have anything else that I could say about that place.
15. There were other times mum threatened us. She threatened to throw us into a river just outside the social work department. That was another time she wanted us taken into care and social work were not going to do it. This would have been after I got out of Beech Avenue. There were other times the social workers were meant to be taking us into care and she was locking them in the house telling them they weren't taking her weans. It was very confusing as a child, one minute she was trying to get us in care and the next she was refusing. The times with social work and my mum all merge into horrible memories of not knowing if I was coming or going. It was very contradictory and this was very confusing for us. I don't know why we kept getting out and going back to this woman and this environment. Social work would question her about not being able to cope with her weans with all the help she was getting. It was just chaotic for us. I know the social workers wanted us to stay as a family unit but it was just mental living like that.
16. I had a lot of problems at school and was excluded or suspended all the time. I attended four mainstream schools, South, Our Lady of Peace, Hunterhill Tutorial Centre and St Charles which were all primary schools in the Paisley area. All the other schools have been residential. To put things in perspective to the best of my knowledge I have never done a full term at any primary school.

- 17. My files will say that because I suffered severe trauma at a very young age I was a very vulnerable and a very disturbed little boy. These were comments that were repeated throughout my records. I started smoking before I was nine years old but I wasn't inhaling. When I got to nine that's when I started inhaling.

Beech Avenue Children's Home, Paisley

- 18. My records show I was placed here on [REDACTED] 1989 until [REDACTED] 1989. From my recollection I thought I was put here around the time I was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] primary school. The address for this place was 1-3 Beech Avenue, Paisley

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

- 19.
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Beech Avenue Children’s Home, Paisley

30. I went back to my mum’s at [REDACTED] and things were just as they were before. There would be no food in the house, my mum wouldn’t be there half the time and if she was she would have different men with her. It was just a really unhappy place. Nothing ever changed at any time I got out of care. How things were was just normal for us and I know it sounds daft but that was how we were raised and we didn’t know any better. I don’t know if [REDACTED] came home as he was in a lot of children’s homes but I don’t think when we were returned that we all went back at the same time. I think it was over a couple of weeks.

31. Me and my two sisters were taken to Paisley social work department in Seedhill Road by my mum who was demanding we were taken into care as she couldn't cope. By this time [REDACTED] was in Ballikinrain Approved School in Stirling. She was asking them how she was supposed to be out drinking with us around and all the rest of it. Social work were telling her they wanted to help her keep us in the home. My mum said she was going to count to ten and if social work didn't take us she was "going to smash our cunts in". She said I would be getting it first. The social work asked her what she was talking about while my mum started counting. We were totally panicking because my mum was a violent scary person. She lunged towards us and went to punch but the social workers flew over the desk shouting at her about what she thought she was doing. This sort of thing wasn't a one off. On this occasion I believe social work tried to take us to a different room while someone tried to calm my mum down but she was trying to follow behind us.

Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

32. I am pretty sure we were taken straight to Gryffe from the social work office. I don't think it was rapid, there was some waiting around. I might even have gone to Chapel House for a couple of hours but I don't know. I was happy to be going to Gryffe as I wanted a wee break from my mum to be honest. I wanted to go to an approved school not children's homes. I wanted to go to Ballikinrain because my brother was there but they wouldn't take me. I did get nervous the closer we got as that's when it starts dawning on you what's actually happening. I was seven when I went there and I stayed until I was nine. My records show I was at Gryffe from [REDACTED] 1991 – [REDACTED] 1993 and was under a section 44 (1) (b). This is a supervision order which required me to reside in a residential establishment. It was that order that continued for all my following placements.
33. I just remember that the building looked very intimidating. It was like a big white mansion. I had never actually been in any sort of mansion before. I had seen them on the telly but to actually go in was quite a scary thing. When I compare the size of the

bedroom I shared with my sisters at Gryffe with my bedroom at home it was four or five times the size, it was that big.

34. It had a long drive of a quarter of a mile or something. It felt long when I was a wee boy. Half way up the road it forks and the one to the right takes you to Gryffe and the left takes you to the back cottage. At the front of the building there are two stone coloured pillars. There was a big wooded area beside the house as well as huge fields.
35. As you walk in the door there was a couple of wee steps and then a corridor that leads into the main hall area. From there it breaks off into different directions. As soon as you walk in on the left there was a pool room which was for the older guys and independent living unit. It was their chill out area which also had a telly and a Sega or Nintendo, whatever it was back then. On the opposite side down the corridor there was an office where the managing staff sat. Right next to the office you had a conference room which was used for meetings but it also had a pool table. If you went up a couple of steps and to the right was another corridor and you had a couple of cupboards, a shower area, another wee room and right at the end facing you was another room that they used to call my classroom. It was HGF a member of staff, who branded it as my classroom and it was a sick joke that kind of stuck.
36. Near the independent living unit past the offices was a set of stairs and at the top if you turned right was the family unit and to the left you go through another wee bit and there is a self-contained area for the adolescents.
37. Where the independent living chill out room was another corridor that twists and this is where the kitchen, pantry and dining area were. I believe that this corridor runs down the length of the building with cupboards down the bottom. Directly above this was the family unit. It was mainly for guys my age who had siblings although there was a couple of guys who were there without siblings. There were bedrooms and common areas there.
38. Although the family centre and independent living were separate we did mix and it wasn't unusual to use their chill out area if they didn't have a problem with you being

there. I got on with the older ones so I would go there and chill and they wouldn't say anything. Usually though the independent living and adolescent unit kept to themselves.

39. There was all different levels of maturity, the independent living are trying to do things for themselves and the adolescents were just the idiots. Then you would have the really young guys like me although the family unit had all sorts of ages to try and keep families together. Once you were old enough you would move to the adolescent unit. There was some really wee guys in Gryffe. At one time there was a boy about two and also five year olds. One time there was a very young baby and they didn't have a cot for it so they pulled out a top drawer, put all sorts of sheets in it and just kept the baby in the drawer. The older boys were just about adults. I would guess there was 15-20 kids living there but it would change. At weekends most people would be out on home leave and there would be next to no-one there and then there would be all these new faces when new people arrived. It wasn't a particularly big home.
40. The staff were quite cliquy, the managers and supervisors thought they were above the other care staff and they would sit in their office drinking coffee. There was a few folk who were quite high up but as to who was in charge of the place I don't know. The normal care staff were stuck with the weans. It seemed to me that there were wee factions between both groups of staff. In my unit you would have two or three different sets of staff. There wasn't really a lot of staff, I think each shift there would be three or four at a time with about ten on the shift system. Sometimes you could get staff from another unit coming to help but for the main part staff were based in their own units. I am not so sure about the management side which was mostly women. I didn't have much contact with them unless something happened. Any incidents of discipline or restraint were reported to them.
41. Over my time I had a couple of key workers but the only one I remember was called Brian Muir. He was a nice old guy, really good with his patter and really witty. If we were out in the minibus he would have everyone laughing. He knew what he was doing and he was good at it, keeping everyone happy and spirits high. He was in his fifties or sixties, had quite a good physique for his age and was quite a fit old guy. He had

grey hair and drove a red Rover although I am not sure of the model. He lived in a place called Johnstone. I couldn't say if my key worker worked the same shifts as the care staff. They seemed to know if I had been restrained but it wasn't like they cared. It would be comments about me being restrained again like it was just normal. In different places the key worker would take on a more active role but in Gryffe it seemed that this would be the person who would come to my reviews. They would also take you out to get you clothes but there was no one-to-one sessions or anything like that.

42. The person who caused me all my problems was called HGF. I remember her name as she is the only HGF I have ever known. She was care staff and worked in the family unit. She was probably about mid to late twenties and was quite an attractive woman but to me she was just a cow. I had a lot of problems with her. She was the type of woman who would suit working in a beautician as she was always filing her nails and doing her makeup. I didn't have a lot of problems with a lot of the staff it was only certain people. It was mostly all women who were care staff. I think there were a couple with the name Ellen or Helen.
43. I have no idea if the staff got any form of training but when I think back I don't think so. If you saw some of them they would never have passed any exams. Nowadays you can see people who are really good with weans and work with them. Then it was all sorts of people who might have been better working in different jobs. I don't think there was training in how to deal with kids like us and I would certainly say there wasn't any training in restraint techniques judging by the way I got treated.

Routine at Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

First day

44. We were still scared and worked up after my mum lunging for us in the social work office but in a way I was nervous and excited because I was getting away from her for a while. My sisters had been there before and they were telling me it was good and I would like it. The social worker drove us there and we were taken into an office where

we were told we were pretty much going to be staying there for a wee while. I remember getting shown the unit. I don't remember who spoke to us but I actually felt they were warm and friendly. HGF wasn't there at that time and I didn't meet her for another week later as she was on holiday. That week was okay as I was just getting used to what looked like a big and intimidating place.

Mornings and bedtime

45. I was there with my sisters and we shared a room. We each had a bed with a cabinet at the side. We each had a set of drawers and there were wardrobes too. We didn't have enough clothes to fill a drawer let alone a wardrobe. I could spend as much time as I wanted with them other than when we were at school. We got up between 7-7.30 am. The day was different for me depending whether I was excluded from school or not.
46. If I was at school I would wash my face, get dressed and go for breakfast. Then it would be on the bus for school. Sometimes the staff would take the kids to school, other times if the Balrossie bus was passing by they might grab kids and drop them off. Gryffe and Balrossie worked close with each other. Lunch was at school and then it would be a bus back. Sometimes it was an actual school bus we would get but there were incidents and fights which is why the staff started taking us to and from the school.
47. Bedtime was early, I think it was something like 8pm they would try and put you to bed. I think we got a wee bit later at the weekends. Sometimes it depended on the attitude of staff. As you came up the stairs to the top level and you turn right into the family unit you have a wee square of about a metre and there was a chair there where the night watchman sat. If there was any noise he was close enough he could come in. You could get up for a pee in the middle of the night but the watchman would shout at you. It was expected bedtime was bedtime, it was kind of strict.

Mealtimes/Food

48. There was one or maybe two cooks but I don't know if they were there together or worked at alternative times. The care staff very rarely cooked and if they had to it would be a sandwich. I think sometimes the cooks left food and the care staff served it.
49. Dinner was about 5pm and it was pretty sharp when you came back from school after we picked everyone up from all different schools. The food was actually pretty good. Everything was good compared to what I had before as I didn't really get food. I think it was good quality food and I couldn't complain about it. The portions were decent enough.
50. We ate with everyone else in the family unit in one of two rooms they used for dining. Staff would eat with us as well. I think we swapped between the two and the adolescent unit used the same rooms as we did but not at the same time. The independent mob cooked their own stuff. If I was expelled from school and HGF was on I would eat lunch in my classroom and a few times she made me eat my dinner in there too.
51. If we didn't eat our food the staff would threaten us that we wouldn't get a pudding or we wouldn't get to watch a video. We were never forced to eat anything, it was more a case of threats to take something else away. We would also be told we would go hungry and if you asked for a snack later you might have to wait until the following day before you got something to eat.
52. I always had a lot of trouble eating because of having gone so long without food when I was at home. At home I could have had a lunch at school and the next time I would eat again was lunch at school the next day. If you do that long enough when you see food you think you can demolish it but you can't. Once you start eating it hits your belly and then you start feeling sick so you are hungry but you just can't eat. It took a while before I could eat. I could eat a wee bit and then I would feel sick and half an hour later I would be starving again. I would tell staff I was hungry but they would say I have just wasted my dinner so I am getting nothing. I didn't talk about life at home when I was in any of the homes but I wouldn't have thought my home life would have been a

secret to the staff. I don't think these staff read the files because they didn't seem to have a clue about me.

Washing/bathing

53. We didn't shower in the morning it was just washing faces. There were no showers in the family unit but there was a bath and to this day it is the biggest and deepest bath I have ever seen. Bath days were a Tuesday or a Thursday so you had a bath once a week. Baths were in the evening and as long as you were in and out quickly you were left alone. Some staff would go in and bath kids. I always bathed myself as I don't like anyone to touch me. I was always conscious of being naked in front of people. It wasn't a case of them respecting my privacy. They were told it was either I bath alone or I am not going in.
54. They would tell us to brush our teeth but it wasn't really checked whether you had done it or not.

Clothing/uniform

55. When we arrived we had next to no clothes as my mum spent the money on drink. What we had was scruffy and dirty because we had been sleeping in our clothes. After we had been there for about two weeks they sorted out clothes for us. I think they wanted to see what was happening with us as I think it was maybe a bit unclear how long we were there for. We got new clothes and I hadn't really had new clothes before then as at home we got hand-me-downs. There were some times that Gryffe was a happy place and compared to what I had at home it was a nice change. I spent a lot of years in care and it wasn't all doom and gloom.
56. To be honest I was never at a school long enough to have a uniform but when I did they were second-hand.

Leisure time

57. We had pool tables and I believe there was a TV table but no one really bothered with that. There was a Sega or Nintendo. The better off boys would bring in their computer and we would all play on it. We didn't have a TV in our rooms in those days but there was the TV in the living room. Each unit had their own living room as each unit was like a self-contained place.
58. After school we could do our own thing but sometimes in the evening we might have an activity on. It was mostly at weekends but on the odd time during the week we would go to the video shop, grab a video and sit and watch it.
59. We could go outside and play. It was a big open space with a wooded area so we pretty much had the run of the place as long as we didn't make a nuisance of ourselves.
60. Weekends depended on what the staff wanted to do. Thinking back to it HGF held a lot of weight probably because a lot of the male staff were younger guys in their twenties and she was quite an attractive woman. It was quite cheesy but they would go out of their way to please her and she would take advantage of that. She knew what she was doing. She did the same with the older boys as well, leaning in and kind of flirting. She was able to work them. I would imagine they had sexual thoughts about her but I didn't. Apart from not liking her I was just a young boy who wasn't thinking like that. HGF seemed to be on most weekends so if there was a film on at the cinema she wanted to see, or if her daughter wanted to see something, we would go. It felt pretty much like she was taking her daughter and we were just tagging along. If we weren't doing anything else we would just go outside and play in the grounds.
61. On a Saturday morning they would usually take us somewhere like Johnstone which is probably the biggest town locally between Paisley and Bridge of Weir. We would go to Woolworths to spend our pocket money. We would spend about an hour and a half there.

Trips and holidays

62. I remember we went to Millport on the isle of Cumbrae. I went once with the school and about a week later I went with Gryffe. I didn't like getting taken to lots of places because I was always getting into trouble.

Schooling

63. I think at this time I was in Our Lady of Peace Primary School, Linwood. I had a lot of problems at school so I was suspended a lot and that meant I saw more of the same care staff than most people did. Anyone going to school would be out the door for 8.30 am so by 8.35 am anyone left was not going to school for whatever reason. Out of the family unit I was the only one having problems at school.
64. I was sent to the room they called my classroom. The door wasn't locked but I was the only person in this section of the building other than a couple of women working in offices. I believe back in the day when it was a castle this would be like the staff quarters. The window used to open and when I was first getting sent to this room I used to escape through the window. They clicked onto that and they got the handyman to put wee blocks of wood in so it could only open a few inches. Someone would come in every hour or couple of hours. I have no idea who made the decision that I would be sent to this room but I could also be sent here during the school holidays. If I wasn't going home and was maybe the only one in the unit I would be put in this room.
65. It was only very rarely that other kids wouldn't be going to school and it would be older people from the adolescent unit. I don't know what happened to them, they must have been kept in their unit but I never really saw them.
66. The schools I went to when at Gryffe were South, St Charles's, Hunterhill Tutorial Centre and Our Lady of Peace, which were primary schools in Paisley except Our Lady of Peace which was in Linwood. When I think of the reasons I was suspended or expelled this is where the madness comes in. I was a thief and shoplifter. This started because we had no food at home so it was out of necessity. We were quite disturbed children and we were different from the rest. Our behaviour was quite violent but it was just our behaviour in general that was different from other children. In The

South it was just fighting but in St Charles's it got a bit more serious with knives and the fights got a lot more vicious. People would try and bully us all the time because of how we dressed and that would cause fights.

67. For as long as I can remember I have always had a fascination for knives which goes back to being disturbed. Back then hearing someone say "I'm gonna stab fuck out of you" or "I am going to rip you open" was common. It was regular that I would be in fights. Once I absconded from one of my schools and just before leaving I had said I had a knife even though I didn't. Before I returned I found a knife and put it down my waistband. It was just pure bad luck. I went back and was hanging about the school area and the janitor saw me. I always got on well with him and he brought me back in. He took me to the headmistresses office and she asked me about threatening to rip people open and stab them. She asked me if I had a knife on me and I produced the knife I had found. I tried to explain I didn't have it until I absconded but of course it wasn't believed. There were a lot of incidents with bringing weapons into school. I think I was expelled from Hunterhill because I trashed the headmistresses office.
68. There didn't seem to be anyone who was looking at ways for me to get an education. Apart from looking for new school placements there was nothing. I did have a psychologist called Rosalind Redpath who was always at my reviews doing her bit but no one ever took me aside and explained what they were trying to work out for me. I remember meeting Rosalind Redpath a few times. I cannot remember what we spoke about but I remember being in her company.

Social Work Contact

69. An official visit from social work would be in the conference room but if not it could be in the living room or bedroom. Sometimes they would take you out in the grounds. It varied and depended what they wanted to do.
70. I think at the start I saw social workers quite regularly as they didn't know what was going to happen. I think we were put to Gryffe for our own safety because of my mum's threats. Maybe it was once a fortnight or once a month. I think they spoke to me and

my sisters together and then spoke to us separately. They would sometimes take us out and we would go to a café and get a bite to eat. We didn't really do activities with them but they would take us away from the home and then take us back.

71. Staff would change when social workers or other visitors would come. The care staff would walk about smoking cigarettes around us. It didn't matter what kids were about they would sit about with their feet up smoking and drinking coffee. If visitors would come in they would open the windows and waft the cigarette smoke out the window and all of a sudden we would be asked if we wanted to do things. It was like an attitude and personality change.
72. It might have been that when I was in Gryffe we were in Hawkhead Hospital and other family care centres to try and help my mum cope better. Hawkhead wasn't a medical hospital it was more for people with psychiatric problems. I don't really know the purpose of the place but it was where families went when they were having problems. There were psychiatrists or psychologists working there. At first I thought they must have thought there was something wrong with us with the way [REDACTED] and I were behaving. It turned out they realised it was just lack of discipline and pure neglect that made us behave the way we did.

Healthcare / medication

73. If you were ill the staff would ask what was wrong with you. Calpol was like their wonder drug. If you felt sick or had a sore head then you got Calpol. I don't think I had any health conditions to complain about.
74. I didn't see a dentist at Gryffe.
75. When I went into Gryffe I would have got a medical. You got medicals whenever you went into somewhere in care. I think I would have had my medical pretty quick after arriving, maybe the first couple of days.

Work

76. We had to help with the dishes sometimes, like clearing up. I don't think there was a rota, it was just a case of staff picking some of us to help. Sometimes we would say that we had done it last night and they would say something along the lines of right enough and choose someone else. It was pretty much down to the staff's discretion. It was domestics who came in and did all the cleaning. They would be in during the day and do our rooms and things like that.

Birthdays and Christmas

77. I think I would have had two birthdays at Gryffe. I probably got a cake or something but I certainly don't remember gifts from mum. It wasn't something we got.
78. I think I went home for Christmas once when I was at Gryffe. The other I would have stayed there. I cannot remember for sure. At Christmas time we would maybe get a couple of selection boxes, a pair of socks and a couple of t-shirts from mum but that was it. It wasn't special so I had no expectations.

Personal possessions

79. I have never had anything so I had nothing to take. We never really got toys or such. Maybe one of my pals might have given me something but it would be one of their toys that was broken.

Pocket Money

80. I think we got pocket money and it was about £3.50 or £3.60 that we got once a week on the Saturday morning. We used to get it like wage packets in wee brown envelopes.

Bed Wetting

81. Sometimes I had to urinate in my bedroom because they wouldn't let me leave to go to the toilet. I would tell them repeatedly that I was bursting before I would do it. Most of the time I wasn't allowed out of my room as a punishment or way to control me. The staff would then shout all sorts of abuse at me and humiliate me in front of everyone else. They would get the older boys to "rip the pish" out of me
82. Sometimes I actually wet the bed and it was a mistake. The staff would try and humiliate you in front of the other kids. I would need to hold the bed sheets until a member of staff told me I could put them down. I had these urinated sheets and I would just need to stand there with them. Other boys would pass me and ask why I was holding them and I would tell them it was nothing but the care staff would jump in and tell me to tell them why. I had to say I had wet the bed. It was just a humiliation tactic, I know that now.

