

Thursday, 26 February 2026

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

(10.00 am)

LADY SMITH: Good morning, and welcome back to Phase 10 of our case study hearings in which we're looking into the provision of residential accommodation for children by local authorities in places they ran, or used by local authorities to fulfil their responsibilities.

Now, we're into looking at Bellshill, I think, as we started yesterday, yesterday afternoon's witness was referring to her time at Bellshill, and we move on this morning to look at more evidence about Bellshill and I turn to Mr Sheldon.

Mr Sheldon.

MR SHELDON: That's right, my Lady.

Slight change of plan this morning. We'd hoped to have a witness in person but we're just going to do some read-ins and the first of those is the statement of 'Sarah'.

LADY SMITH: Thank you.

'Sarah' (read in)

MR SHELDON: Her witness statement is WIT.001.002.8006.

'Sarah', according to the records, seems to have been at Bellshill between [REDACTED] 1988 and [REDACTED] 1990.

(Pause)

And she also had spells at two other children's

1 homes during her time in care.

2 My Lady, 'Sarah' was born in 1973. She talks about  
3 her life before going into care in paragraph 2 and tells  
4 us that she had six siblings and lived together with  
5 them, her parents and her grandfather, all in the same  
6 house. It was a three-bedroomed house and she says that  
7 it was pretty cramped and notes at paragraph 3:

8 'It was quite cool when I went into care and got my  
9 own room.'

10 Reading from paragraph 4, she says:

11 'I went to Taylor High School, which is in  
12 New Stevenston, Motherwell. I was wild. I was  
13 strong-willed. I like to think I just didn't get the  
14 right nurturing. I was grounded all the time. My  
15 parents would call the police if I didn't come home.  
16 I didn't run away, but I'd go out when I was grounded.  
17 I didn't have a lot to do with the police and I wasn't  
18 getting into trouble with them. It was just a few times  
19 when I didn't go home. Looking back, I think my parents  
20 just had too many children and I was too strong-willed  
21 for them. I was the only child who was taken into care.

22 'My dad used to fight with me. The more he beat me,  
23 the stronger I got. I would not cry, even though I was  
24 dying to. I wouldn't back down. I would go into that  
25 mindset where he was not going to win against me.

1 Thinking back, it was absolutely terrible. My mum  
2 actually went to the social work because she thought my  
3 dad was going to end up killing me. I had no  
4 involvement with the social worker prior to that point.

5 'The social worker involved was Sheila Harris, she  
6 was from the Motherwell Social Work office. She was my  
7 social worker for around a year. She was all right. My  
8 mum didn't like what the social worker was saying  
9 because my parents were hitting me. My parents closed  
10 ranks on the social work department. My mum had gone to  
11 tell them that she was really frightened for my safety  
12 because of my dad. Suddenly, that changed and she said  
13 it wasn't as bad as I was making out and that I was  
14 talking nonsense. That was what my mum continued to do.

15 'My mum put me in a home and then a week later she  
16 went off to America for three weeks, which wasn't the  
17 caring mum. She never really was. I think my parents  
18 were embarrassed by their own actions, so it was better  
19 to blame me for everything that happened. I was  
20 a child. It should never have become that bad with my  
21 dad. My mum should have intervened. I used to give her  
22 a bit of cheek if I was in trouble. My mum would then  
23 phone the pub to get my dad home. She knew that meant  
24 that I would get a doing. He leathered me with belts  
25 and his hands. She didn't care.

1           'My mum and dad constantly threatened me that I was  
2 going to go into a home. On one occasion I was  
3 grounded, but it was a roasting hot day. I went out and  
4 my mum sent the police out to get me. The emergency  
5 social workers came to get me from the police station.  
6 They were really horrible, scary and intimidating. They  
7 were threatening to put me into care then, but it never  
8 happened. The emergency social workers then came again  
9 for a second time.

10           'I think it was only about a week after the first  
11 time, but I can't remember what had happened. The  
12 people that came the second time were really nice.  
13 There was no Children's Panel or anything. I think it  
14 was just agreed with my parents that I would go.  
15 I think I was asked too, because I remember saying that  
16 I wanted to go. As soon as they asked me, I went into  
17 the cupboard to get my nightie. I just went and packed  
18 my bags. It was absolutely horrible at home. I annoyed  
19 everybody and they annoyed me.