Culture

83. The place was full of bullying and I got it mainly because I was malnourished and really skinny, I didn't have good clothes or the best of trainers like some of them. The bullying could be anything from name calling to straight up violence.
84. There were times when other children would urinate on the clothes you had in the drawer or they would urinate over your bed. They would also take a crap in your bed. Just really disgusting things.
85. For a lot of this behaviour I don't think the staff cared as those who were getting bullied were pupils the staff despised. I would say a lot of the staff hated some of the kids. I don't think they understood if you have a lot of disturbed weans you are going to get conflict. Everywhere in life where you have people confined together you are going to get bullies.

Visitors

86. I don't remember any official visitors but you would get the Who Cares mob coming in to talk to you.

Family Contact

87. Occasionally people had access visits in Gryffe for whatever reason they couldn't get home. I know I certainly had them for a while. Maybe you would see other people's parents or relatives coming.
88. I don't think I got home leave right away because there was a supervision order. My mum would come to see us but most of the time she didn't show up. If it was weekend leave she would try and change it because she didn't want to be visiting weans instead of going out drinking. She would blatantly say things like that. When she did show up she didn't really pay any interest. To be honest she was more up for the social workers benefit than for ours. She had very little interaction with us. We would see her in the conference room that had the pool table in it. That was the room used for access visits. I would play pool with my sisters or if [REDACTED] came up with my mum I would play pool with him. My mum would only want to join in if one of the care staff came in. The visits were not all supervised but some were. Even the supervised visits you would find whoever was supervising would disappear for ten minutes to get a cup of tea. I didn't feel safe during these visits because my mum was unpredictable but I never really felt safe ever. Not before or during care.
89. There were efforts made to keep me, my sisters and brother in contact. Sometimes we would go to Ballikinrain or he would come to us. A lot of the time we were booked to visit him he was already away as he was one for running away as well. I think it was a monthly access we all got although our visits to him would be cancelled if he had absconded. When he came we wouldn't run away but we would disappear into the grounds so we could have our wee time together. We wouldn't talk in front of other people. My mum wasn't always involved in these visits. She got involved when it was a family visit. After I went to Gryffe there weren't many occasions when we were

actually all together. The visits were a good thing but we didn't always come away from them feeling good. We sometimes had an argument as maybe my brother would be going through some stuff and wouldn't be in the mood for the visit.

90. I couldn't phone my brother as much as I wanted but if I said to staff they would come back maybe a few days later having arranged a call.
91. My mum told us we were not allowed to make any contact with any of the other members of our family during the time I was in Gryffe. I was at my mum's mercy. It was either my mum or nobody. I knew my gran's address so me and my gran were writing to each other. I would write her a wee letter and send her pictures I had drawn. A long time later but before I went to Woodlands I was in my gran's house with my mum and she found out I had sent gran a letter and a picture. She said at the time that it was nice and by the time I got home I had forgotten about it. Mum battered me with a belt for talking to my gran when she had told me not to.
92. My mum had a few altercations with staff but her and HGF were always at each other's throats. I am not sure why it was like that, I knew what my mum was like but I also knew what HGF was like as well. All the kids could be in the unit and these two would be heavy screaming at each other in front of everyone. I reckon this is why HGF really hated me, it was more to do with my mum.
93. Once when my mum was there for a visit we were in the minibus and she was charging towards it with a house brick in one hand and a bottle of beer in the other. She tried to put the brick through the window because we were on the bus.

Home Visits

94. There was quite a lot of time during my stay at Gryffe I was getting home leave but later on that stopped. I believe it started with me getting day access to my mum's house for a while and she was coming to Gryffe. Eventually I started to get weekends at home and I believe I was getting some overnight stays during the week . Sometimes because of incidents that would happen at home I would refuse to go for weeks at a

time and other times I would go home and refuse to go back to Gryffe. I wouldn't talk to staff about my reasons for refusing to go home. I found it hard to talk about my home life, what I was feeling and what I was going through. The threats from my mum were real and there was a risk of anything I said being carried back to her at one of my reviews.

95. I was going home with fresh bruises and my mum wouldn't mention it and I was going back to Gryffe with different bruises and nobody would mention it. No one really bothered about the condition I came back in. I never showed the staff my bruises but if I was running about playing football and it was hot I would take my top off. My bruises were blatantly there if anyone had bothered to check. I think they knew how much they restrained me so were never sure if they had caused the bruises or not.

96. During home visits I would get battered off my mother or whatever one of her boyfriends were there. It could go from walking sticks, belts, slippers, punches, open hand hits or getting choked. I remember one of my mum's boyfriends battered me behind the bedroom door and then he kept smashing the door off me. I don't know how he done it but he actually hung me up. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] it was all mad stuff like that. There wasn't a single home leave that we were not getting assaulted. That was if they were there at all. I didn't know what was best, them being there or not. They would be there on the Friday for us getting there but then go out and come back the early hours of Sunday morning, if that. There were times she didn't even come back.

97. Sometimes she would get back late on the Saturday night or early hours of Sunday morning. I remember she would come back with a pizza but there would be no food in the house. She would call us things like "ungrateful wee bastards" and tell us she had bought us a pizza. Bearing in mind we didn't have a microwave or anything but that was what she expected us to eat. We didn't stay in the house much after she left. We went out and done some shoplifting for food as we had to eat. We did what we had to do to survive.

98. Social workers were aware of a lot of this. Sometimes she would say to them that she had left us with sixteen year old babysitters but that wasn't happening. It would have been easy for them to check on what was actually happening at home.
99. On one of the times I was on home leave with my sisters they were playing with matches and the curtains went on fire. The ceilings had polystyrene tiles so all of that went up in flames. The whole living room was pretty much uninhabitable. We moved into my bedroom but we were still getting home leave after that with the house in that state. Then the social workers told my mum that the house wasn't suitable and they told us that they were stopping all home leave until mum got new accommodation sorted out.

Running away

100. Running away was pretty much a daily thing. I would just run away and either stay within the grounds in a big wooded area or otherwise hit the town. Sometimes I would try and make my way to Paisley. I only made it to Paisley once and that was when I sneaked into the minibus. Bridge of Weir is not too far away from Paisley but it's all main roads which are really busy so unless you stick to the cycle tracks it wasn't easy to get there. Mainly I would just mess about the town. I would get into trouble occasionally for shoplifting but mainly for fighting. I didn't get caught stealing a lot, I was quite a good thief actually because at that age I had become quite clued up. The police were never really involved and I was never charged with anything at that time. When I came back I would be put into my room and my shoes would be taken off me for the rest of the night. It didn't bother me as I would have been in my room for the rest of the night anyway.
101. The only time I wouldn't run away is when I didn't have any shoes but I would either borrow someone else's shoes or steal them. Then I was off again. Sometimes I would run away with other boys from my unit but more often than not I was alone.
102. When I was really struggling with my mental health I would phone my brother and tell him what was going on. He would tell me he would come and get me. He would come

in a stolen car, he wasn't actually driving it was one of his mates he ran about with. He would toot the horn and I would escape. Then we would go away in the car for a while.

Review of detention/hearings/external inspections

103. I would have my reviews which would have me, my mum, social workers, maybe my key worker and someone to take notes but I don't know if that was done by one of the people I just mentioned. There would be a senior social worker and a child psychologist or psychiatrist who would have put their reports in. I think these were six monthly reviews of my situation. Every year I would also go to the children's panel for a review. The six monthly reviews were done at Gryffe but I had to travel to the annual reviews at the children's panel in Paisley.
104. I thought the reviews were crap. I didn't really understand what was happening and my mum was very contradictory. One minute she was threatening our lives and the next minute she was threatening the social workers telling them they were taking us nowhere. My mum used to tell us not to do as we were told. She would tell us to kick off and set fires. She was telling us that if we talked to social workers she would kill us. She told us she would know what we said. She terrified us and she said all of this in front of the social workers. She would say that if I went away and set a fire I would get where [REDACTED] was. It was all twisted stuff. I never really said much as I was too intimidated by her to be honest. I was terrified and I never felt safe. Mainly because of my mum but the children's home and even some of the kids had their own dangers.
105. I may have had other children's hearings before Gryffe but it was from that time I remember them. I remember a couple of them and they were terrible. I remember sitting in the waiting room once waiting to get called into a review. I was always a nosy wee guy and the door was ajar. When I put my ear up to it they were sitting discussing us. I said to mum that they are talking about us and she came up to listen as well. That meant that they had already been talking amongst themselves and had decided what was going to happen before I even walked in the door.

106. I have always had a mistrust for all these social workers and anyone like that. I didn't really talk much and if I did I would be nervous because of what my mum had been saying. I didn't know who to trust so I wouldn't talk and I wouldn't open up. I wouldn't talk about my home life or my personal life.
107. At some point someone would have taken me aside and asked me what I was feeling and what I wanted but all I can say is you would need to read my files to understand what my mum was like at these meetings. She was very explosive and very threatening towards me and towards whoever was attending. She would say I was going to get stabbed or threaten people who were there. People were taking notes as it was done in front of everyone. She would also say things like you better not be behaving yourself, you better be smashing windows or fighting with so and so. She didn't try to hide it.
108. At my reviews a lot of things went over my head as I didn't understand what they were saying. There was no way I could ask anything anyway with my mum growling away at me.

Discipline

109. The discipline became physical, like slaps and chokes.

Abuse at Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

110. My classroom was a wee room with a desk, a chair and a window. That was it. They would put me in there from about half eight to nine and that was it, that was me until about 3 pm. I didn't have any schooling but sometimes they would come in with a book or a magazine and tell me to copy out a bit of writing from an article or paragraph. I would be given a pad and a pencil or pen. It was just to give me something to do and I just thought I am not doing it. Sometimes HGF would come in and she wouldn't even see if I had done the work or not. She would say it was "fucking shite" before ripping up the paper and walking out. At lunchtimes I wasn't allowed out of the room

so I ate my lunch in there. HGF would come in with a sandwich or a roll and a wee juice like the wee box of juice you can get. You could always tell who had made it. If the cook had made it, it would be really nice but if HGF had made it you would get two bits of bread, no butter and a cheese slice or one slice of cold meat. So it was just like dry bread and my juice. She was a pure cow, she would sometimes come in holding the plate in one hand and the juice in the other and tip the plate up before opening the juice and taking a drink out of it. She would say something like 'there's your lunch' before walking away.

111. There was a lot of mental abuse, like psychological stuff. After months in my classroom my mental state got bad. It would have been when I was either nearly nine or just turned nine I would be sitting on the floor with my knees up just rocking back and forward and the staff would laugh at me. I wouldn't even be aware I was doing it until someone came in and then I would be non-responsive and spaced out. Fiona who was one of the cooks who made the cracking sandwiches would chap the window when she was going home. I could open the window a few inches and she would pass me sweets and lollipops. She would ask me how I was getting on and tell me to cheer up. She knew I would be in the room and she would always pop round. I think she could tell there was something wrong with me. I think that maybe she questioned me being in that wee room and I think a couple of other people did too. I think a woman called Ellen or Helen O'Neil who was the other cook came in as well. She tried to cheer me up. She knew some of my family members. I actually heard people swearing asking what was going on and to look at the nick of me. I believe she was one who raised concerns about me and I didn't see her again after that. I think it was this wee room that broke me. I would say I was a bucket of depression and I kind of gave up. I wouldn't talk to anyone and I wouldn't eat. Any chance I got I would run away. I don't think I can fully explain just how bad I got but I think this definitely influenced the way I behaved when I moved from Gryffe.
112. I am not actually sure of times but I would be in this room a lot. Sometimes it was days at a time, sometimes weeks or months. It depended on how long I was suspended or excluded from school. Sometimes I would be taken from this room to my bedroom with

a member of staff sitting outside to make sure I didn't leave. That is how my routine was, it wasn't like the others.

113. HGF would turn other people against me so she could get the older boys to attack me. There was a lot of that. She would tell me that she was going to get me battered and it just happened half an hour later three boys would come to leather me. I remember a guy called [REDACTED] was one of her favourites. He was what you might class as the top boy, the hardest fighter, the toughest guy. He was about fourteen or fifteen. We were all weans compared to the size and age of him. I was just a scrawny malnourished wee boy who got thrown about like an empty tracksuit. If I was leathered it would be them punching me to the ground and then kicking and stamping on me. Although getting battered seemed to last ages at the time it was a fast thing, probably fifteens seconds. They would laugh at me and spit on me before they went. If I had sweeties lying about they wouldn't think twice about taking them.
114. HGF would also try and turn the whole unit against me. Just say it was a video night and the kids would be asking about it. She would tell them it wasn't happening and to blame me. It was the same if they asked to go to the park or somewhere in the minibus she would refuse and tell them to blame me.
115. HGF would bring her daughter to the unit a lot when she was working at the weekends. Whatever her daughter wanted to do was our plans for the weekend. It was just how she spoke to me or about me. She would refer to me as "a wee prick" to her daughter and tell her that if I look at her or try to talk to her she was to tell her mum. Her name was [REDACTED] and she was a stuck up little bitch. She would speak about me like "that just tried to talk to me" and HGF would shout at me to get into my room. This went on for about two years.
116. I think HGF tried to intimidate me and it didn't work. I know she hated that. A lot of people were scared of her. I had been through so much by that time there was nothing she could do to me.

117. The staff were quite rough handed especially the guys. It was always the same, if they saw you struggling with a woman the guys came in all heavy handed. Bearing in mind I was aged 7-9 years old and very small for my age. HGF would make it worse by shouting things like she was scared just to see me getting slammed and restrained. As I was being restrained she would be digging her long nails right into my wrist or digging her thumb into my back trying to get me to scream. I tried never to show how sore or upset I was but afterwards there would be tears in my room.
118. Staff used restraining a lot. There wasn't any sort of technique, it was just grabbing and holding down. Sometimes it could be your arms twisted up your back or your arms straight out in front of you as you were face down and other times one arm twisted and the other not. Sometimes they would hold you down and another time it was thumbs into pressure points. When I was being held down the length of time I was on the ground depended on how much resistance I gave. I normally would try and fight back because I have never liked anyone touching me. I think this is because I wasn't used to touch or affection as a wean so I am as cuddly as a cactus. It was usually about three staff restraining me and I would be responding to them by struggling back. I would be kicking off. If you don't do anything you are at their mercy. I know it sounds stupid but if you struggled it was less painful for me because whatever training they did have would kick in. They would sit on me sometimes by straddling me. I would be face down with someone sitting over my back, another might have one arm or maybe both arms held above my head and sometimes someone else would be holding my face down. Sometimes I would feel I couldn't breathe but I never passed out. I didn't feel they had a certain technique it was just however they could grab you and the takedown was usually the worst. I was always really small so some of them could pick me up and slam me down on the floor. It knocked the wind right out of me and I would be struggling to breathe whilst feeling panic as well. It was always a scary situation. I remember all of the staff using restraint but most of them would try and calm you down once restrained. HGF would try and wind me up whether it was wee sly digs, which were physical or verbal. Don't get me wrong the staff were heavy handed when restraining but with HGF she would try to wind me up. They used restraint if you refused to do something they told you such as being sent to your room. They would

try and drag you but any sort of resistance and they were on you. Other kids got restrained for their own reasons it was just part of being there.

119. I have no idea if staff ever recorded the times they restrained me and I am hoping there will be details of this in my records. I know in other places they recorded it as I was aware. I think Woodlands, Secondary Institutions - to B even Balrossie recorded the restraining. I actually think in these places they would sit down with me when I calmed down and go over it with me. No one at Gryffe ever showed me what they had recorded about the incidents I was involved in.
120. Staff used to terrify me with ghost stories. This was a big mansion type building and everywhere I went there was a ghost story. There was a room called the back rec which was a recreation room which looked like a miniature gymnasium. HGF or some of the other male staff would take you in there, just push you in and hold the door shut.
121. HGF slapped me one time. We were only allowed to watch channels two and four because you would get kids programmes on channels one and three after school. I think it was over the school holidays and I was watching some kids programmes but I was completely zoned out. She said she had told me that I was only allowed to watch channels two and four. I answered her all cocky saying that it was channel two and she just slapped my face and told me I wasn't getting to watch anything. I felt that anything that I took any sort of enjoyment out of it was taken away.
122. HGF was always verbally abusive towards me and she didn't hide it in front of the other staff. She had an air about her and the other staff either fancied or feared her. We never saw much of the supervising mob. She seemed to carry a lot of weight in the place. It wasn't just me, she talked in a crap way to a lot of the kids, called them names and gave them some verbal.
123. I would say there was some kind of conflict every day. Whether it was because of something that had happened at school or with me and the staff. They were verbally abusive and I would just react to it. It wasn't the case of one or two incidents all of this stuff happened every single day for two years.

124. There was a time when I was in my classroom and they were doing work on the floor of the shower area next to it for a couple of days. The workers that were there were outside contractors. They were already working when HGF was taking me to my room and one of the guys looked like he gave me a dirty look. HGF said to him that if I gave him any cheek he was just to hit me a belt because no one will bother. She also asked him to grab me if I ran past him. He said to me that he wasn't a member of care staff and if anything happens he would "kick my cunt in". I opened the door a few times and he would say to me if I came out I would be getting it. He was an intimidating guy. A few hours later I opened the door and I could hear laughing and joking. It turned out the guy had left his cigarettes at the far end of the bathroom on one of the sinks. As he has done his work from the far end toward the door he has realised he has forgotten his cigarettes and lighter and he can't get them because of all the fresh concrete. It was him and another contractor that were laughing because of this. As soon as they left to let the floor dry I went out for his cigarettes. I remember thinking bingo because of the way he had talked to me and got footprints all over the cement. I also had his cigarettes and lighter and I went into one of the cubicles to smoke them. I had a wee giggle to myself about the footprints so I decided to get my finger and write my name in the cement as well. I went back into my room and about fifteen minutes later the guys come back in a pure rage because of the footprints. It was clear where I had gone. HGF was with him and he was shouting and swearing asking what I had done with his cigarettes. I was scared but my mouth runs like I am not scared and I swore at him. He punched me one square in the belly and I folded over and fell. He knocked the wind right out of me. This was done in front of HGF but I don't know if the other contractor was there or not. I was struggling to breathe but I knew not to panic. He was right in my face shouting about his fags and I put my finger up at him. He just walked off in a rage. I was just left there. I don't think I told anyone about it.

Reporting of abuse at Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

125. I was constantly making complaints but the way they saw it, it became a bit of a joke. Everywhere I went supervisors would be thinking he has been restrained and here comes the complaints. I would complain to any of the managers, any who would listen. I would tell them I wanted to make a complaint. I would tell them what had happened but they never actually wrote it down. They would tell me they would put it on file. It was like they would listen to me ranting and then say stuff like 'aw right wee man we will take that on board'. There was no consequence for me making these complaints. It made no difference how I behaved, good or bad, I would still get restrained.
126. Now and again social workers came in but they never really done anything. I would have told them about me being in the room every day but they never done anything about it. The way they saw it was Gryffe is going to run the place how Gryffe wants to run itself.
127. I told my social workers that I was getting restrained quite a lot. I believe it will be in my files as they have probably taken a note but they never really done anything that I was aware of.

Leaving Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

128. We hadn't been having home leave for a couple of months because of the fire damage but I was always told I would get to go back once my mum sorts out her accommodation.
129. There was a children's hearing before I moved from Gryffe to Woodlands. I think it had already been decided I was moving. They didn't really tell me a lot or talk directly to me because they knew I couldn't give them an answer because of my mum. I was in such a position, every time there was a question aimed at me I was getting daggers from my mum or she would kick my legs to warn me to shush. Her behaviour will be well documented. I know it sounds a bit farfetched but she didn't hide her behaviour.

For formalities I had to do a visit even though it was already decided that this was my next placement. When I think back it annoys me that they made decisions about me and I wasn't really consulted or considered but they never told me the truth anyhow. That is how I had a pure distrust and disregard for authority.