20           'I went into care in 1988.'

21           And this would have been I think just before her  
22 14th birthday -- I'm sorry, her 15th birthday, my Lady.

23 LADY SMITH: 15th, yes.

24 MR SHELDON: 'Bellshill was a local authority home. There  
25 were houses all round about it. It was built on two

1 storeys and had a flat roof. The windows had wood  
2 panelling beneath them. There was a big garden at the  
3 back. There were nothing in the garden to play on,  
4 which was quite strange given that it was a children's  
5 home. It was just grass.

6 'There were three groups in the home. I was in  
7 group three, which was based at the bottom of the home.  
8 Each group had a sitting room, a kitchen and bedrooms.  
9 The groups weren't really separated from each other,  
10 they were just in different parts of the house. There  
11 were two main offices. One had a safe in it and the  
12 other was the main office for anybody coming in. The  
13 officer in charge would sit in the main office and deal  
14 with any phone calls and suchlike. Each group also had  
15 a wee cupboard with phones and paperwork in it.

16 'There were usually two staff on duty for each  
17 group, plus a manager. Two staff would be on duty  
18 during the night. Jean Richmond was the houseparent for  
19 my group. PVX was SNR. He was  
20 really good. The staff I can remember are RBP,  
21 John Blair, Margaret Ramsay, Margaret Ritchie,  
22 MVN, Kathleen Irvine, Kate Steele,  
23 RFG, Cathy Mulgrew, George Graham and  
24 Jess Weir and INH, Heather Hunter and Claire  
25 Flannery. Those staff were there during the day.

1 I think the shifts were six in the morning until two in  
2 the afternoon, and two in the afternoon until ten at  
3 night.

4 'There were two sets of nightshift staff.  
5 PWR and Margaret Kerr who worked together,  
6 and Celia Carter and Bridie Gallagher who also worked  
7 together. There were two cooks and two cleaners who  
8 came in.

9 'Ed Stanton had been the officer in charge of the  
10 home before I arrived. He was no longer a member of  
11 staff when I was there. He had left his job but he  
12 still stayed in a flat annexed to the home. He stayed  
13 there for quite a while. He's now in jail. RBP  
14 also stayed over sometimes.

15 'We used to get students coming in to work in the  
16 summer. They were covering staff holidays. They didn't  
17 have any qualifications to work in the home. It used to  
18 crack me up because they could read our files.

19 'There were about 30 children altogether. The  
20 groups were mixed, boys and girls. The children were  
21 mainly teenagers. There were younger children in the  
22 home but they weren't there a lot. They tried to place  
23 the younger children in foster care. They might only  
24 have been in the home if there was an emergency. Group  
25 one had less young people. It was for older children,

1 preparing for independent living. You could cook your  
2 own food and things there. I moved to that group when  
3 I got older.

4 'I was taken to Bellshill by two social workers.  
5 They took me in and just left me there. I remember the  
6 smell of the place when I arrived. I hated the smell of  
7 homes. It smelled dirty. They had cleaners, but it was  
8 never clean. Kevin Murphy was the manager in charge of  
9 the home when I got there. Jean Richmond was also there  
10 when I arrived. She was a houseparent. She also ended  
11 up being my key worker. Kevin and Jean took me into my  
12 room and showed me where I was going to be staying.

13 'I shared a room for the first while that I was  
14 there.'

15 And she names the girl that she shared with and  
16 says:

17 'She's married now and I don't know what her second  
18 name is. She's about the same age as me. The bedroom  
19 was all right, but it didn't look that clean or painted.  
20 The floor was carpeted. The room was a good size. It  
21 had two single beds and we each had our own wardrobe.

22 'I wasn't sharing for long before I moved into a  
23 single room. I was quite happy to get my own room. The  
24 staff on duty would wake us up in the morning for  
25 school. I would get up as late as I could get away

1 with. I would go and get washed.

2 'After 10.00 pm we weren't supposed to go into any  
3 of the other groups so the staff could keep us  
4 contained. We could usually go to bed when we wanted,  
5 but it really depended who was on duty. If it was  
6 Bridie and Celia, we used to torment them all night. My  
7 friend and I used to play hide-and-seek with them, so  
8 they'd have to come and find us. We used to sit on the  
9 top shelf of a cupboard. We used to hear Celia opening  
10 up the cupboard, talking to herself, trying to find us.  
11 We came out ourselves.'