130. It turns out I had been given a 52 week placement and no one ever told me. The people at the hearing would have decided this and they certainly didn't tell me. Any time I asked I was just told I was there until my mum got her new house. It was everybody including care staff and social workers who told me this rubbish. I only found out about the duration of my placement from my records. My sisters didn't move with me as I think by this time they were in foster care. I think they went back to my mums for a wee bit but then my mum lost her parental rights for my sisters and they went to permanent foster carers. I am not completely sure of the timeline but I'm pretty sure it was around the time I was going to Woodlands.
131. The staff told me I was going to this place called Woodlands for a visit. I was told I was going there and the visit was just a formality. There was a really nice women in Gryffe whose name I think was Maggie Bryson. She had an accent which might have been Irish. I was crap at accents then but I knew she spoke different from me. She knew a Woodlands and she told me her husband used to work there. It turns out her husband had been done with some historical child abuse things out there and it was well known amongst the staff at Gryffe. The staff would say that it was a pity that Maggie's husband wouldn't be there as he would love me and I had no idea what they were talking about. It took me a while to work that out.
132. I was on the phone to my brother telling him they were sending me to somewhere called Woodlands and he hadn't heard of it. We were clued up about schools and children's homes and we had never heard of the place.
133. They certainly didn't mention anything about the distance on the first visit. I was naïve and thought it was going to be close. I think a normal drive is about an hour and a half but because of traffic it took us about two and a half hours. I had never travelled this far in my life so I was getting car sick. I had never been car sick before. When I got

there it was just a pure culture shock. I didn't have a clue what any of them were saying because they had a different accent. I had a strong Paisley accent at the time and I now know that their accent is called Galloway Irish. They were using words like 'ah ken' and they used 'ken' a lot but I didn't have any idea what they meant. I would say wan and two and they would say it like yin and twa. It was an absolute curve ball to me.

134. It was Grace Cameron who drove me and I think my mum was there and maybe my key worker. If it wasn't the key worker then it might have been two social workers. By the time I got there I was tired and crabbit but at the same time I was excited as I just wanted away from Gryffe. It was a lot to take in. It was a bigger building than Gryffe and I thought Gryffe was intimidating. The boys were all a lot older and bigger with ripped physiques. I liked the look of the place but they only show you the good bits for the visit. I quite liked the feel of the place and I thought that compared to Gryffe it was nice. There might have been a meeting with staff but I don't remember, I certainly wouldn't have said anything because my mum was there and I would have been threatened not to speak to them. I left quite excited apart from the distance because I didn't see why it had to be so far away. I realise now there might have been reasons for that but I don't know.

Woodlands Children's Home, Newton Stewart

135. It was a huge tall building. I was in a unit called the Flat which was at the very top of the building. Below that you had a unit called the Uppers, below that a unit called the Inners and below that on the first floor was a unit called the Lower. Outside of the building there was another building which was called the Bungalow. That was a separate unit for the girls and some of the more vulnerable boys.
136. In my unit as you enter at the top of the stairs on the right hand side there was another door and that would take you up to the attic. To the left you have two bathrooms, one was just a toilet and the other had a bath and shower. Further along that corridor there was the kitchen. Off the kitchen straight ahead you had two bedrooms and further

along you have the entrance to the living room and that led into a wee dining room area. Then there was a door with a really steep staircase going down to the next level. There was another bedroom on the other side before you got to the living room. The Flat was self-contained as was every unit on each of the floors. You could mix with the other boys from different units at class or after school if we played football. There were staircases but they were more for emergency exits. If you wanted a friend from another unit to visit you would have to ask staff and they would arrange it.

137. Every unit had their own staff. The staff who worked in my unit were Craig Williamson and Ian Shankland, They were pretty cool guys. When it came to any violence or aggression Ian took a back step, he didn't like any of that sort of thing. Obviously if any staff needed his help he was there but he never started anything. I would say he was gentle natured. There was a couple of other guys but I don't remember their names. If they were short staffed then staff would work in another unit but usually they kept to their own. Ian was in his late twenties or early thirties I would say. He was a mad homosexual. It was ripping out of him a wee bit but I wouldn't say he was super camp. He was all right and quite a cool guy. I think he was genuinely a decent guy and in fact I think he was my key worker for a while. Craig was about the same age, with the same build but maybe a bit taller than Ian. He was all right as well. I had run ins with every member of staff but that just happens when you are in care. I think there was Morag Robertson or Robinson and HFR or something like that. HFR was like a witch, an evil nasty woman. She had an accent which I couldn't tell at the time if it was Welsh or Irish. She came across as a sweet old woman but she was twisted. There was a woman called Ann Miller, her real name is Pamela Miller but she went with the name Ann. I really liked her and she was one of the staff when I first started I couldn't make out what she was saying. She was the first Londoner I had heard. She would come in in the mornings all full of beans and call people ducks. She said things like 'good morning my little chickadees' but it was like she was singing it. I would ask her why she was calling me a duck and what a chickadee was. I liked her because she was a bit bonkers. She saw the funny side of how I was struggling with all the mad accents. I had a lot of time for her. At night the care staff went home and a night watchman would come in.

138. It was weird as they had two sets of staff and every second weekend or on holidays you would have a different team of staff. These staff would run things with you so it was all activities. We had Bobby and his wife Betty Dalziel. Sometimes it would just be me there when they were on or maybe another couple of boys. If there was anyone in the Uppers they would join us after the assembly on a Friday and once all the boys who had home leave were heading off. They would sit me and whoever else was staying and ask what our plans were for the weekend. They would go through things with us like what's for dinner tonight and what's for lunch tomorrow. They would make a plan with us then we would go shopping on the Friday for the stuff. They were very accommodating and it was all about what we wanted as opposed to being told what we were getting. They slept on fold down Z beds in the unit with us. The other units had HGH and his wife .
139. There was also Mr and Mrs Malcolm who did the same job as Bobby and his wife. He had been there for thirty years or something by the time I got there and a lot of people despised the guy. I really liked him though. He ran the local karate club and he was right into his martial arts. He used to take me and show me all his weapons. He gave me a sword Secondary Institutions - to be published later He asked me about the knives I possessed and I said I had a few wee lock backs and wee knives. He gave me other things like ninja stuff just to show there was no threat or danger from them. I think that is how I bonded with some staff because we had some things in common. I could talk to him about weapons all day long but start talking about my personal stuff and I would be off. I suppose I was quite selfish as it was always on my terms.
140. Mixing the bungalow pupils with the units at weekends and holidays was crazy because the boys in the bungalow were very vulnerable. Some of the boys from the other units were violent and that was something they could never be prepared for. It would be like dropping a kid from a normal happy family into Woodlands. It was a culture shock for them to see how abusive the staff were to the boys from the units but to us this was normal. We couldn't understand why they weren't treated the way we were.

141. A lot of pupils didn't know who the weekend staff were as they would be on home leave. Likewise the weekend staff didn't know a lot of the pupils. I would be telling my friends that Bobby or Betty had taken me somewhere and they didn't know who I was talking about. If I was telling Bobby or Betty about fights I had had they had no idea who the pupils were. Eventually over time they all met each other but it seemed the two different groups of care staff were very separate.
142. I am pretty sure within each of the units there were unit managers so there would always be one who was a bit more senior. I didn't know their title. I think some were called co-ordinators and others unit managers. I believe Morag was the head honcho and if not she was up there within my unit. They also had people whose job was to catch you if you ran away. We called them the kid catchers. I remember [REDACTED] whose surname I think might have been [REDACTED] was the guy who ran after us if we were running around the grounds. The only roles I ever saw him doing was the kid catcher and sometimes he drove one of the minibuses to drop the boys off.
143. There were a couple of people who ran the place. I don't know who was the head and who was the deputy head. One was Paul Maitchell and the other was Peggy Smith. You had people who were head of care and others who were head of education. Those in education worked during the day more like around school hours. I would see them during school times as we had a lot of problems within the school and it was them who would come and deal with you. I think George Epsworth might have been head of education and David Drake was head of care. I may have got those two roles mixed up but I am pretty sure the names are correct. There was also teaching staff who worked at the school and they were completely separate to the care staff. I do not know if the teaching staff had any sort of specialist training to deal with challenging kids. It didn't seem they had any training in restraining us. Only very rarely did a member of the school staff come in to help cover if there was a care staff shortage over the school holidays. I was under the impression the Church of Scotland ran the place but I don't really know.
144. I think Woodlands had 30-40 pupils in total and in my unit there would be five or six boys. It was two to a bedroom. I think one of the rooms had something like three or

four beds in it. They weren't all occupied but if they needed them they could make space. I would say I was two years younger than the youngest of the kids there. I think it was unheard of at the time to have someone there who was my age. I remember much later another younger guy arriving. I think there was some sixteen year olds but it tended to be fifteen was the oldest age. The boys in my unit were aged 12-13.

145. I don't know why a lot of the kids were there but most of them got home every weekend or every other weekend. It was the same with the school holidays a lot of boys would go home for them. I never had any home leave at Woodlands until the lead up to me leaving. We had three separate buses. We had one for the Glasgow area, one for Edinburgh and one for the Ayrshire areas. They had a couple of boys from Aberdeen and they were taken in the Glasgow bus and they were flown to Aberdeen every weekend.

146. HFM [REDACTED] is a guy who was a member of care staff but not in my unit. I had problems with him [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED]. I would say he was six feet tall, he was in his late forties or early fifties, strong looking and he had previously had a stroke [REDACTED]. When he [REDACTED] he was called HFM [REDACTED].

Routine at Woodlands Children's Home, Newton Stewart

First day

147. I don't recall the date I started but it seemed to be really fast after the visit. I was nine years old. My records show I arrived on [REDACTED] 1993 and stayed until [REDACTED] 1996 under a Section 44 (1)(b) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. My records show that Woodlands and Merton Hall were one placement although they were two separate places that merged. I was quite excited and hyper about the move, more to be getting away from Gryffe. I think it was Grace and it might have been another social worker who took me. The staff were nice for the first hour until I got a feel for the place. It was a Thursday I got there so I was told I would go to school for one day before the

weekend. They explained they would start my work on Monday and that the Friday would just be like an introduction. Staff did sit me down and tell me what was acceptable and what wasn't. They were reading the riot act pretty much but I didn't understand a lot of what they were saying because of their accents. I felt they were talking really fast and I think they got sick of me asking them what they had said. I was shown around and shown my bedroom. I was also introduced to the boys before going for dinner.

148. I don't know what records were transferred about me and nor do I know what information was shared with each of the staff. It was well-known from everywhere I had been in care not to try and touch me or hug me. You would be lucky if I would shake your hand. To put it lightly if you remember that movie years ago There is Something About Mary where Cameron Diaz had a mentally handicapped brother who had earmuffs on. If anyone went to touch his ears he would go to punch them. Without the mental handicap that was what it was like for me. I'd strike out without warning and it was an automatic reaction rather than something I thought about doing. You would expect something like that to be made known to any staff dealing with me but it wasn't and that led to an incident in my first few days which impacted on my time at Woodlands.

Mornings and bedtime

149. For the first six months you got up about 7.30 am and you were expected to clean the room. I shared my room with one other person. One of us would clean the sink, the skirting boards and wipe the door while the other person would Hoover and make the beds. The residential staff would come in and check things like running their finger along the top of the door. After the six months things relaxed. We were expected to keep our room tidy but not to the extent of clean skirting boards and stuff like that. Once the cleaning was done you would get ready for school and go through for breakfast.
150. I was always used to sharing a room so it wasn't new to me. The boy I shared with was called [REDACTED] and he was a mental wee guy. I would wake up and

he would be sitting at the end of my bed. I wasn't used to this and he would come out and say he was scared and ask to sleep at the bottom of my bed. I would tell him we were all scared kids but he couldn't sleep there. Thinking back now I think he might have had homosexual tendencies as he was always trying to get into the beds of the younger boys. I told staff they needed to get him out of my room or I would stab him in his sleep or something. I was very vocal and even if I was unrealistic I knew the words to say for shock value. [REDACTED] was two years older than me but he was big like a farmer. Strong and stocky and quite an intimidating guy to look at. Things came to a head and he was moved. He was just too weird, not just trying to get into my bed but the stuff he was talking about. The other people I shared with were just the usual problems. When you spend so much time with someone you start picking faults and looking for reasons not to like them. I would also say that by this time I think my behaviour and actions put some people on the back foot. Although I was the youngest and by far the smallest when it came to acts of violence I was to be watched.

151. Bedtime was 8 pm through the week and I think it was 9 pm at the weekends. The night watchman didn't do anything other than sit and smoke and check on us every couple of hours. He would work between two units so sometimes we would have no adult present because he was down the stairs dealing with something. We didn't have much interaction with the watchman unless we were kicking off.

Mealtimes/Food

152. It was the staff working in each of the units who prepared the food. Ian Shankland was a trained chef and he was dynamite in the kitchen whipping up all these things that were good to eat. He would get you involved, he was a decent guy. In my family growing up I never once had a roast beef dinner so I thought the full Sunday roast with all the bells and whistles was really good. I had never seen a lot of the food we got and it was quality. I still had the same eating problems as I had in Gryffe. In my mind I was looking at this plate of food and thinking I am smashing this and going up for seconds but as soon as I started eating and it hits my belly I couldn't eat much. I would

be starving again in half an hour but the staff would say I had had my dinner and wasted it.

153. I have just never been able to eat large amounts of food and I couldn't just go and grab a snack. We didn't have snacks that were available for us to go and help ourselves.
154. For breakfast it was cereal that was on offer. It would be in boxes on the table and you would just help yourself. There was a variety of cereals and things like toast

Washing/bathing

155. Every morning you had to have a bath or a shower. If it was a bath it was only a couple of inches of water and you were to be in and out. That caused me problems and I know it sounds bad but I think my hygiene must have been pretty bad. I don't remember my mum bathing us much and in Gryffe it was a bath once a week. It wasn't in my nature to jump up in the morning and have a shower. It wasn't normal to me. I struggled with washing every day, I didn't really know how to wash my hair. Sometimes I would go in and honestly I would just duck my head under the water and tell them I had had my shower. I probably stank most of the time and was quite dirty. It caused problems with the teachers and the other boys. The word in the day back then was "ya black bastard" though it wasn't a racial slur in any way the black referred to being dirty. The care staff called me that and that led to the boys doing the same. To understand all the boys were going through their own thing so if they saw an opportunity to jump on the bandwagon and give someone else a hard time they would. It is the same psychology as in the jail. It is to stop any attention coming their way. It took me a while to understand it.
156. It wasn't for months later I overheard a teacher telling another boy how to shower. She explained how you start with your hair and use the shampoo and then work your way down your body. She told him that once he finished washing he should wash the shampoo out and once your shampoo is out you go to your privates. I pick up when someone is telling other people and from that I learned how to clean myself.

Clothing/uniform

157. We had uniforms for school time. It was black trackie bottoms, a polo shirt which could be blue or burgundy with a jumper matching that colour. It was pretty much like a prison uniform. I believe the lassies had some sort of skirt they could wear with tights or they could wear the trackies.
158. Every 8-10 weeks they gave you £150 which was used to buy clothes. They would take me out to buy them. I could buy whatever clothes I wanted within reason. I think there was a fifty quid limit you could spend on trainers but if they were slightly dearer than that it was at the member of staff's discretion. I always chose to go with Bobby, I wouldn't say I was close to him but I was seen as having a better relationship with him. I always kept other people at arms-length. With him I could kind of talk but then he would always try and get into my home life and how I was feeling but I was too guarded. I couldn't deal with my emotions so I couldn't physically talk to him. I think at one point he became my key worker but that was a few years down the line. He was there pretty much the entire time I was so I chose to do everything with him or his wife.

Leisure time

159. In the first six months things were different. You could get what they called a hall pass which meant you could be outside after school hours. If a teacher or the kid catcher asked you had to show them your pass which meant you had permission to be out. You could also get a town pass which you could get if you were trusted. Again if staff asked you to show your pass you had to show them it. I didn't really get passes because they didn't really know me as I was just fresh in. The boys who were established in the place could request these passes. There was also an option if a member of staff was willing to take you out. That could happen as they were allowed to go out with a certain amount of boys. I think it was one staff could take no more than three boys.
160. In the evenings I could watch the telly. Some of the boys were getting home leave and they might bring in their Nintendo or a Super Nintendo. They would be the main man

and we would just sit in their room and play on that. Some people were allowed to bring in their own portable TVs.

161. There was a rope swing in the grounds I liked to play on or you could play football. One of the boys might bring in a football or rugby ball. I was always a lot smaller so I stood no chance if they had the ball. They would just be body checking you and taking the ball so I realised in the early years not to play football with them. Any kind of physical games it was laughable and because of my size I stood no chance.
162. Bobby and Betty were good. I had a lot of time for Bobby as he helped me out a lot throughout my time with them. The activities we could do included going to the Magnum Centre at Irvine where we could go ice skating, swimming and other stuff. That was a favourite. We could go fishing. We could pretty much do anything within reason. I would say that this team was one of the best things about Woodlands at the time. If this team weren't on you were pretty much confined to your base. There wasn't many activities with the normal care staff.
163. At the weekends Bobby and Betty were not working what I got to do was dependent on my behaviour. If I had been put on a sanction then I would be confined to the unit. Once I had been there long enough then I would be given a pass to go out and play. There were times when they might take you into the town but only if they needed to get something.
164. The Bungalow had their own version of Bobby and Betty. They had HGH and [REDACTED] who were married but kept their own names. HGH was a right horrible man. It was said that he used to be a professional boxer and it was easy to see with the way he could fight and the size of the guy. He was over six feet tall, with fair hair and an amazing physique. He was a very intimidating guy even to the other staff. He used to take us to the cellar for boxing lessons.
165. Being in care meant that I didn't have a lot of contact with the outside world. I didn't know what toys kids were playing with and that meant I was never interested in toys. I was interested in other things. Even what guys in the outside world were wearing and

what sort of trainers they had would be of interest to me. I found that coming from Paisley there was a different style from guys from Newton Stewart. Older guys I knew from Paisley liked their Air Max, Ben Sherman shirts and things like that which wasn't anything like what the local guys wore. I never had them but it was a cool thing to have these labels, like a status symbol. It was good making pals with guys who weren't from homes because to us they were normal people and we didn't seem to be normal. It was also interesting to meet them as they spoke and acted differently. Even if we went to a member of staffs' house and they opened their fridge to get a drink of juice or something and you would see all this stuff in their fridge. To me it looked too good to be a normal house with a lot of shopping. It was certainly nothing like my house. To see someone just go and help themselves to a can of juice and packet of crisps without saying anything to anyone and then go and put the telly on was like nothing I had ever experienced. I think I would say I was fascinated with life outside the home and that is why I took to a lot of people from outside.

166. In the last five months at Woodlands before my move to Merton Hall I would say I was getting quite close to Bert Malcolm. He was bringing in some of his martial arts stuff like knives and throwing stars. He wasn't giving me any of them at this time but he was letting me use them and we would throw them at the trees. Everyone would be away home and it would just be me and him. There might be a few lassies left but they would be doing make-up or whatever. Bert was also right into his outdoor pursuits and he used to go to exhibitions in the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre in Glasgow. He was like a wean in a sweetie shop. He would ask me if I wanted to go and I would tell him that I wasn't interested. He would say that we would have a great day. I knew that if I agreed it meant he could go all expenses paid. He would jump into a hunting or fishing shop and buy a new knife and would let me play with it in the motor on the way home. He got excited about the same things I got excited about. He was like a big kid but a lot of people hated him. Being there for thirty years meant he had a lot of history in the place. I think certain staff take to certain pupils and vice versa. Some of us can't understand why some of us like who we like.

167. Bert had a karate class that I went to every now and then

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Trips and holidays

168. We went to a place called Flamingo Land, I think I went there three times when I was at Woodlands. That was our go to place. We went for a week at a time and we would hire a caravan. There was a zoo, theme park, night life kind of thing and caravan area. It was okay but some of the staff would start their crap with some of the boys.
169. In the summer time and summer holidays before I moved to Merton Hall I remember it was a good summer and HGH's stepson, [REDACTED], was around a lot. He was there for most of the summer. I used to play a lot with him. I never liked him to start with because of who his stepdad was but they weren't close as he got bullied from HGH too. That made it easier for us to accept him in our wee group. He was getting a hard time off one of the school bullies at the school he went to even though he was a lump of a boy. Even his mum asked if there was any way we could speak to the bully although she didn't ask us to do anything. We ended up going and smashing the guy who was bullying him and got charged by the police for that.

Schooling

170. For me at the start I was quite excited because I just wanted out my wee classroom I had been in at Gryffe. It was all new and I was going through that many feelings I was scared, excited and nervous. I didn't have one particular feeling it was a lot of feelings.
171. The school was within the grounds at Woodlands. It was like two Portokabins joined together and there would be one or two auxiliaries or support teacher types who would go between both classes. They were there for some of the boys who needed special help with their reading so I think they were there for specific people and not just in there in general. The classes were made up mostly by those close in age rather than ability or level of education.
172. Before school we all had to wait outside in the yard for fifteen minutes before classes started. It was everybody including the girls all mixing. There was a football pitch

nearby and a climbing frame that we could use if we wanted to. After the fifteen minutes you would line up for your class.

173. It was run just like a normal school. You would have a few lessons and around half ten or eleven there was a half hour break where you went out to the yard again to play. Then it was back to class until lunch. We went back to our own units for lunch then there was time again outside before classes started. Then it was lessons again in the afternoon. It was pretty much structured like a mainstream school day although the classes would be very different. After school you were taken back to your unit and you were there until the next day. On a Friday I think it was a half day then we had an assembly and they would read out how much pocket money everyone was getting.
174. I suppose they tried to teach me maths and all the rest of it but it was certainly a different way of teaching from a mainstream school. In a mainstream school you are expected to do work through each lesson. I can only compare this with when my oldest talks to me about his high school he talks about going to different classes in different classrooms. With us it was pretty much the one teacher was jack of all trades. They taught you all sorts. There were maths teachers but they didn't necessarily teach you maths, it could be another subject. Most of the lessons were in one class except for woodwork and mechanics. The expectation was if you could sit down and do at least a page you have got the rest of the day to yourself. If you could at least show something then it was do what you want.
175. On my first day at school I remember walking into this yard and I was the youngest by far and I was tiny compared to all the other guys. I think they were a bit confused about what I was there for. I was getting all the questions about where I was from. I was only in the yard about 10-15 minutes before there was a fight. One of the boys came and put his arm around my shoulder and asked me if I was all right. I turned round and hit him because of my problem with people touching me. When someone asked me what I was doing I did the same to him. The two of them went for me but it was really the rest of the boys who stopped it as they were saying to look at the size of me. He wasn't being aggressive but it wasn't a case of me saying to someone to get their arm off me, straight violence was my automatic response. You don't get a chance to get

hurt because you hit first. There was staff there but by the time they came it was all over.

176. I think I opened the eyes of a lot of them because I was so small. They were all asking me what I was in for and if I smoked. Although I had a lot of problems with some of the boys there I think I became quite popular, especially the older boys who were very protective of me.
177. In the classrooms if you misbehaved or absconded you were taken to a big room called the Office. It had a stable door with the bottom part about the same height as me or slightly shorter. A lot of time you could be in there all day with nothing but a chair. You would just be sitting there. There could be other boys there too, it was like the dumping ground. If you were put in there you were not allowed to leave at lunchtime. I was pretty much in there every day but at the same time so was a lot of other boys. There would normally be at least another four or five boys who would have been sent there. There was only one member of staff supervising and that wasn't enough to control a lot of volatile guys who would pick on me who was the smallest and skinniest. When HEU [REDACTED] caught any of the boys who were running about the grounds he would take us to the Office.
178. On my first full day at school, which was the Monday after I arrived, there was an incident that happened that led to a serious offence. I don't remember why I was in the Office but while I was in there my teacher who was a wee Welsh women called [REDACTED] came in. I had been in for a couple of hours with my head in my hands. I didn't hear her come in, I was in a trance with my head miles away. She put her hands around me and straight away I have turned around and punched her. Afterwards I was thinking to myself what was I doing? It wasn't that hard of a punch but she was heavy and was a bit of an exaggerator. They got the police in and I got charged for the assault. It is on record as I did assault her. That led to a series of events because some of the boys quite liked her and all of a sudden I had a problem with each and every one of them.

179. It just so happened her husband, [REDACTED], also worked there. I don't know his role, he said he was a trained teacher but he was always working in the office writing our incidents reports. He seemed to be the member of staff who did all the incident reports and he seemed to have a more admin role. After I punched [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had been left in the Office with me until the police arrived and he grabbed me by the throat putting me against the wall choking me. He was raging and threatening me about hitting his wife. I was gasping for air but we could hear someone else getting brought to the Office. I said to him that I was going to get him and he told me that I would do nothing. I just repeated something like [REDACTED] 'I am going to do you'. He was shouting at me telling me I should call him Mr [REDACTED]. I continued to tell him he was getting done and he just said that we shall see. I don't know if it was a week or two weeks later but I was in the Office and [REDACTED] went to assist with an incident with another boy. As [REDACTED] was getting ready to stand up I ran up and volleyed him right in the face. It was a full force kick. I think he had contact lenses in and that did something because the guy was off for a while. I said to him that I told him I would do it after he hurt me. I then got restrained. That was seen as an unprovoked attack although I tried to say what had happened when he choked me. I think that it was at this point that I was taking the fight to them. I was the height of nonsense but I had had enough.
180. These incidents caused so much conflict for me at school when I had the same teacher every day for every lesson. It wasn't just having conflict with these two teachers but having conflict with anyone who liked them. This was before I knew anyone so no one had my back.
181. Incidents became an everyday thing. Sometimes I would just refuse point blank to go to school and that would cause incidents. Pretty much in the early days it didn't take very much to initiate getting restrained. If you were refusing to go somewhere or were not following an order the staff would try grabbing me by my arm or t-shirt and any sort of resistance of pulling back you are down and they are on you. I was between nine and eleven years old and was tiny. Even pulling your hand back from them was seen as resistance.

182. I tried to get to the local high school but they wouldn't take me. It seemed to get brought up at reviews a lot but deep down I knew it wasn't going anywhere. For me it was an angle worth using to try and get out.
183. During school holidays most boys went home. If anyone from the lowers was staying then they were moved to the bungalow. It was a huge building with lots of bedrooms. Bobby and Betty would spend at least four weeks of the school holiday with us. They might take the odd day off but they were right back. Holidays was for them to cover and they were there 24/7. I tried not to have interaction with the bungalow mob but they were always inviting me as I would often be the only guy in the uppers unit. I didn't like **HGH** because of the way he behaved so I refused to do anything with the bungalow even though I was really close with the girls. By this time I had become popular and the lassies loved me in a motherly way. They were the only people who could put their arm around me and hug me and I liked it. It was a good warm feeling. It wasn't in a sexual way as my mind wasn't there yet. They were the only people in the world I would let hug me. At the same time they knew I wasn't like the rest of the boys as I wasn't being sleazy towards them. I liked their attention.

Social Work Contact

184. I think it was once a month or once every two months I got a social work visit. It was a bit of everything, they would come in and talk to me on my own but they would also want to see how I was. Thinking about it now they wanted to see how I was alone and how I was in amongst a group of people. Sometimes they would take me out for lunch. Incidents were still happening when the social worker was there. It could be her that was getting assaulted through me not getting answers or the answers I wanted. I could go into a rage. I wanted home or I wanted to know why I couldn't be with my brother. These were basic questions and I couldn't see why I couldn't get answers from her. I became unresponsive and uncooperative with my social worker and sometimes a bit violent to be honest. I threw a big ladle of coleslaw into her face once.
185. I was aware that my mum and her boyfriend had moved into [REDACTED] Paisley. Part of [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] and her boyfriend was the caretaker.

It had belonged to a [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] but it had a few old books and some statues. My social worker told me that my mum couldn't take me because children were not allowed to live there. At the same time I knew my brother was living there with both of them. This was what I was getting annoyed at as I could prove they were lying about me getting home. I would ask her about [REDACTED] being there but she would say she couldn't discuss that with me.

Healthcare / medication

186. Things got to a point that in my head it was a war between me and the staff. I think it was really anyone in authority. I had lots going on in my head and no one was telling me what was happening. I would get to phone my mum and when I did she was accusing me of talking to these people. She would tell me she didn't want me and that she wouldn't take me home. She would hang up the phone on me. The next time she would say she did want me. I was a confused. I felt my future was so uncertain and no one knew what was happening. I know my mum had a very negative influence on me. She knew I wanted out of care but she would tell me she would never take me back. She would tell me that I was doing what I was told in care which made her angry and she kept telling me to do bad things.
187. It was always noted that I was a depressed, sad, lonely wean but no one had ever tried to speak to me and explain about mental health. It wasn't a thing that was discussed. I was getting really bad bouts of depression but I didn't know what it was or why I was feeling that way. I ended up consumed with just anger, hate and aggression which just kept building up.
188. No one was helping me with my behaviour. I was just branded as if I was violent and very unpredictable. That I would attack staff for no reason but I have never assaulted any staff without reason.
189. I know it was recognised that I was a disturbed child but I had a strong passion for animals and nature in general. This was well documented and was brought up in reviews. There were comments about me displaying patience, kindness and love

towards animals that I had never displayed towards people. They had said I had little or no empathy towards people. They noted that when I talked about animals I came to life. They had a no pet rule but eventually they let certain people get certain types of pets. I was allowed to have a hamster. It was a dwarf Russian hamster.

190. After I had been at Woodlands for a couple of years I was taken to see a psychiatrist or psychologist when my mental health had really plummeted. They wanted me to take anti-depressants and other sorts of medication but I said no danger. I knew I wasn't crazy it was more to do with what had happened and was happening in my life. I might not have been school smart but I wasn't stupid. I think that being alert made my frustration worse as did the fact everyone kept lying to me. Abusing solvents was quite popular back then and I was happy doing that but at that time I was never really into drugs. There were people in there taking tablets for depression but they were crackpots and a lot of the medication made them look like zombies. I like to have my wits about me.

191. In the last five months at Woodlands I would say that me going up on the roof of the building became pretty much a daily thing. After being in Woodlands for a few years you learn how to avoid situations and some people. If a certain member of staff was on duty then we would decide to run or go up to the roof. It wasn't like there was a lot of places to go so mostly when I ran I was just in the grounds. I would say I was feeling depressed a lot of the time. The uncertainty around what was meant to be happening with me definitely didn't help. I know I was frustrated but I had a lot of mixed up feelings to be honest. Going up on the roof was a good way to take time out and just try and think beyond the drama and whatever else was going on. I think I avoided people and went into myself. I also think I stopped interacting with people and I always felt it was me against them, not just from Woodlands but really from when I went into care. I just got into wee bouts of severe depression when I wasn't talking, eating or taking part in group activities. I was doing a lot of solvent abuse like aerosols and things. I would say my behaviour was changing from being out there and violent to going more into myself. The other problem was you would make good pals with someone but they came and went so its temporary. I don't know what the staff thought about my changing

behaviour because I avoided them like the plague. There were a few staff I did get on with but as soon as they talked about things I didn't want to talk about then I was off.

Religious instruction

192. The only religious thing they did was say Grace before we ate. Saying Grace went on for a year or so but after that they just kind of dropped it. There was nothing else.

Birthdays and Christmas

193. I think they actually tried and they would get a cake especially if it was on a weekend. If it was Bobby and Betty they would actually go and buy me a wee Lynx shower gel sort of thing. I didn't accept gifts and I would leave them wrapped up. I would give any presents to one of the boys as I wanted nothing. We never really had it so when it gets to birthdays and everyone is singing happy birthday I feel awkward. I don't know what to do. Do I sit there while they sing or do I sing along with them? Wee things like that annoyed me as I made myself look like a retard. I didn't know how to act. They were putting me in a position I wasn't used to and that would lead into a pure incident.
194. At Christmas time they used to ask me what I wanted and I would tell them I want nothing. I think they thought I was just in a mood. I would get to the point that I would tell them that I don't want anything and if they got me anything I would just smash it up. They thought I would change my mind once I saw what they got me but I felt they were just disregarding what I said. They would get all wee cheesy stuff out of a shop called Semi-Chem. It was stocking fillers type stuff. I would have to smash anything they got just to save face. I didn't want to but felt I had to. That caused problems.

Personal possessions

195. I had very little possessions. The only things that I held dear was the knives I managed to source.

Pocket Money

196. The minimum you could get was 75 pence, they wouldn't give you any less than that but it could go up to six or seven pounds. I think you could get wee bonuses for good behaviour. I think in the two and a half years I got the basic of 75 pence except once in the assembly when I got £1.50 and I got a standing ovation.

Smoking Permission

197. The pocket money was a problem because I would need the staff to go and get my cigarettes as obviously the shop is not going to serve me. Woodlands had a smoking permission rule but you had to be twelve to get it. I was a smoker and I would be sitting smoking with the other smokers in my unit. At first the staff tried to object but I told them I am a smoker so I am smoking. The only real reason I would want to go into the town at the weekend would be to get cigarettes but sometimes the staff wouldn't get you them. Some staff would say that they would want two of my cigarettes for getting them. I would say I wasn't giving them two cigarettes and they would say that they would want three for my cheek. You were at their mercy. Once they got you your cigarettes they would take two or three before I got what was left. Bearing in mind I had to save up a couple of weeks pocket money for these. I was a smoker but I could never actually afford them but other people could bring cigarettes in from home. I was always a popular wee guy amongst the older boys so they shared their fags with me. They would also come back on the Sunday and put cigarettes in my cigarette box in the unit so these boys would see me okay.

Bed Wetting

198. I wet the bed quite a lot, especially in the early days. I had to take my sheets off and it was just like Gryffe. I had to hold them until I was told to put them down. This could mean that wherever I went I was carrying my sheets because it could be half an hour or a couple of hours. There was a couple of times when I had to go for my lunch and drop them in the living room and after eating I had to pick up the sheets until instructed

otherwise. I can't remember which members of staff made me do this but I know it wasn't Ian Shankland.

199. There were a couple of other boys who wet the bed and they got the same. You always knew who wet the bed because these were the people who didn't laugh at me when I did it. It took me a while to realise it was because they have experienced exactly the same. People who have not experienced that level of bullying or humiliation would just laugh at you but those who had would just put their head down.
200. I never got any help for the bed wetting. I didn't feel the staff were there to care for me it was more just to be there and look after me.

Culture (Gangs, Fighting, Bullying, drug abuse, smoking, and staff awareness).

201. Things were mad in the first six months or so. We had to address staff as Mr and Mrs or refer to them as Sir and Miss. For most of the staff they wouldn't have you call them their first name but Bobby was a really positive wee guy and he would want us to call him by his name. He would say that his name was Robert and we could call him Rab, Rob, Bobby anything that was within reason. It was the same with Betty. With them it was a completely different regime. They would tell us that they were there to help us and that we didn't need to please them like that.
202. There was a big mix up with the staff after I had been there six months. I am not sure what was happening but I think a lot of people were getting made redundant and a lot of people had to reapply for their positions. Nothing was ever explained to us but we knew that pretty much everybody had to reapply for their jobs. I think most of the teachers were safe as this was mostly for the care staff. This meant that those staff who were normally heavy handed or using bad restraint techniques improved as none of them wanted complaints about them. Everything became kind of chilled and the staff would talk to us with respect. They treated us the way they should. It was like the staff were all walking on egg shells. For us it was like breathing space. We could deal with our own problems without worrying what they were going to do or say to antagonise us.

203. After that it was like they tried to change the full system. They were trying to make it easier for us I suppose. They tried to relax things like reading out who was getting what pocket money and we were told we could call staff by their first names. A lot of staff didn't like this and still told us we would call them by Mr and their surname. We didn't see much of a difference especially with the staff. To us it was still the same people in the same positions. After their jobs were secured it didn't take long until it was back to normal.
204. The kids who were part of HFP-SPO clique would just try bully tactics. Walking past me giving me the shoulder and calling me names. I was never a tough guy but I was always game. I had learned from a young age if you let someone come and just batter you then you are at their mercy but if you put up a bit of a scuffle and just fly in amongst them you are going to come out less damaged. That was my outlook then. The bullying went on for months and months and I think it came to the point that they didn't even remember why they had a problem with me.
205. Over time I started to become more and more popular with some of the boys. I think it was to do with my size as I was always really wee and skinny. I was game and I think some people couldn't believe the damage I was doing. Some people there were really academically smart and they were there for problems at home. I was never school smart but when it came to street wise I was like a scholar compared to half of them. They would be struggling to get past a padlock and I would be showing them how to break it.
206. Someone came in with a bit of cannabis and they were trying to roll this joint and couldn't do it. I didn't smoke cannabis at the time but I threw the joint together rapid. I think some of the boys were quite impressed with my street wisdom. For me when other kids were getting taught their A, B, Cs I was getting taught how to break into cars. It was all the wrong stuff but to them they were probably impressed and thinking about it I probably played up a wee bit to be accepted. I always played up to the older boys.

207. Most of the time the police charged me it was in the home unless sometimes where I had ran away and there had been an incident. Usually they would keep me for six hours, or as long as they could, then charge me at the end of that before taking me back to the school. Only sometimes would I have a member of staff with me but more often than not it would be on my own with the police. It got to the point the police were called all the time mainly if I was being restrained and I would get charged with some sort of assault.
208. There would be days when I had no problems but one of my pals did and we would back each other up against staff or boys. At times I was easily led and sometimes I got involved because of the relationship I had with a particular boy at the time. Initially there weren't many boys from the west as in Paisley way but as time went on we got some younger boys from there who were my age. I gravitated towards them and it was just because of the accent. That was the same for the staff. There was a member of staff called Cathy Douglas and because she had a strong Glasgow accent I loved this wee woman. I hadn't heard that accent for so long and it was so familiar. There were some staff I had a fairly good relationship with especially compared to the rest of them.
209. A lot of us were there for years and I would describe our friendship as becoming like brothers. They were in different units to me but they went through the same things I went through. It was well known what certain staff were like towards pupils.
210. I ended up on the roof quite a few times. I could access it from outside the Flat unit where there was a big flight of stairs with a window that was maybe about four feet high. I could use the bannister and a hand railing to get up. It gave access to a flat bit of roof but I could climb up from there to the highest part, part of it was pitched and some parts were flat. That was the quickest way. There were other ways. One way being through the attic but they kept the attic door locked so you couldn't always get in there. Sometimes it happened because incidents would escalate or sometimes it was because of how I was feeling. If I was with other people it would be because one thing had led to another and if I was alone it was usually to stay away from staff, pupils or just get time to think. I wouldn't say I was suicidal but I would say a lot of things up on the roof about harming myself because that was how I was feeling at that time. If I

had problems with boys or staff going up on the roof gave me an advantage. I was tiny compared to them but if they are coming up to carry out their threat to throw me down then for me it was a kind of safe place. If they tried to come up I would kick them or hit them with a slate. Bobby would calm me down and ask me to come down so we could go somewhere quiet and just talk about things. I would huff and puff but I came down. Other staff would restrain me when I got down and they might remove my shoes or dock pocket money. Other than that there was nothing they could really do to me.

Visitors/Inspections

211. We got official visitors and called them committees at the time. We would be told there was a committee coming in. They were definitely outside people and I remember one was Who Cares? Scotland. It would depend on our individual behaviour if we got to see them or were isolated during their visit. They would do their rounds to every unit but if we were kicking off at the time or had something to say we were not allowed to speak to these people. I did speak to them on a couple of occasions and they showed interest in what I had to say. They asked about the day to day stuff, how the staff spoke to us, how they behaved when we were aggressive and how they used restraint techniques. My answers were straight off the bat and I think they were interested in what I, and the other guys, had to say. I suspect for a lot of these visits I was always unavailable with some appointment or something like that.
212. I got in touch with Who Cares? Scotland because my main concern was that I was stuck in Woodlands and no one knew the plans for my future. I know they were in because it was a home and I believe they were going round a lot of different care places. There was also flyers up on the notice boards about them and how to get in touch with them. I have got the letters in my files from them but I don't actually know the outcome. There are letters from the social work department which say they do not know how much sensitive information they could give Who Cares? Scotland. I know they did chase things up for me. I think because I didn't get an answer I was quick to cut ties as that was what I was like then.

213. At that age I understood Who Cares? Scotland were there to help people like me in care, they were pretty much like an 'internal affairs' team to make sure we were not getting abused. In those days though you never ever heard the words child abuse, it wasn't understood like it is now. We just got hurt or battered and that seemed to be acceptable. All the mental and psychological abuse were not really things that were spoken about. They would ask us if we got hit or if they used restraint techniques. I believe they took a bit of interest which was unusual. I don't remember a lot about my contact with them but they were taking notes. If we were talking to them then there must have been something about them that we felt we could trust. I am pretty sure I talked to them alone.

Family Contact

214. Getting no home leave was a big part of why I was losing the plot. I was seeing everyone getting away on the Friday and coming back on the Sunday with all these stories about what they had been doing with their family. It used to drive me crazy and definitely didn't help with my mental health.

215. I believed I had no home leave because of my mum's accommodation but she had many addresses within this time. I was under the impression I wasn't getting out because I was waiting on her getting a house because that was what I had been told.

216. The first visit I got from my sisters was when they were in foster care and they came down with their foster parents. I think we did monthly access which alternated between them coming to Woodlands and me going to see them at their foster parents. When I went to see them it would be a member of care staff who would take me. Travelling there wasn't good for me, I would either be tired, car sick or had had a fall out on the journey. At the same time I would be nervous about the visit. Generally when I got there it would be all right but afterwards there was always some sort of incident because I didn't want to go back. Contact ended in 1995 or maybe 1996. For some reason before a visit I refused to get changed for two days. I don't know why but my moods went like that. I went to see the lassies and the foster parent said something to me about not changing my clothes for the visit. I thought nothing of it but when my

mum heard about it she had an incident with the foster carers. It was decided that because it was so unsettling for my sisters they wanted no contact with any of the family. Since then it has only been in the last couple of years I have had contact with one of my sisters.

217. The staff said to me that my dad wanted to meet me and I just said which one because at the time my mum had a lot of boyfriends and if she was with them long enough she would say he was our dad. I had no recollection of this guy and meeting him when I was probably ten was the first contact with my real dad. He was a stranger and I don't think I even knew his first name. I certainly didn't see this guy as a family member. It was the staff who arranged it and at first I refused to meet him. I think I chopped and changed my mind because of my mum. When I mentioned it to her I got a negative reaction. I think she kicked off with the social workers but I can't tell because of the redactions in my records. She wasn't happy when she learned I had met him. I think the staff came back to me and asked again and I agreed probably because I was just bored. The staff took me to meet him in a wee forestry park near to Newton Stewart and later we went back to Woodlands for a while. I think the social worker brought him there. The meeting was rubbish. I had no expectations although I was probably a bit nervous drawing up in the car. I knew he wasn't taking me anywhere so I just thought what was the point of even being there. I thought if you're my dad and you're coming to get me then get me and if you are not then why bother. He didn't say why he wanted to meet me and he told me he didn't want to get me into his care or anything. In the records it said he had been trying to make contact with me. I saw him another three times when I was an adult. When I think about how big a deal it was to meet my dad for the first time there was no real support in place. Maybe a couple of people asked me how it went and I told them it was crap but that was it. I think I had been excited to see him because I thought it was maybe an angle to get out of Woodlands but I learned real fast that was not even a suggestion. No-one had ever told me why he wanted to see me. I just thought why am I meeting him, it was weird. I think I felt confused and rejected but it was more confusion. Rejection was part of life.
218. Eventually about three months before the end of Woodlands it was decided that I needed some respite at the weekends. I think that because of the state of my mental

health the staff and social workers felt something had to be done. I felt no one could tell me anything about my future and this really affected my behaviour. It was decided that I would go back to Gryffe for a weekend. HGF was still there but she was on holiday so I had no issues and I had quite a chilled weekend. It was good to get away from Woodlands but at the same time being at Gryffe reminded me of what I had got away from. Then it was either two or four weeks later I was due to go to Gryffe for a second bit of respite but there was an incident and that stopped all the access. It was a couple of years later when I was in Merton Hall before they resumed.

219. Although I got no home leave during my entire time at Woodlands my mum would come down to Woodlands usually once a month. We had a caravan there and that was used every weekend for visiting parents. Most of the time she wouldn't come down. That set me off and caused incidents. She would tell me she wasn't coming all the way down to visit me as she was going out to get drunk. She would also refuse to come down if she couldn't bring her boyfriend. There were very many guys who were strangers to me coming with her at the time. She made no excuses about it as she just spoke her mind. Woodlands argument was that I was needing contact with my family and that I shouldn't need to compete for her attention with a guy I didn't know. Woodlands were right though whether I chose to believe that at the time. I was more influenced by my mum and she would tell me to say that I wanted whoever she was seeing to come with her.

220. At my request we tried to make any visits by my mum when Bobby was on. That is when I preferred to have my mum down. It made things seem more normal as the other staff could antagonise me and cause a lot of aggression. There didn't seem to be any aggression from Bobby or his wife. Don't get me wrong if you pushed your luck they would come down on you but to me they certainly didn't instigate anything. They were good people is what I am trying to say. I formed a good relationship with them, I respected and would listen to them which I think made some of the other staff jealous. To the best of my knowledge he never ever betrayed my trust whereas a lot of them did.

221. Sometimes mum would come down when the other staff were on anyway. It was mad because there would be the usual trouble with the staff where we would be fighting and stuff but then my mum would start. I know it sounds terrible but in my anger it was always expressed with threats of death, severe violence and stabbing. The staff had to take these threats seriously. The influence my mum had was severely negative.
222. There were times when I didn't want my mum to come and visit but I couldn't say to members of staff that I didn't want to see her because that would go on paper and she would find out at the next review. Me and my pals who were going through similar things decided that if we wrecked the caravan none of the parents would have anywhere to stay. It worked for a certain time.
223. I was really close to my brother [REDACTED] but I only saw him about three times in the whole time I was in Woodlands and Merton Hall. He was going through his own stuff. We still spoke on the phone quite a lot. Paisley had a big knife culture back then and he told me he had a couple of lock backs for me. These are knives that lock open. About a year into my stay I had a problem with a certain member of staff and I had been upset after that incident where I ended up making threats about stabbing them. I am pretty sure it was a holiday and it was Bobby and his crew that were on. When I spoke to my mum afterwards on the phone I told her about the two lock backs that [REDACTED] had left for me. I was still upset and I told her to bring a lock back down the next time she was visiting as I was going to do the staff member. To be honest I shouldn't have been allowed on the phone. I should have been calmed down first. Anyway the conversation died and in the time before my mum arrived I had forgotten all about it. It was a few days or maybe even a week later my mum came to visit with her new boyfriend at the time. She said that [REDACTED] had taken my knives away but she told me that her partner had bought me a knife. I asked her if it was a lock back and she said it was a Swiss army knife. She pulled it out and showed me the main knife part of it. The blade was a couple of inches long. I told her it was rubbish and I was likely to do myself more damage. She told me if I couldn't hurt someone with it then I could do nothing. She was trying to egg me on. The incident with the member of staff had all fizzled out but she was keeping it going. She was telling me just to do him and she was goading me asking if I was scared. I was trying to tell her I had now

moved on to different problems. My mum called me a coward and told me she didn't want me home anymore. She was saying things about what my brother would think of me. She told me to stick it in him and not be scared.

224. A member of staff saw her slipping the knife to me and asked what I had. I denied she had given me anything but my mum straight away said she had only given me a pen knife. She said it was because I was going fishing and it was to use then. I assume it was Bobby or Betty and they told her that it wasn't acceptable and that she should not be giving me a knife. They said that they had seen me flaring up and a knife could make me cause considerable damage. They said they didn't think I wanted to cause damage like this but the way she was encouraging me to behave badly made giving me a knife a very bad thing. She was told to take the knife off me which she did. They said they would feel better if she gave them the knife but she refused and said she would put it away in her bag. When my mum went home they did a search of my room and they found the knife under my pillow. After the staff had left she gave me the knife back telling me that I had to do the member of staff. I tried to explain that I didn't care about the incident and that it could be put down to a storm in a teacup. It turned into a heavy investigation where I said I had stolen it rather than say she gave it to me. I don't know the outcome of that other than my mum's boyfriend wasn't allowed to visit again. I couldn't talk about my mum because I knew it would all go on paper and six months down the line at a review it was going to come up about what I said. I would have had to deal with the repercussions from her.

225. Boys had threatened me that when I got 1 weekend leave to Gryffe they were going to kill my hamster. These people would have killed it just for a laugh. They were seriously messed up guys. I was on the Glasgow minibus run and I had my hamster but I hadn't cleared it with Gryffe staff. I kept my hamster in a wee fish tank and there was no incidents all the way up to Gryffe. I was one of the first to get dropped off and there was a member of staff who came to help me with my bags. His name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I remember him from when I was staying at Gryffe but he had just started and was mild mannered. He seemed okay. During the time I had been away he had transformed like the rest of them and had grown an attitude. When he saw the fish tank he told me I wasn't allowed to bring it as Gryffe had a rule that no pets were

allowed. In my mind I am thinking if I send this back to Woodlands it will get killed. I told him that I couldn't stay and he told me to leave the fish tank on the bus as he was trying to drag me out. Straight away I punched him which made him more aggressive as he kept trying to drag me out. Some of the other boys on the minibus started flying over their seats to protect me. I was in the front and [REDACTED] was trying to drag me out the passenger seat. I was holding on to the steering wheel as there was no way I was leaving my hamster. It ended up that I was taken back to Woodlands and that was the last leave I had for a couple of years.

Running away

226. Every chance I got I would try to run away. If any of us were in the Office we all tried to dive over the stable door and run off into the grounds. Once you left the Office it was a few steps to the left and that was the exit to the back of the grounds so that was the target place to go. Sometimes we would get caught by staff doing things like breaking into the pantry to get snacks.
227. I would run away for anything from half an hour to one or two days. Mainly I would be in the Newton Stewart area. I would be with other guys a lot of the time. We broke into a sports shed at the High school which had baseballs bats in it. We took them back to Woodlands thinking we would be ready for anything now. I don't think the police ever caught me when I ran away and I normally returned when I wanted to. Usually when I got back to the grounds you could be rugby tackled and that would cause me to struggle. That immediately went into a restraint. I could be restrained four or five times on my way back to the building.

Review of detention/hearings/external inspections

228. I would go to a children's panel which was once a year. I would be going with 10-20 plus charges which included assault, breach of the peace and criminal damage. They obviously knew the full history and I think in their eyes, taking everything into account, they thought that this behaviour was quite mild and well-behaved for me so they were never taken any further. No charge was ever taken any further than the panel. We

would talk about it and I would give them an explanation why the incident happened and that's where it finished. My children's panel happened in my home town and was at Glen Street, Paisley.

229. I had reviews every six months and they were something that happened throughout all of my time in care. I believe it is actually part of the system that I had to have a review once every six months. They would be carried out at the home or school I was in. I would be present with my mum, Peggy Smith, Rosalind Redpath, my key worker at the time, maybe a senior social worker and maybe someone who would take minutes.
230. My mum was at every review and panel. It was the same way she behaved at all of these with her telling me not to speak to these people. She was actually reprimanding me for behaving myself. There were periods when I was trying and there was no incidents but it just seemed to be that my mum's influence caused my behaviour to plummet and go downhill. They never spoke to me at any hearing or review away from my mum which I think might have been them following protocol. They did speak to me afterwards and say that what my mum was trying to tell me to do would have a detrimental effect of my progress and life in general. I wasn't thinking of my life I was just confused and had no trust in authority. The person I did trust was encouraging me or supplying me with the tools to do things that were wrong.

Discipline

231. There were sanctions if you swore and your pocket money would get docked. If you broke anything or smashed your room up you had to pay so much to cover the damage. After things settled down after the time when staff had to reapply for their jobs I recall the docking of pocket money was done away with.

Abuse at Woodlands Children's Home, Newton Stewart

232. The first meal time was an evening meal because I got there after lunch time. I only lasted at the table for fifteen minutes before I was getting slapped and restrained. We were sitting around the table and a member of staff called HFM was telling me that I would do what I was told in there and that I thought I was a wee hard man. It was the usual spiel to me. As soon as my elbows touched the table he started shouting and swearing at me telling me to get them off. He was telling me that they have manners in this place and was calling me a scumbag. This was my first introduction to what people called table manners and it was all new to me. I did what he said. Then he said that seeing I was the new guy I was to say Grace. I asked him what he meant and he said that before we eat the evening meal they said Grace. I was starving and didn't understand so I said the word grace and I went to eat. He was screaming at me asking 'if I was taking the piss'. He told me to say Grace properly. I had no idea he was talking about some kind of blessing, like thanking the Lord for this dinner. It was stupid in a way because I thought he meant I wasn't pronouncing the word properly so I said it again emphasising the word clearly. I went to eat and he told me I had one last time to say it properly before he would slap me. The boys were looking at me and were laughing. I think they thought I was acting up. I didn't know any better. I said grace once more clearly pronouncing every letter of the word. HFM flew up in a rage, grabbed me, dragged me through the room and slapped me on my face. I think he hit me with the bottom of his hand as it sounded more like a thud than a slap. He threw me into my bedroom and shut the door. I was starving and I tried to come out and barge past him so he grabbed me by the back of the jumper and restrained me. I struggled and other members of staff came and helped restrain me. It wasn't for long, maybe five minutes, and then HFM threw me back in my room. I just crawled into bed and stayed there.
233. When we were at Flamingo land on one of our visits there was a wee boy that had problems with the toilet and was always soiling himself. It was a well-known fact amongst everyone and no one ever gave him a hard time about it. He was a good wee guy who just had a wee problem. He soiled or dirtied his underwear in Flamingo Land but he was really self-conscious about it especially if other people knew. Instead of

saying to staff that he had had an accident he hid his underwear in a shoe box. Don't ask me where this shoe box appeared from but he carried a couple of pairs of soiled underwear in there. [HGH] aggressively asked him what he put in the box and the wee boy said nothing. I was in the caravan and saw all of this. He started swearing at the boy telling him to show what was inside the box. The boys head was down and I have no idea if [HGH] knew about his problem or not as I think usually the boy went home at weekends. The wee guy opened the box and showed him and [HGH] humiliated him. He went outside the caravan and was telling everyone to listen up. He used to call it a public announcement. He used to either shout telling everyone around to listen or give an ear piercing whistle. When he had their attention he would say that he had a public announcement to make and then he said something like 'right you dirty little bastard would you like to show them what you did'. The wee boy is mortified as you had all these different people in caravans and he told him to open the box. The wee guy opened it but [HGH] told him to take the underwear out. He had to bring out his soiled underwear. [HGH] then went on that he apologised if he was ruining their holiday. He had no clue, it was him causing a scene. [HGH] told everyone that he apologised because the boy doesn't know how to act and that he comes from a special school and all the rest of it. He gave a big spiel for a couple of minutes. That wee guy was made to carry that shoe box about with him. There was quite a squad of us so we had a few caravans and although we did our own things during the day we met up later in a restaurant. One of the guys asked the wee guy why he was carrying a box about with him and what was in it. The wee guy just said nothing. In the restaurant [HGH] got up again and shouted "public announcement" he told the wee guy to show the other guy what was in the box and tell him what he had done. He humiliated the wee guy again. It was those kind of tactics he would use to humiliate people and make them feel like nothing. He made it out like there was something wrong with us when he called it a special school and that we all had special needs. It was a residential school and that's what made it special.

234. [HGH] did the same to me in a restaurant in Skegness where we had gone for the weekend. I was bickering with a boy because we hated each other. Every chance we got we were either fighting or there were insults where we were egging each other on. He actually made me stand on a chair while he shouted to everyone to get their

attention before he apologised for disturbing their dinner and so he went on. He told them we came from a special school and I was made to apologise to everyone in the restaurant. People were just looking at us wondering what it was all about. To be honest apart from his humiliation tactics I don't think I ever saw anyone getting restrained by him. He was that fearsome. Statistically I think a lot of the boys at Woodlands were the most dangerous in the country at that time and they wouldn't mess with [HGH] [HGH] died about four years ago. He is the only one I have heard anything about.

235. When I talk about getting restrained which happened often a lot of the staff would take the opportunity to have fly digs when they were rough handling you. They would often get a woman to try and deal with you first and the men would come in harder if they thought you were resisting them. If during being restrained you happen to throw your arms around and you accidentally connect with one of them then they said it was an assault. When it came to telling the police what happened it just seemed that everyone of their statements just happened to be identical. If you are going to tell a story about what happened it would differ slightly because of the view they had of it. They got their stories straight every time before the police came in. In the first year I would say most of the assaults on me were through being restrained.
236. Any sort of back chat was met with aggression. It was like living with an abusive drunk step-father. Not all but most staff would scream, swear and shout questioning what I, or others, had said. Staff ramped things up and didn't respond proportionately to things. They even brought my mum into it and would make comments about her or why she wouldn't want me. It was mental and emotional abuse especially when it came to a Friday as it was well known that I was probably the only one who didn't get home at all. They used restraint a lot and I know that sometimes it was needed but a lot of the time it wasn't. Even at that age I knew what was justified and what wasn't. I do understand that the staff had to behave in a certain way as they were dealing with boys, a lot of them were big, and they were some of the most violent in the country. The way staff behaved or reacted with the boys could cause incidents or escalate them. I would be covered in bruises every week because of being restrained so much and even though I got new clothes I still looked like a tramp because my clothes were

constantly getting ripped. They got rid of corporal punishment around that time but they replaced it with restraining kids instead but even then I got chokes, slaps and slams being restrained.

237. Sometime within the first 8-9 months I dived over the stable door of the Office and I got into the grounds. This guy **HEU** the child catcher was chasing me all up and down but I was rapid on my feet. He couldn't catch me at first and he was all out of breath. He could catch about ninety percent of the guys but I was able to run rings around him. He hated it, I would be ahead and I would stop and give him abuse like telling him to come on mate. I would wait until he was quite close then I would shoot off to the side. This time I was on the football field and I got too cocky and I let him get too close. He came up behind me fast and hard before he kicked the back of one of my heels. I tripped up and fell flat on my face. He then kicked me on the thigh part of my leg before grabbing me by the scruff of my polo shirt. He dragged me by the polo shirt into the Office and by that time I was kicking, screaming and trying to bite as I was trying to get away. As we got to the Office there was already an incident kicking off with some other guys and he was told I couldn't go there. He took me to my unit but there was no staff there. He threw me into my bedroom and shut the door but I came back out straight away. I tried twice, the first time he pushed me back in and I fell. He held the door shut then he pretended he was walking away and I tried to make a run for it. He went boom right away and punched me right in the nose. My nose exploded and there was all this blood down me. He has kind of panicked and shut the door again. I was lying in my bed in shock and I was trying to stop the blood with my t-shirt as I had nothing else to use. I was left for about half an hour and by that time my nose had stopped bleeding. As I heard staff returning to the unit **HEU** just said I was being kept in my room as I had been kicking off. None of the staff had seen me by then. I started kicking off and managed to get out. That's when the care staff saw the state of me and they asked me what happened. I told them that **HEU** had punched me but he denied it saying he only threw me onto my bed. I think it was Ian Shankland who questioned him, it took me by surprise that he was questioning how I got injured. To me this was foreign. I started to pay attention then and asked him if he threw me onto the mattress where is the blood. **HEU** couldn't come up with the answers to simple questions. I ended up getting angry and kicking off again. Ian said he needed to take me down to

the Office because it was all within school hours. I went down there and I told them I wanted the police involved. My nose was broken and if you look at it now it is still crooked. I never got any treatment. This happened in the morning and by the back of three I was still sitting there with blood over my face and clothes. I felt like no one showed any concern about my injury they were all more bothered I was making an allegation against staff. I feel they sat me for such a long time pretty much hoping I would change my mind.

238. HFR [REDACTED] would pinch and nip me as she was restraining me. She would mess with my head because she would act so nice and polite while being evil. She would be restraining me telling me to calm down but at the same time digging her nails into me trying to make me scream. Sometimes she would give me wee winks and just behave all weird but she knew she was causing conflict not just with her but some of the other boys. People thought I was imagining her behaviour but she pushed me too far so I tied two karate belts together and wrapped them around my hand. I hit her a couple of times. Staff saw this as an unprovoked attack and because it was a woman they came down fast and hard on me. She got involved in the restraint and she was at my head and had me by the throat. I don't remember what she said but she was saying horrible things to me. She took her attention off for one second and I slid my chin down and sunk my teeth into her hand as hard as I could before I shook it like a Jack Russell. She was screaming but I wouldn't let go. I am not proud of this but she was a very evil woman. That incident was the final straw with her and I snapped. Every time I saw her it was pure aggression after that. It got to a point I didn't forget about the things she did to me. She thought that things were all calm and forgotten about after a week or so but she was wrong. That was where my head was, I wasn't going to drop anything like that. She didn't last long after that before she left.

239. HEU [REDACTED] got the sack around the time we started moving to Merton Hall because he battered a boy. He battered a lot of boys but this time it was enough to get him the sack. There were a few times like that when a member of staff ended up in the office after they kicked the crap out of a boy. They left but we were never told anything about this sort of stuff.

Reporting of abuse at Woodland Children’s Home, Newton Stewart

240. After I told staff I wanted the police notified about **HEU** assault on me they kept me in the office all day past 3 pm when I should have been back in the unit. They were asking me if I wanted to change my mind about the police. I think they were worried because there was reason to believe I was assaulted. Eventually the police came in and they didn’t believe me. Well I actually think they did believe me but they were asking me if I was at it and had I done it myself. I gave my statement but I don’t know where that went.

Transition from Woodlands Children’s Home to Cree Lodge, Woodlands (formerly Merton Hall, Newton Stewart)

241. I can identify that my behaviour got out of control and it was atrocious. It was mainly the violence from me towards staff. Me and a couple of other guys had had enough of how some of the staff treated us and for me my mental health had become very much worse.

242. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



243.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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245. As far as I was concerned when I moved to Merton Hall I got a lot of notice about the move. After I had been there for a few months they did move me back for a couple of weeks but I don't know what that was for.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

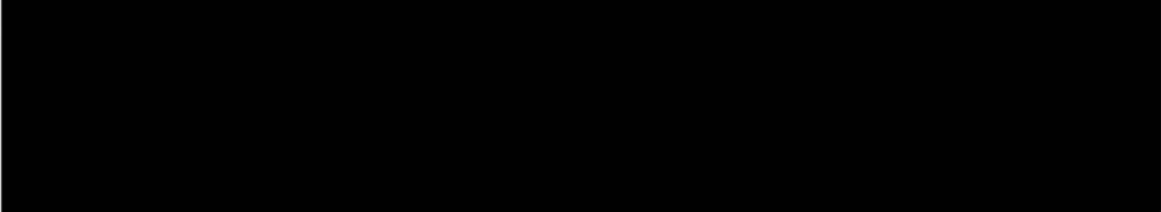
Cree Lodge, Woodlands (formerly Merton Hall Approved School) Newton Stewart

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

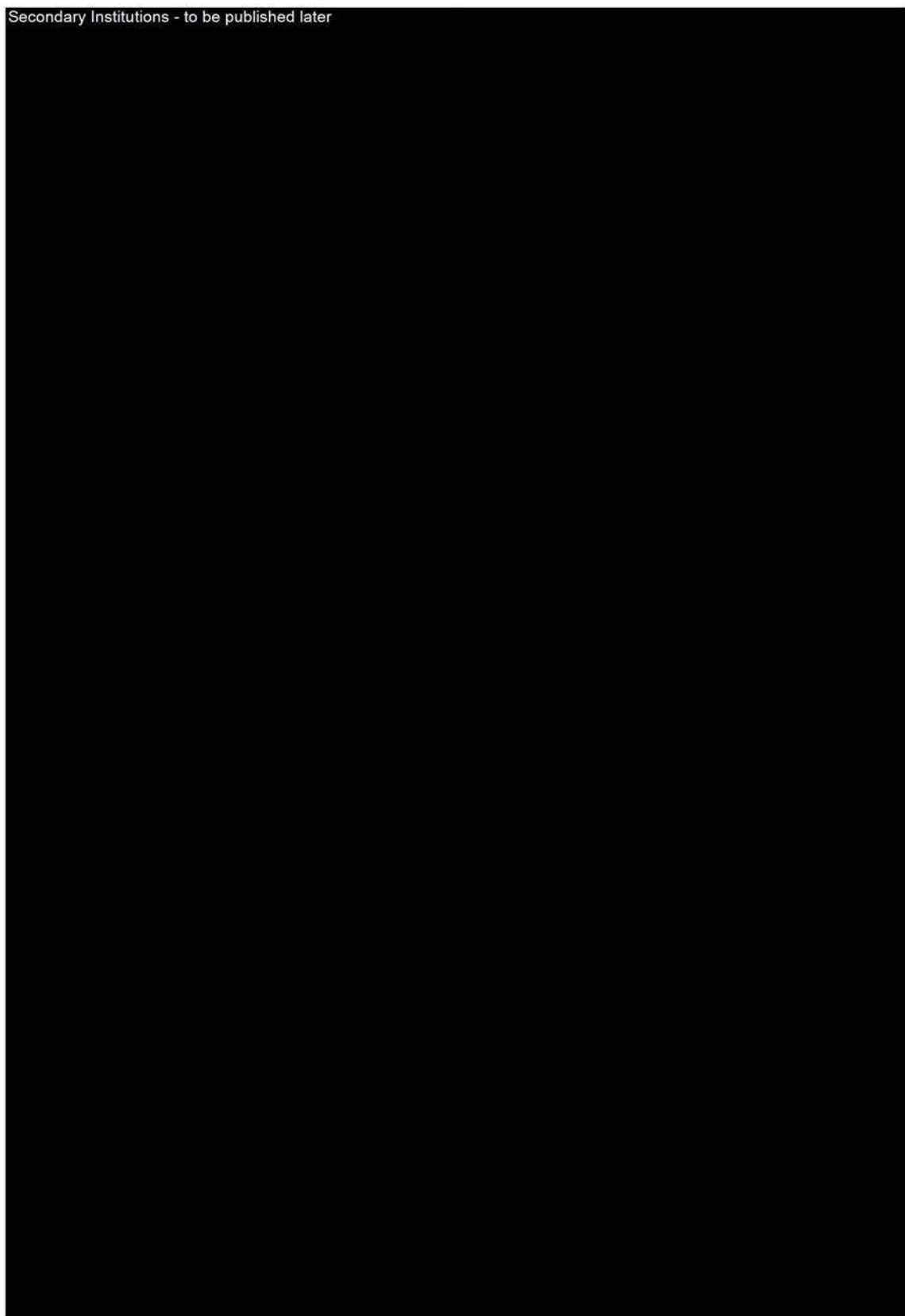
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Secondary Institutions - to be published later




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252. I don't remember the date that I moved but it was [redacted] in 1995. My records do not record the move to Merton Hall and show a continuation of my placement at Woodlands. I was quite excited because I wanted out of Woodlands. Every home I am in I just want out and then there was the usual type of anxieties about the staff and the pupils who will be there.

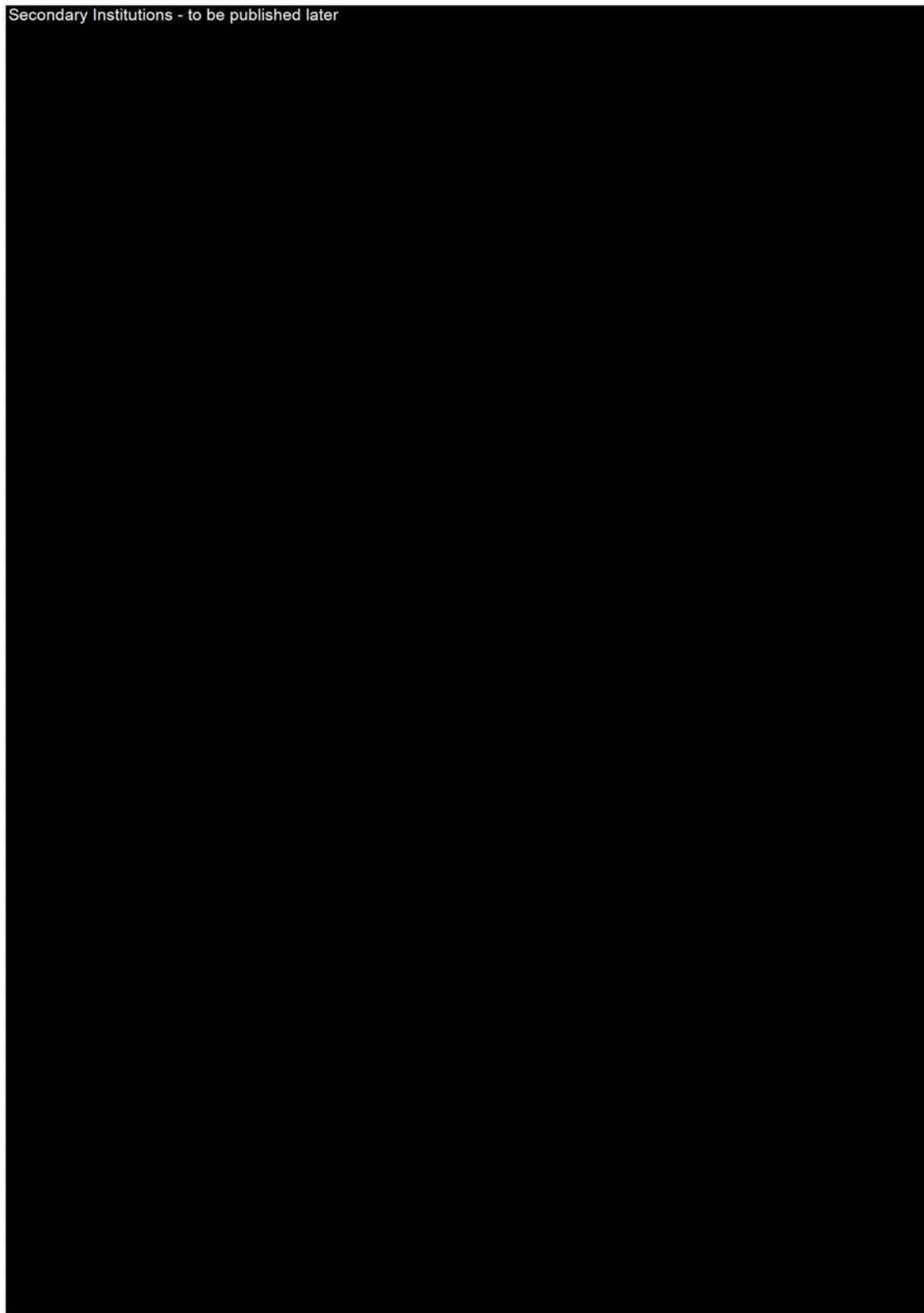
Secondary Institutions - to be published later



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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

288. I thought I was in care until my mum got her accommodation sorted and it turns out I have this 52 week placement which turns out I ended up doing three and a half years. In these reviews it says they are trying to invoke section fifteen or section sixteen. Pretty much they were trying to take parental rights away from my mum but at every review this was getting reviewed and reviewed. They have left it so long without making a decision and I think this has totally ruined my life. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Obviously beforehand they should have decided what was happening. Take the parental rights away from my mum or don't but make a decision. If they had explained to me and pointed me in the direction I was going at least I would have known. I am not saying I would have turned out better but it would have given me focus. It might have taken me a week or two to accept and settle into that plan but I would have known the direction I was going. It even said that I was getting to the age where pretty much they didn't know what to do with me. I think this was a heavy blunder from the social work especially when you read why I was in care from the very start. I don't know if it would be the same in this day and age. To be badly battered as a baby and then every other time I was taken into care there was risk from my mum who was making death threats towards me. It makes me question at what point do social workers make decisions to revoke my mums rights? At what point do they see that she is not fit to look after any weans? I think this was a heavy moment in my life which could have gone either way but they procrastinated too much and this was not in any way in my best interests.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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**Leaving Cree Lodge, Woodlands (formerly Merton Hall Approved School)
Newton Stewart**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

the social worker started talking about Balrossie. I don't remember if this was ever mentioned at any reviews. In my records it says they were trying to get me into a few different places but none of this was done with me being aware of it. They never said a thing. I think Harmony in Lothian was one of the other places they were looking at.

306. I was aware of Balrossie and knew what it was like beforehand because my brother had been there and I had been to a few accesses in there. I went for a visit. Between the visit and actually moving there I think it was within the month. I think during that time is when I was getting a few home leaves although I think my timing may be getting a bit confused because a week and a month feel like the same thing when I was in care.
307. Balrossie seemed all right on my visit. It had a bad reputation since I was a wee boy and I knew about it before I was in Gryffe. Balrossie was seen as a more fearsome place even though it was just a residential placement. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Balrossie, Kilmacolm

308. Balrossie lived up to some of the stories I had heard. My brother had spent a few years there so he was quite well known and that kind of helped me out. He had left before I got there. I thought I would pick up the same problems that he had had with staff as they have a tendency to do that. I thought once they realised whose wee brother I was they would pick up where they left off with him but thankfully that didn't happen in my case. I think that might have been because we have different names.
309. Balrossie was slightly outside a wee town or village called Kilmacolm. It had a wee drive leading up to it and the building was a cream colour. The front had castle sort of features on it. It is hard to explain but it was a big intimidating looking building. Out with the main building there were other buildings which were other units and beside them were other buildings that were used for the school.
310. I was in the Cumbrae unit which was up the top of the main building. I think Bute was downstairs and the unit names were like Iona, Lomond and names like that. I think down stairs was for the younger guys.

311. I hadn't realised my accent had changed, it had been diluted quite a lot because for over three years I hadn't really had any home leave. I did find it strange being with my own people again. They would ask me where I was from and when I told them Paisley they would ask if I was sure. Pretty much the first three questions when you go into a place like this is where you are from, do you smoke and do you have any fags? As soon as I said I was from Paisley they told me not to eat the chips. No-one in here had heard of Newton Stewart let alone Woodlands. It is mad that where you are from could decide how you would get on with someone. I found that if you were a Glasgow boy you were more or less on top probably because there was more of them and they are likely to be doing a longer time in care. Then you have your Edinburgh boys so you have your cliques and with that brings certain politics.
312. For me I was accepted into the Glasgow boys. Although they hadn't heard of Woodlands they had heard of Gryffe. I think the fact that I had had no home leave also gave me a few bonus points and also I had done more time than most of these guys. I was wider and a lot more street smart. You couldn't really compare Woodlands to Balrossie, it's like comparing Paisley to a wee farming place in central Scotland. There is just no comparison. Even the nature of the boys was different and the Woodlands boys wouldn't have stood a chance in there. For me Balrossie was more similar to Polmont Young Offenders than Woodlands. A lot of the older boys were much more developed and bigger than me but not to the scale as Polmont where they looked like men. It was the same kind of rules as Polmont.
313. I don't know why we were put in whatever unit they chose for us other than the younger boys were in the unit downstairs. I was thirteen when I went here and the age range was from ten or eleven up to fifteen years. There might have been some sixteen year olds but some of these guys were so crazy that by then they have probably done something really stupid and got themselves into secure. It was all boys and I had about eight boys in my unit. I would say that most units were the same with between five and ten bodies. Iona was a separate wee unit and they were the weirdos in there. They were really creepy wee guys who were kept away from us. I think they might have been in there for some sexual offences or stuff like that. I am sure in total there were five or six units and I would say there were thirty or just over thirty boys staying

there. We didn't really mix with the other units much except for Bute unless at school or playing football. Bute was in the same building so it was easier.

314. Staff were either from the education or care side of things. On the care side HWB HWB and [REDACTED] were in charge but I don't know who was the top one. Whoever it was they were the unit manager. There was a big heavy set woman called Maggie Burns who was quite high up as well. Billy Moran was my key worker and there was a woman called Jane or Jean. Most of the staff were alright. It was more teachers I had problems with at this place. When I say they were alright I didn't spend a lot of time with them. I kept company with pupils more than I did staff. Balrossie was more like a young offenders so you couldn't be seen to be too friendly with staff and be talking to them.
315. The two main teachers I had problems with were HFQ [REDACTED] whose surname was HFQ [REDACTED]. He was a wee middle aged guy, bald head and glasses. Also the [REDACTED] teacher who was also SNR [REDACTED] was called HGE [REDACTED] but he went with the name HGE [REDACTED]. I had known of him from my Gryffe days because he was such a fearsome character. He was old school having been there for years and took no rubbish. HGE [REDACTED] wasn't a physically big guy, he was quite short but he was into rugby and things. He was burly and very strong and I would say he was just the type of guy you could imagine working in a place like Balrossie. He was well suited for the role as he was mental. I think the head teacher might have been Bill Murray and if not he would be the head teacher at Kibble. I get confused where he worked.

Routine at Balrossie, Kilmacolm

First day

316. My records show I arrived on [REDACTED] 1996 and stayed until [REDACTED] 1997. I was nervous to be there because of the reputation the place had but at the same time I was excited as it was a step in the right direction. It was like a new start. It was a scary

place and there was a lot more politics amongst the boys. Certain boys got the right to certain things first, that sort of thing.

317. A guy called [REDACTED] asked the usual questions and when he found out I was from Paisley it was him who told me not to eat the chips. When I went for dinner he came up again and reminded me not to eat the chips. I was looking about thinking do I eat them or not but I already had phobias about food so decided not to touch them.

Mornings and bedtime

318. I think they shouted you at seven and really started getting you up at half seven. By eight o'clock they were really on your case, tipping the mattress and stuff. After that it was just like any other place and you would go to school.
319. Bedtime was seven or maybe eight o'clock. I think it was quite early and it was a pure shock to me because by about seven o'clock they wanted you wearing slippers, your pyjamas and a housecoat. They wanted us all settled by about seven o'clock and just be watching the telly. It was weird.
320. I shared a dorm with three other boys and I had my own bed and a wee side cabinet thing. I was around thirteen and they were about fourteen or fifteen. I was always the youngest by about a year of something. I was too old for the younger ones but younger than everyone else. Although age wise I was younger the difference is that if you spend years in care you become older in other ways. The door wasn't locked during the night so you could come and go. I am not sure if the unit main door was locked but if people were actually absconding there was a fire exit just along the corridor. If you opened it you would set the alarm off.

Mealtimes/Food

321. You came out the unit to eat your meals. The food was prepared in the kitchen by kitchen staff. There was a canteen so you got a tray and plate then you would go up

to the hot plate and choose your food before going back to your table. There was a chilled cabinet at the very end of the hot plate which would have bottles or cans of juice and bars of chocolate.

322. There was a suppertime in here and you went to bed earlier. We would be sitting about in these pyjamas and housecoats and we would go down to the kitchen to make supper. It would be three boys from the unit who would go down to make it and the other three will do the dishes. In the kitchen there was potato peeler machine and some of the boys were masturbating and ejaculating onto a dishcloth and wiping the inside of this machine.
323. A lot of food was prepared the day before such as soups or other things made up ready to go in the oven. That would all be contaminated with whatever these wee guys could find. Whether it be cleaning products or body fluids. This really opened my eyes up. I had thought it was just staff doing things like this to boys but Balrossie was wild and it was boys doing it to everyone. I don't know why they did it. Maybe they didn't like a lot of the boys and staff but they would say to their wee pals. I was disgusted. I always made sure I went down to help with the supper because if you are helping you are not tampering with your own food and no one is going to touch your food while you are there. I learned early to get down and try and make supper because I couldn't eat anything at this place either. It wasn't like I could say anything about what these boys were doing because the repercussions for sticking a guy in were too big.
324. There was a wee women called Fiona and she would be giving me cans of juice or a bar of chocolate. She was standing there because otherwise the boys would be filling their pockets. Anyway she noticed after a couple of weeks that I wouldn't eat and was only taking stuff that had wrappers on it like crisps, chocolate and cans of juice. The staff didn't really care to be honest. I think they saw it like if you were what they would call difficult then they didn't really like you anyway. I think it was just put down to I didn't have a big appetite.
325. At school you would go back to your unit first and from there you would go to the dining hall for lunch. It was us, Bute and one of the other units who ate together and I think

the other units ate separately. Dinner was in the evening and again we ate in the dining hall area before going back to the unit for the rest of the night.

Washing/bathing

326. You could have a shower in the morning or at night but there would be some guys who were dirtier who wouldn't shower. Either the staff would be on their case or the boys would get on their case because they were stinking. I think there were four or five cubicles which had curtains. It was quite a big bathroom and had about three sinks down one side and three down the other and a big urinal. You pretty much were left alone by staff so there was privacy from them but there was a lot of messing about from the boys doing stuff like trying to steal your towels. Where there are young boys there is always messing about.

Clothing/uniform

327. Other than the pyjamas, housecoat and slippers there was nothing else you had to wear. I just wore whatever I took from Woodlands. I think I got taken out once for clothes at Balrossie. My clothes would end up getting ripped when fighting or getting restrained. I was always really scruffy. I think they thought the responsibility for my clothes was down to my mum and my mum thought it was down to them and I was just stuck in the middle.

Leisure time

328. There was nothing much you could do. We would just have a laugh with our pals. One of the boys had a play station and they were quite new at the time. It was the first one I had ever played. We did keep ourselves entertained. In the unit there was a telly and I think it had a couple of Sky channels but there were no pool tables in there. If I wasn't on a punishment we could muck about outside by kicking a ball about or a few of them were right into rollerblading as that was quite big back then. We could steal hockey sticks from the PE bit and we played what we called street hockey in a wee courtyard at the back of Balrossie where the woodwork class was.

Trips and holidays

329. We didn't go on any trips or holidays that I can remember but I did get close to one of the staff there. Wee Mary was into dog shows and it was a dog club every Tuesday or it might have been a Wednesday. It was like a mock dog show with all these mad breeds and she used to take me down every week. I cannot remember exactly how the arrangements worked but I know sometimes I went from Balrossie and sometimes I went from home and she would drop me off. It was good, I got to know a few of the staff over the years and their families.

Schooling

330. I think school started from about nine until about three and you would just go to your different classes and follow your timetable. I think the day was split into six or eight periods. After school you went back to your unit.
331. I have nothing to really base what the quality of the teaching was like. They were always trying to teach us stuff but either you didn't want to learn or it was impossible to try. We had some decent teachers who did try but I certainly wasn't doing much work.

Preparation for Living out with Care

332. There was no sort of guidance there was nothing at all. Sometimes when you were going home for leave they would drop a squad of us at Port Glasgow train station and we would make our own way home. I think it was a dodgy move on Balrossie's part as that could bring its own problems. That's where the boys could sort out any problems they had with other boys. There were a few fights with all these reckless youngsters. You could become a target if you chose not to go and get a lift home instead. I quite liked it as having been locked away for all those years I didn't get to enjoy travelling and seeing things. As I hadn't eaten all week my weekend consisted of going to the chippy at the train station and spending most of my pocket money on a chippy. After a few bites because I hadn't been eating much I ended up feeling sick. I would get

home and my mum would be there for a wee while before she would disappear then that would be me until I went back after the weekend.

Healthcare / medication

333. I had a few injuries but I never went to a doctor. I think there would be staff who would be first aiders so they would look at injuries and treat what they could. I remember seeing a first aid box being brought out.

Religious instruction

334. We got religious education at school but that was it.

Work

335. We made our own supper and if no one volunteered we would be told to do it. I liked to volunteer so I could sort my own food out.

Birthdays and Christmas

336. I would be at home for Christmas. I remember most of my birthdays but there was nothing that special. I don't know if I got anything, I never really got or had much for birthdays or Christmases back then. My mum would usually give a tenner in a card and then ask for it back that night telling me she would give me it when she got paid.

Personal possessions

337. I never really had stuff of my own. I left my pets from Woodlands at my mums.

Bed Wetting

338. I think I had stopped wetting the bed. If anyone did wet the bed they would be humiliated by the staff and the boys. It would just be insults. The boy would have to

roll up the sheets and then be given fresh ones. That's if he reported it as I have known boys to just sleep in it and try and hide it. It was the smell that caught them out.

Culture

339. The culture was the same as being in jail. If you talked to staff too much or stuck anyone in there were consequences from the other guys if it was not seen as the right thing. It was a case of if you were getting a doing take it. Chances were you have done something to get it. Gryffe had been a bit like this but I had forgotten all about this sort of thing because in Woodlands it wasn't like that.
340. Where you were from could dictate what type of time you would have in Balrossie as well as who were the top boys. If they were from Glasgow and you were from Glasgow that was better than say being from Edinburgh. You didn't have as much protection if you came from somewhere else. It was all very cliquey. It didn't mean that I wouldn't get battered but maybe it would only be one of them instead of three.
341. I got into quite a lot of fights, most I lost because they were much bigger to be honest. I got a glass Lucozade bottle across my head. If you smash these bottles the plastic wrapping would contain the glass when it broke and that was what I was hit over the back of the head with. I got stabbed in the back with a pencil when I was fighting. The staff didn't do anything about the conflict between the children. There was nothing really they could do. If a boy was giving another a hard time then they would only know if you told them. That would just cause more trouble because he would be seen as a grass. You couldn't be seen to be friendly or show too many feelings. You had to be cold. Every time I fought a guy or hurt somebody I felt terrible after it and in my bed I would be lying feeling crap. I felt like that not just for the guys but some staff as well. In this place you couldn't be seen to be weak. At the end of the day it was survival of the fittest.
342. The good thing about being in care is that if you were to go into Balrossie like just off the street and from a good family or something like that you would be ripped apart. You would get a really hard time from the staff and the boys. I don't know but it was

like we were conditioned for this over the years so it wasn't as difficult as it would have been for someone who had never had that experience of care. I think I had the early stages of being institutionalised but not really like my brother because he spent most of his adult life in jail. He struggles a lot with his life after coming out of the homes.

Home Leave and Family Contact

343. I was getting home leave pretty much every weekend and after a week or two I think I was getting a Wednesday night or something back home as well. It was hard going home as I had been away pretty much for five years. It was good to get away from the home but the novelty wears off and reality kicks in. It was a strange time. When you are in Balrossie you want out and especially during the summer holidays you kind of miss the outside. I felt that especially at Woodlands because I was in there a lot longer. It was a mad time to be honest as my mum wasn't really about much. It wasn't as bad as the old days because she wasn't battering me. She didn't get away with that stuff. It was the usual thing with her not being around very much and there wouldn't be a lot of food in the house. My sisters were still permanently in foster care and my brother was possibly in St Mary's. My mum would be there on a Friday before she would go out and would come back on either the Saturday or the Sunday. She would come in drunk and spend the rest of the time hungover.
344. On home leave I was just sitting about the house to be honest. I didn't really know anybody because the area my mum was staying was a new area to me. I didn't know anyone from there as I was from the other side of town. Also with my accent diluted I didn't really fit in with the people in my street. I wasn't really accepted because I spoke differently. My mum didn't care that she was away. A Saturday for my mum would mean she was either going to the bingo with my gran and everyone and after the bingo she would go to the pub. Back then weans could sit in a pub. I could either sit in the pub all day or I could go home. I had two choices and there is only so long I would want to sit in a pub. Then if I was there when it got to 6pm or whatever time it was they kicked weans out I would be in the west end of Paisley which is a dangerous place to have to walk home. I felt it was better in the house as it was a bit safer.

345. It was the first time I had a bit of breathing space so I saw the positive in it because that leave gave me that kind of peace. It was confusing as well because I was thinking they could have done this years ago or they could have sent me somewhere else. In Paisley at that time you had a lot of young teams hanging about shops. Now they are all on Facebook but back then they hung about the streets tooled up. That could be weird especially if my mum was in on a Friday night and she is firing me to the shop before she goes out. These were dangerous places for me.

Running away

346. I ran away a couple of times but I only got a mile away in the fields. I was thinking different than when I was in Woodlands. In Woodlands the plan was always trying to get home. When I speak of getting home I mean back to Paisley and to my own kind of people. I don't mean home to my mum. I was getting home leave and I very quickly realised being at home wasn't so good. I was mainly just trying to get away from staff. I also started to realise that getting back to where I came from wasn't so good either. I was very rarely caught so I just went back. Once I got back to the grounds they would usually start grabbing you and putting you to the ground before dragging me in. It was just for show to say to everyone else that they had got me. Most of the time I absconded there would be a couple of us who had gone.

Review of detention/hearings/external inspections

347. I think social work would come and visit me once a month then you would have your six month review and your panel every year. That happened all the way through care. I don't have a lot of memories about any of these from my time in Balrossie but it was all the same rubbish. I wasn't really paying attention because where I was then in the care system I could have been there all these years ago. I just thought what is the point. I was getting to the stage at that age that I was too old for foster parents and I was approaching leaving age so they were just trying to wait until I was old enough so they could pap me out. I had already got to be a day pupil nearer the end of my time at Balrossie.

348. We would see outsiders quite a lot but I never knew who they were because obviously there are a lot of boys there so it could be for things like reviews. We never really knew who was who. We never had a time when we were introduced to someone and told where they had come from.

Pocket Money

349. We would get five or six pounds but that's what I would spend on the chippy when I was going home. I would have been dreaming about that all week because I would be starving. I think we got it on a Friday just before we left for the weekend.

Discipline

350. A favourite punishment was being confined to the unit so you couldn't go out. If you were known for running away you would have your shoes or trainers taken off you so you couldn't really do anything.

Abuse at Balrossie

351. Within my first month or so I was in the class next to the art class with Miss Conway who I think taught modern studies. There was an altercation between either a boy and Miss Conway or this boy and a boy from another class. The boy came into the class and calmed down for ten minutes but then got up to start it again, ran into the hall and bounced a chair off the teacher's head. Her head just burst open but I don't know if he meant to get her or if it was meant for the other boy. I don't know why but I started laughing. I had my history with this teacher and didn't like her. HGE [REDACTED] ran in like He Man and started swinging the guy about. I think the guys name was [REDACTED] We were left sitting in the classroom whilst Miss Conway went away to tend to her wounds. HGE [REDACTED] just came in and charged towards me. I stood up and he grabbed me by the hips. He picked me up and slammed me on a table where I landed on my backside and hurt my back. By the time I registered what was happening he picked me up and threw me on the floor. He was throwing me around like an empty

tracksuit. He was choking me asking me if I found it funny that one of his staff was hurt. Then he stood me up with his hand around my neck and shouted at me asking what I had to say for myself. I replied "fuck you" and this just made him worse. I was back on the ground with my arms all twisted and he kept going until he had me screaming. I got restrained maybe five or six times between the classroom and the unit. At times this was on a gravel path with puddles. My clothes were damaged and my full body was grazed. He was just by himself. I know it was a fault of mine, I wouldn't shut my mouth and every time I spoke out I was back down on the ground. My mentality was it didn't matter how many times he put me down I was still going to call him names. The other thing is that we never saw [REDACTED] again after he hurt the teacher's head with the chair. My suspicion is that he would have been battered severely.

352. Since that incident I wouldn't do any of [REDACTED] HGE's work and I wouldn't cooperate with him. It was strange because I kind of liked the guy. It was the fear and the respect he got off the other boys that got my attention. I got restrained a few times off him and every time it was a sore one. He would pick me up and slam me down shouting his usual threats at me. My issue was the reason he had originally restrained me. I didn't think it was right what he did to me because I had laughed. It became a battle of wits between him and me. A lot of people were scared of him but I had been through so much by this time. My actions were always under scrutiny by my peers so if I didn't take a stand I could get an absolute hammering at the end of the hall. I had to be seen to never cooperate with [REDACTED] HGE and I kind of backed myself into a corner with that one. [REDACTED] HGE didn't care he did all this stuff in front of other boys and staff members. I don't think anyone would ever go as far as making a full complaint about him because he would have got a grip of you and all of a sudden any complaint would be dropped. I saw [REDACTED] HGE restraining other guys using the same heavy handed techniques he had used on me.
353. [REDACTED] HFQ punched me a few times. He was the science teacher and I took a dislike to the guy because he looked like a mix of a creepy paedophile. He had that look of being totally sleazy and perverted. I have no idea if he was, it was just how I felt about him. He had also taken an instant dislike to me. In his classroom there were gas taps

where the bunsen burners could be plugged in. I was rubbish at reading and writing so I would prefer to do the experiments. Boys would be sitting doing their written work and HFQ would come up and put his hand on their shoulder and sit and talk to them. To me I don't like that kind of thing, I couldn't have people touching me. Other guys would just shrug him off but as soon as he touched me I would shout and swear at him telling him to get his hands off me and calling him names like beast. I asked him what he thought he was doing and he said he was just seeing if I was ok. I told him he didn't need to touch me. From then on in every time I saw him touching a guy I would be asking him why he needed to do that. To me it wasn't just a touch on the shoulder, it was more a squeeze. I would tell the other boys to stop him doing it to them. HFQ took a dislike of me for that.

354. A couple of times HFQ tried to stop me from going out of the class and there were struggles. On one occasion not long before I got expelled he had punched me to the face before restraining me on the ground. He then punched me another couple of times in the side. I don't think these would be full body weight punches but I still felt them. The way he had got me I was face down and he was on top of me sitting on my back or arse but he had my hands over my head. That left my legs free to kick out because he was really hurting me. I had friction burns on my face above my eyebrow because he was pushing my face into the floor. This was maybe the third or fourth time he had restrained me and possibly the second or third in that week. I didn't really see HFQ restraining any other guys. I think it came down to we both took an instant dislike to each other.
355. Things became so bad with me in the art and science classes they decided to move me into a different class so I had these two people in one day. I think their logic was that that would mean I would only have one bad day. To me that was just nuts but it led to the incident which caused me to be expelled. It was always the same with HFQ restraining me on the floor outside the classroom which is where every incident involving HFQ happened. He would just be restraining me himself and giving me wee digs in the side. That is just what they do when restraining you, it's mad but it is just part of being restrained. I know there is no easy way to restrain a guy who is kicking off but they would just go too far.

356. These staff never gave me the sense they used any form of training when restraining me. They would just get you down however they could and use whatever ways to hold you down until you ran out of energy and had no fight left in you. They would try and hit you first to give you a bit of a shock until they got you down and then they would use wee pressure points or bend your arms or fingers.

Reporting of abuse at Balrossie

357. I had made complaints about HFQ [REDACTED] and there were all sorts of investigations but it had only been him restraining me himself. He got off with every investigation after complaints I made. I think on one occasion when I went home I had told my mum about him and it was her who phoned the social worker. I think it was how they got involved and that was probably when Mr Eddie, one of the teachers, got interviewed. That would be the time I had a mark on my face above my eye. Mr Eddie said that I got restrained perfectly fine. He said that everyone was behaving perfectly fine but everyone's statements were entirely different. Some said everyone in the class were as high as kites and they had to remove them to deal with me and others said that some of the boys were trying to help me. If they had given their evidence like that in court it wouldn't have stood up.
358. What I would say is we were used to getting restrained and used to all this rough handling. If anyone did make a complaint I would say it fell on deaf ears and in a month or so afterwards staff would come back to you about the same complaint. By that time you have probably made up with the person you had complained about and I would think they should just forget it. I think the longer I was in care the less likely I was to make a complaint because nothing ever happened. I also think because I was getting out on home leave it was like having a break from everything going on in Balrossie.

Leaving Balrossie

359. I got into an altercation with HFQ and I think I tried to talk to the headmaster about him but he blew me off. I don't remember the full conversation but I ended up going and scratching the headmaster's motor. I think from there they couldn't get hold of my mum so they ended up dumping me in the social work department. I didn't know that the social workers were raging at that at the time.
360. I had been a day pupil for a few months at this time and I think this was the final straw. That was me expelled and I never went back. My mum got a letter on 1997 telling her I had been expelled. I was fourteen years old. This letter is contained within my records.

Life after being in care

361. It was a mad transition from leaving Balrossie until I went to Kibble as a day pupil. Kibble was a residential school however they took day pupils like me. I do not remember how long I was at home until I got started. I tried to make pals but this was an area of Paisley I didn't know. It took me a long time to settle in and I wasn't out the house much. In the same week I started Kibble I met a lassie from the other side of the scheme. She was a year older than me, I think she was about fifteen. She went to the local high school. I started hanging about with her and her friends and it gave me people I could kick about with. These were decent people. I wasn't into drinking, I hated the taste of alcohol back then. I had smoked a joint maybe once or twice in my life and didn't really like it either. These people didn't smoke or drink. It was good and it was keeping me out of trouble. I was getting into trouble at school but on the streets it was all right.
362. Life with mum was just the same. When she was there she was usually hungover, sleeping or she would be bitching about the milk she bought about a week ago. That meant I spent a lot of time either in my room or with my pals. I was dealing with a lot of stuff back home

363. There were social workers around when I went back to my mum's full time but they were trying to get me into things like youth clubs and all that. I just thought they were nuts. I think the social worker was an English woman and I don't think she understood how schemes work. You can't go from one scheme into a certain area with this happy go lucky social worker. I don't think she realised the danger of getting to these places. It was different back then. It was a dangerous place, I had already lost a few people who had got into fights. That is how I couldn't do the things she was suggesting. I don't think there was any real support. On top of that I despised social workers and care staff so I would look for reason to miss appointments or if I went I just wouldn't talk to them.
364. Kibble was better than Balrossie because I was happy to be in Paisley and a lot of the boys were from Paisley. I feel I always fitted in better with my local people. I feel it was alright but I feel I was already conditioned to these sort of places so it wasn't that bad. I would go in in the morning and sit in the wee day unit which would have about ten boys. There was a pool table and a wee smoking room where you would smoke with the staff. You would hand your fags in in the morning and anytime you weren't in class you could just get a fag out of the box and go for a smoke. The timetable was structured a bit like Balrossie. I think you had six or eight periods and it was the usual English, maths and science. I wasn't really interested in the school at all. When you are in places like that it is more about how you get on with the other boys. It is hard to explain but in my mind I wasn't really thinking about school and if you did they were hitting you with nursery books. It is degrading so I just mucked about to be honest. I got on really well with the science teacher. He had a house just outside the gates at Kibble. In the classroom he had all sorts of snakes, tarantulas and all sorts of creepy crawlies and I loved all that stuff. I think his name was Joe Coralas which I think was Greek sounding. He was darker skinned and a good guy. He knew the score as he had been there a long time. He would tell me to do ten minutes work and then I could play with the animals. Double science would be the best part of the week. If I gave the guy 10-15 minutes work or half an hour if it was a double period you were left to it. All the other classes I was doing nothing.

365. I was dealing with a lot of stuff back home. My mum wouldn't be there a lot and when she was she was hungover. There was next to no money, there was no food in the house and when she was there she did nothing. Just trying to get my clothes washed was a mission. She had a twin tub washing machine and then she would hang the clothes up on a pulley. It took ages for the clothes to dry. She was far behind the times. I was also starting to look really scruffy as my clothes were not getting replaced.
366. My mum got evicted due to rent arrears and not taking care of the garden which was like a jungle. I was still at Kibble. I would say I was about fifteen because I had been hanging about with this mob from the scheme for a wee while by then. We moved to the other side of Paisley to [REDACTED] with her boyfriend at the time. It was too far away for me to travel to see my wee pals. This would be around the time I left Kibble or maybe just before.
367. I think I was getting prepared for my prelims. There was some set up with desks in the gym hall before my prelims and I got expelled. I would have been in there for about eighteen months. There were always incidents, it was what I was conditioned for so we were always fighting or struggling with staff. To be honest I don't have anything to say about one member of staff, they were all pretty rough with you. It was a rough place but I wouldn't say it was as bad as Balrossie with staff getting boys to turn on you. I wasn't residential so I didn't have any of that crap. If there was an incident staff would try and get you into an isolation room and it was the same thing that if you struggled you were getting put down in a restraint. The isolation room was next to the smoking room. I don't have a lot of complaints looking back and they weren't too bad.
368. I didn't stay with my mum for very long after that. I think it was before I was sixteen and then I was sofa surfing. I had family in Paisley but they were up to no good. There were a lot of mad alcoholics. My mum told me when I was sixteen that she wasn't getting paid for me so I was on my own. I couldn't just jump in to see her and make something to eat because she wasn't having it and there was probably no food anyway. I was not her responsibility and I had nowhere to go so I never really saw much of her for about two years. By this time I was hanging about with the wrong crowd and getting into trouble. I wasn't getting a lot of money so I had to go out and

make it. I was really clued up streetwise and the older guys took to me so I was kept busy being up to no good.

369. When I was eighteen I was down in [REDACTED] visiting the [REDACTED] family. I had kept in touch with them by phone a couple of times a year. I went down for the day and the day turned into a weekend. Then I met a wee pal and I ended up crashing at his bit for a few weeks. I then met my wean's mum, [REDACTED]. I was away from Paisley for about two months and was floating about the wee villages near [REDACTED]. I never really had anything in Paisley and a lot of my pals ended up getting big sentences. I knew that was where I was heading if I stayed there. Twenty years later and I am still in the Dumfries area.

370. I found it hard to fit back into normal life. It wasn't until about 2009 when I got released from my last jail sentence that I sorted things. Before then we didn't have kids so I didn't have dependants. I was in Newton Stewart as that's where [REDACTED]'s family is from. I was getting into trouble and in and out the jail a few times. I got a year in the jail for brandishing a sword after an altercation with a guy. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] but it wasn't as sinister as it sounds. I have had a couple of jail sentences for knives, breaking into shops and pubs and car theft. My last sentence was four years dropped down to 32 months for nine ounce of heroin. I never took it I was just a runner. I was trying to change my ways as my son [REDACTED] had been born. I had a lot of paranoia. I was doing all right but I found it really hard. I dropped the blades but I had to do one last job because I needed the money which is when I got caught with the heroin.

371. It's all very well coming out the jail and saying you are going to go straight. It is hard because I just cannot go and get a job that isn't washing dishes. Everything I have done I have done myself. There has been no guidance, no nothing. [REDACTED] was a good woman and didn't get into trouble. I decided when I got out that I didn't want my weans going through care. I have not been in trouble since the last sentence in 2009 and we have never had any social work involvement with the weans so it is good.

372. When you are in the jail you have a lot of time to think about where you are going wrong. I was thinking when I was trying to change that if anything happened to [REDACTED] and I was in prison then my weans would go into care. I know my weans aren't built for care. I look at my fourteen year old and I just know he couldn't have gone through what I went through. I had three more children and I have tried to get wee jobs but it is dish washing, litter picking and crap like that. I know a lot of people and I know I could make money but it would be through dodgy ways and I do not want to risk my children going through care. I am determined to keep doing all right and it is probably my hatred for social workers that pushes me. I have always been a bit of a loner so ditching people was not a problem but I found hanging about with the wrong people was always getting me pulled into situations.
373. One of my sisters contacted me through Facebook. She talks to my mum. I have spoken to her three or four times since and it is all right. It is a bit of small talk to be honest and I am not one for small talk. There have been a few messages back and forward but nothing for a year or so I would say. I have no contact with my other sister.
374. I have not seen my mum in about four years and she has no contact with my weans. She saw my oldest when he was born because he was born in Paisley. She saw him a couple of times as a baby but apart from that there has been no contact. Up until I had my weans I was jumping back and forward from Paisley to Newton Stewart. I decided I didn't want him brought up there so we went back and stayed in Dumfries. I took my wee lassie and one of my boys down a few years ago just to show them Paisley.
375. My brother is back in the jail. I am still really close to him. He had a worse time than me and was in a lot worse places. He has spent a lot of time in and out the jail and he went down the drug path.
376. I saw my father three times as an adult. Once when I was nineteen as I had friends whose family members he knew from Paisley. It just so happened we were in the same area and by pure chance we met each other. Once I had kids I saw him again.

Impact

377. Being in care has had such a drastic impact on me and I don't really know where to start to be honest. I never had any childhood and I lost my family. I think my childhood in general even before going into care and then my time in care has pretty much affected everything for me. Sometimes it is not easy for me to see or explain just how much it has impacted on my life.
378. I don't know if things would have been better if I hadn't gone into care. My mum has three sisters, one was a speed freak and the other was a hash head and they both had weans. They would always be laughing at us because we got battered a lot worse than them and money wise they were seen as the poorer ones. About a year ago my cousin [REDACTED] and the others aren't doing so great as they are all using drugs. My mum's other sister died and her husband got his leg amputated because of drink. He died a year later and their daughter hanged herself leaving four weans two days before Christmas. Two years later the brother overdosed [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. That is three first cousins who died by suicide in the last five years. They hadn't been in care with me but their lives weren't good.
379. One of the most important points for me was a lack of decision making from social workers and the other agencies about my care. If they had removed parental rights right at the start or early enough things would have certainly been different. I can't say if they would have ended up better but I would have got used to it. It ended up with me being put through the care system and kicked out back to my mum who wasn't bothered about me. It resulted in me being in Woodlands for three and a half years with no focus. It built up resentment, left me with no focus on where my life was going and it affected my mental health in childhood. It was all so unnecessary. If you look at my records why would I ever have been put back to my mum? Before care it was horrific. At what point do the authorities say enough is enough and decide that my mum was a danger to kids? I don't know if I have the right words but they "fucked about" too much. There was a lot of trauma before I even went into care and they

should have just done something because its well documented that my mum wasn't safe and was a bad influence.

380. Even being put into care when you think of everything I had been through being abused by my mum and the lifestyle she had made us live through I was never given the right kind of support. How can anyone expect a wee boy who had been through all that to behave normally and adjust to living in a different way when he doesn't know any better? They say its care but all they do is take you away from all the problems you have at home. They were not good places I was sent to. Every children's home or residential school are like warehouses for weans and they hold you until you need to go somewhere else. There were a few crackpots who had individual care but most of us were just left until social workers told us otherwise. There wasn't the type of people who had been trained in dealing with children who had been through so much trauma from a very young age and neither was there anyone who was interested or cared about helping me cope and deal with that trauma. That has had a massive impact on me as each placement just got worse because I didn't learn how to deal with my behaviour and it became like me and the other boys against the staff and them against us. There was nothing of me being shown that this is the life you could have and instead I go to the homes rejected by my mum and then rejected again. Every home I was in I was moved on. I wasn't really wanted anywhere and as a wee boy you carry that through your life. The staff would just deal with you until their shift ended and then it's the next guys problem.
381. I think the term institutionalised gets thrown about too often. If you look at my brother then I would say he is but I don't think I was to that level. When I look at the things he did it was different. I think for me most of what I did was for survival. It took a long time to get where I am now but I can function in the outside world. Maybe at some point I was but I don't think I was ever truly institutionalised.
382. I have no trust in authority and especially social work. That's meant all my life I wouldn't talk to people in authority. Not just social work but people like probationary or community services. That has all brought problems and made life harder than it needed to be because I don't trust any of them. Even a few years ago I couldn't have

spoken to the Inquiry. When you think someone with my background managing to bring up children and having no social work involved with us is probably rare.

383. To me speaking to the Inquiry is like a bit of closure. It is almost like a bit of therapy. Even if a slight part of what I say corroborates someone else that will be good. I don't want these people done or charged. I have never had an opportunity to talk to people and anytime I have tried I freeze and I cannot find the words. I probably will never speak about this again.
384. I have never had anyone to talk to about this stuff. I was with my kid's mum for nearly nineteen years and she knew nothing about being in care or children's home in general. If you remember that children's TV show Tracy Beaker she thought that that was what children's homes were like and how could any child get battered.
385. I think that my time in care has affected my relationship with my brother and sisters. I would say it was a huge thing. I think it was 1995 or 1996 that I saw my sisters and we were just kids. I felt cut off and had no contact with them. I only saw my brother about three or four times, they destroyed that relationship.
386. I think my time in care has affected how I am as a husband and a father in a positive way I would say. Having weans has changed me and if it wasn't for them I would either be in the jail, dead or very successful but in the wrong way. I look at my weans and think they are not built how we were built. My weans couldn't handle Gryffe **Secondary In** **Secondary** let alone the others. I couldn't imagine them being in these places. So the positive side is because of everything I have been through I am really clued up on the darker side of life and I can educate my weans better than someone reading from a book.
387. My mental health has definitely been affected as I have had depression for thirty years. You go to the doctors to say you are depressed and they give you the wonder drug citalopram or Prozac. It is just crap and what they give to anyone who is depressed. I have always had nightmares even through all my time in care

388. I do get flashbacks but it is not like the films. It can be certain scents. My missus gets all the stuff for the washing like softeners and sometimes I catch a whiff of it and it reminds of things like hiding in the cupboards in Gryffe. It is a nice smell, it's the way the wind catches the sheets. There is also a certain smell with the cold tap in the bath that reminds me of my mums old house. We had to drink out of the bath because there was no other tap. There are other scents and they just bring back memories. I don't see things it just they make me remember.
389. I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease about seven years ago. I don't know if that has anything to do with all those years of bad eating habits. I was in a bad way and was in hospital for seven weeks. I thought I was going to die, I was down to seven stone. It has taken me a while to recover. I am only about nine stone just now but I can't put weight on.
390. When I was seventeen or eighteen I tried to get into the army but because I was so underweight they told me to go home and put a bit of weight on before I went back. I also have no back teeth and high cheek bones and I feel people now look at me and think I look like a mad junkie because I am so skinny. That look also stops you from getting jobs.
391. I know it sounds daft but I think being in care has in a way stunted my growth and development. Puberty was really late and I wasn't really shaving properly until I was in my thirties. I don't have scientific evidence to prove this but I think all the trauma and stress has somehow slowed everything down. It is mad that as a child you have so many things happening and you don't have time to think about it because more things are then happening.
392. I left care without any education or qualifications. I did a lot of courses in the jail. You can spend a year and a half doing cleaning courses but when you get out the cleaning companies won't touch you. They train you to be a hospital cleaner and the hospitals won't take you either.

393. Job wise I have no prospects and I am not going to get a career. I wasn't prepared for being independent. My reading and writing was terrible but towards the end I could read books but I would need to read a couple of pages. I would then have to stop so I could think about those pages before I read another few pages. If I didn't I would be ten pages deep and I would find myself thinking about something else because I wasn't retaining the information. My hand writing was shocking, no one could read it but I could understand it. I enjoy reading now and I can write but I find my handwriting changes depending what I'm writing. All the stuff I learned about numbers and fractions didn't come from school that came from the wrong kind of people.
394. Now we don't bother much with birthdays and Christmas as it is not something me and my siblings look forward to.
395. I am better now when it comes to being around people and being touched but back then I had no one that I could be that close to. In adult life it hasn't affected anything in the bedroom department. I will avoid drunk people but usually if a drunk person is hanging over me I just shrug it off and I don't react the way I did as a child.
396. I struggle to have relationships with people in general and it doesn't take much for me to be put off somebody. If I see they were sleekit or fly to someone I would be put off as it doesn't take much to break my trust in people.
397. Me and my missus live separately because she is nippy. There have been times when we have both had a drink and argued and she has kicked me out of the house. I don't have family or anything in Dumfries and there have been times when she hasn't let me in for a couple of days. I don't let myself be at someone else's mercy, if I jump through her hoops then I am homeless. That is why I now have my own house. I am up at hers every day but my daughter chose to come and live with me. My three boys stay with [REDACTED]. I guess we live separately but bring the kids up together. This comes from learning at a young age to look after myself and not depend on anyone else.

398. My problems with food have carried on most of my life. I still won't take food or even a cup of tea from people. I still won't take anything that someone else has prepared.
399. I feel like I was kicked out of care without any guidance to prepare me and my family were not going to help as they were all up to no good. I wasn't into drugs until I was eighteen but that was because of the lifestyle I was living. I used speed and I wasn't hungry when taking that so you could go on for hours making money in dodgy ways. I did stop taking speed and I have never taken the hard stuff.

Treatment/support

400. I have not had any counselling or other support. I know it is probably there if I could be bothered to chase it up. Especially somewhere like Future Pathways who have said it is there if I want it.
401. This is the first time I have told anyone the bigger story of being in care. My Mrs knows a wee bit about it. I don't really like talking about it because a lot of people have not experienced it so they can't understand. A lot of people don't really believe the things that went on.
402. There are some people I do like talking to about it. Like my wee pal who is halfway through a life sentence and I went through the homes with him. I talk to him maybe three times a year. He will phone me and we can talk for two or three hours. Then that's it, he gets on with doing his sentence. It definitely helps to talk about it especially the people I feel I can talk to. There is not actually many people who have been through it left. Most of them are dead to be honest or are doing heavy sentences. I met loads of the guys who I had been in care with in the jails and I have also heard through the grapevine that they have died mostly by stabbings, drugs or suicide.

Reporting of Abuse

403. The police came to see me at Paisley social work department after I left Woodlands. It was two women but I don't know where they were from. I don't know if I was in Balrossie or Kibble but I think they were following up some different enquiry. It was maybe Grace Cameron who was with me when they spoke to me. They kept talking about sexual stuff and I was like nothing like that ever happened. They certainly weren't interested in the sort of stuff I was talking about. I thought they had wanted to talk about the things that happened to me but I could tell they kept switching it back to what they wanted to talk about. Thinking back now I think they were chasing up some other investigation of a sexual nature but because nothing like that happened to me they kind of lost interest.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

404. I wouldn't say I was trying to report to them the sort of things that happened to me but I wasn't not going to tell them when I thought that was why they were there.

Compensation

405. I actually heard about redress through the pal who is doing life and he just said I should be in touch. I emailed the Inquiry and someone got back to me the next day. We just started talking and took it from there. I originally thought the Inquiry was part of the redress scheme because I didn't know what was what. I felt I had already committed myself which is why I am talking to the Inquiry. I know it sounds bad that I am trying to get money out of redress but if you look at what I've been through in all these years I think I might get it and if not I can close it and move on. I am also glad I came and spoke with the Inquiry and I now understand what it is doing and that it needs information.

Records

406. I received my records on 25 March 2021 and there is nearly 2000 pages so it is a lot to go through. I got in touch with Future Pathways first of all and it was BirthLink that helped me. It took 4-6 weeks to get them during the lockdown so that was all right with all the restrictions. I think the woman from BirthLink said Renfrewshire Council were one of the best for getting records. I was told by the BirthLink team that they might not be a reflection of who I am and it can just come down to someone's opinion of me. I understand that and it will be interesting to see their views. I think their interpretation of an event might be very different from mine.
407. As I have been going through some of them I would say a lot of it is just crap. A lot of it is redacted. Also a lot of it is handwritten and I cannot make any sense of it, it is like doctors writing, it is crazy. Some of it is quite funny and a lot of it is just lies I would say. On one report it said it was noted that they thought I was making false statements and to me that was a way to start blowing off any complaints I was making. I have never made a complaint or statement that wasn't true. I was angry at that bearing in mind I was only nine years old.
408. I have been trying not to go through my records too much as I have been trying to tell the Inquiry about the things I remember. When I look at them I see information about things I had completely forgotten about. Maybe a time where I had bruises and there was a wee investigation. Some of the things I have read in my records I don't even remember at all.
409. I am more interested in the earlier stuff but there is nothing about why they waited and waited so long without doing anything. It is harder than I thought going through them and it stirs a lot of memories. I don't want to sit all depressed or angry when I have the wean here so I would rather just keep them for another day. Once I deal with the redress I probably will never look at them again unless I write a book. I do think that one day I might get a book written about all the things that happened in my life.

410. I found out through my files that Balrossie was only a stepping stone to get me into Kibble and I never knew that. All I knew was Balrossie was next stop and they never told me their plans.
411. I believe it was either Future Pathways or someone from BirthLink who offered to sit with me to go through my records but I just wanted them myself.

Lessons to be Learned

412. I have tried to give my statement showing a true picture of how my behaviour was even if there were lots of reasons I behaved in that way. I think for me the biggest mistake they made was a failure to make decisions. They should have decided to either take me away from my mum completely or not. I think they should have removed my mum's parental rights at an early stage. I believe how they managed my care ruined any chance I had to move on and focus on getting on with a new life. Instead I lived with the continued impact of my mother's influence on me and constant uncertainty about my future from a young age. I learned from that not to trust anyone particularly those with the power to make decisions about my life. Decisions need to be made and they should include the child's thoughts and feelings. Decisions need to be made at the right time to give a child focus and ability to adjust to life.
413. No child should be left with no direction for their life. They shouldn't feel that they are just dumped somewhere and left with no plan. With me there were things going on behind the scenes but I was never told anything. I think children should know what the plans are so they can prepare themselves for it. Surely if things were not progressing and being positive then they should be reviewed. No child should just be left to sit and rot for years feeling forgotten about. There should be deadlines so if things were just the same then they have to look at other options. Not only do I feel the time I spent in care ended up to be a waste of years but I also wonder if and when they made a decision that the plan for me was to return back to the life my mum offered. I might not have been at physical risk but all the other risks remained.

414. No child should be returned to where they suffered abuse like I was. Over the years nothing changed with my mum's behaviour apart from the violence as I got older and bigger. I wouldn't take it then. I feel I was put into care for nothing and went through all that to go back to my mum.
415. I don't think children should sever contact with their family like they did to me with my brother and sisters. That was a big thing for me. They sever all contact and keep us all apart for years until they eventually kick you out on the street with no guidance or anything and no family to speak of who might have been able to give some support.
416. Back in my day care homes were just a warehouse for weans and I don't know what they are like now. There needs to be individual care. Each care home allowed me to prepare for the next place. Gryffe and Woodlands helped me a lot to get ready for Balrossie and Balrossie helped me a lot to prepare for Kibble. It is like conditioning you for what's to come. My childhood was spent preparing for the next care home and not for the outside world. I think any child who went to a place like Balrossie would be heavily traumatised if they hadn't been conditioned for it. The staff and the other boys would see the vulnerability and they would eat them alive. They were just places of depression when they should have been anything but that.
417. I know I was dumped out of Kibble and back to my mums without any preparation and she wasn't there to help me. I don't know what they should have done, it is hard to know what would have helped and I don't think I have an answer for that. I was glad to be out of care and I was used to my mum not being there. As soon as I turned sixteen she told me I was on my own. I don't think social work were looking out for me to make sure I was okay so they more or less did what my mum did. Maybe there needs to be better checks of children when they leave the care system.
418. I think being in care will be different now. Every boy and girl has social media and they will be on all these sites. I don't think things would be as bad now because people can be recorded.

419. I think it would have been better that there was training in things that I needed for the outside world. Things like how to apply for a job, fill out an application form, apply for things like benefits, open and manage a bank account and things like that. In Kibble you would get a music class and it would be how to play the Birdie tune on the piano. That was the lesson for that day. If they could get any wean to do work even for ten minutes they were happy. There was no talk about being homeless and what to do or anything else like that. That came later on in what they called IT groups which I think the social work or social work types arranged way after the Kibble. I think we went once a week. I don't know what the IT stood for.
420. I had trust issues so when I went to my panel I wouldn't have felt I could speak up. I also thought they only listened to what they wanted to listen to. I believe they already made up their minds what they were doing before I went in the room. I think it might be a good idea to have a safe space for children to speak but for me I didn't feel they really listened. In my records it says that I was happy with the idea of foster parents but I don't remember having that conversation. My memory is that I always used to say no but they have on file that one time I agreed. I think for me I had that much distrust I don't know if I could ever have talked to anyone. I never had an independent person represent me to explain what was going on at a panel and I never had legal representation. It might help other children but I don't think where I was it would have helped me build up trust. I would always believe anything I said was going to be told to my mum, maybe not then but at some point. For me the threat from my mum was too real.
421. I would say that I would never have trusted anyone enough to talk to them but then I think of the people from Who Cares? Scotland and they managed to break down some barriers so maybe if the right person had come along they might have been able to break down the barriers but that wasn't something that happened back then.
422. You would think there would be better ways to choose the staff working in care homes. In Woodlands it was crazy it was husband and wife teams, cousins and uncles, nephews so it was people who just knew someone and were pretty much from the job centre rather than being specially trained. I don't think any of them had any

qualifications so I think you need better training for people who are looking after vulnerable children. I am talking from years ago so I don't know what it is like now but it should be people who want to work with children who have the right qualifications and training.

423. I don't know what they do to vet people who work with children but what I do know is that after everything I went through with my mum she got a job [REDACTED] as a cleaner. I heard through the grapevine and I thought that it couldn't be true. I contacted her and she confirmed that she was working for the council as a cleaner so she is working in schools [REDACTED]. I said to her I thought she must be at it but she wasn't and she spoke about all the wee weans. I believe she is still working with the council as is the man she is with just now. It kind of blew me away she was working with children in children's homes or with disabled children. I know now you have disclosures and all that but there needs to be better background reports and especially for children's home it has got to be a bit deeper. Fair enough my mum is not as bad as she used to be but she still likes a drink. I am not saying my mum is a danger as she has changed from what she used to be but I still can't believe Renfrewshire Council saw her fit to work there. For me I have spotted a loophole for protecting children in care, I am not saying my mum is a danger but that she potentially could be. The background checks need to be the same standard for any person working in care homes. That means your cleaners, domestics or anyone that is coming into contact with children in care homes should all be checked and vetted thoroughly. Councils need to be more vigilant.

424. I think there needs to be more individual care for children who have come into care from really traumatic and abusive situations. Specially trained staff should be there to deal with children who are showing behaviour like violence, mental health problems, lack of trust, anger management or anything else that is clearly coming from how they have been treated. I don't think you can expect children to be dumped into a care home and expect them just to adjust. Fair enough my behaviour wasn't great but no-one thought why I behaved like that or did anything to help me understand and change what I thought was a normal way to behave.

425. I don't know what staff get to know about children's backgrounds and how that child is as an individual. For me it didn't seem anyone bothered and incidents could have been prevented if they knew things like my reaction to touch. I think this just goes to show that these were just warehouses for weans rather than places of care.

Other information

426. I have tried to focus on the things I think will be relevant to the Inquiry but there is just so much that happened because I was in care for so long. I hope that something I have said will back up what someone else has said and gets it out there.

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

Signed..........

Dated..... 15 November 2021