12 And she says that:

13 'We did this with Margaret and PWR as well.'

14 And notes that PWR was really horrible to  
15 everybody.

16 She says that:

17 'PWR came into work drunk one night. I didn't see  
18 what happened but I heard about it in the morning. The  
19 boys said that she was being vulgar towards them and  
20 inappropriate. That night was the only time she had  
21 ever been nice to me. She came into my room and was  
22 talking to me. She was off sick for about a year after  
23 that.

24 'I didn't really have breakfast, but that was my  
25 choice. It was probably cereal. When I got in from

1 school, I got my dinner. The staff also made us  
2 a supper before bed, like tea and toast. We were  
3 allowed to make our own stuff as well. Although there  
4 was a kitchen in each group, the cooks made the dinner  
5 in the main kitchen. They would then take it to the  
6 group. The meals were fine. I didn't see any child  
7 have a problem with the food.

8 'There was a cupboard full of all the goodies. We  
9 used to try and steal the keys so we could get in. It  
10 contained sweets, biscuits and cans of juice. You could  
11 open the door from the inside, but they had taken the  
12 handle off the outside. We would plot to go in and  
13 steal stuff from it. We used to all go into the  
14 kitchen, try and leave it open and swipe the keys. The  
15 cupboard keys were gold so we used to call it the "gold  
16 cupboard".

17 'There was one shower for all three groups, which  
18 was crazy. There was a bathroom on each floor. I used  
19 to wait until [her friend] ran her bath and then jump  
20 into it in the morning. I'd hear the bath filling and  
21 [her friend] pottering about in the room. That was time  
22 for me to get up. I don't know how she never got wise  
23 to it. I'd then hear her greeting to the staff that  
24 I'd nicked her bath again.

25 'I wore my own clothes in the home. If I needed new

1 clothes, I got money to buy new clothes. The staff  
2 would come with us to do that. There weren't rules  
3 about clothing.

4 'When I first went into the home, everyone was  
5 dogging school and keeping the lunch money. That seemed  
6 like a good idea until they started giving us a packed  
7 lunch. I didn't want to stoat about in the rain so  
8 I decided to go to school. I carried on attending  
9 Taylor High School which I had been attending at home.  
10 I was the only child from Bellshill Children's Home who  
11 went to Taylor High. Sometimes I had to get two buses  
12 there, and on the way home I had to get two buses, so it  
13 could take about an hour.

14 'School was okay. Staff from the school had to  
15 attend meetings about me, so they knew I was in the  
16 home. My school friends knew I was in the home. It was  
17 a small town and everybody knew my business. I didn't  
18 really care though. It didn't bother me. I left school  
19 when I was 16 and went to Coatbridge College.

20 'Sometimes the staff would take us out places during  
21 the week after dinner. If the weather was nice, they  
22 might take us to a park. They took us to loads of  
23 places. Every Friday night, we used to go roller  
24 skating in Falkirk. We'd go driving in the big minibus.  
25 It wasn't cool going on those buses. Not everybody

1 would want to go out. We were given a choice. I went  
2 quite a lot. If we chose to stay, we would hang about  
3 in the place because there were loads of people there  
4 anyway. The different groups would all mingle with each  
5 other. There were TVs we could watch. There was a pool  
6 table, shared by all the groups.

7 'The social work department arranged for me to go to  
8 a girls' group at Viewpark. No one else went from the  
9 home -- no one else from the home went to the group.  
10 Children from other areas went there, but they weren't  
11 all in care. I don't know why I got into that group,  
12 but it was good. I went there every week. They took me  
13 out and did things as well. I went on residential trips  
14 to Aviemore with them.

15 'During the school holidays, the staff used to take  
16 us on day trips. John Blair used to drive the minibus  
17 and take us places. We used to call him "Doublers",  
18 because he did a lot of overtime.

19 'We went on holidays at Bellshill. We went to  
20 caravans in Scarborough and Port Seton. We also went to  
21 France. We went to these places in the minibus  
22 including the south of France. Sometimes we went on  
23 holiday twice a year. We might get to go away for  
24 a weekend or a Monday to Friday as well. I went on all  
25 the holidays.'

1           And she remembers a girl:

2           '... being the only girl in group two when I was  
3 there.'

4           And she says:

5           'I got to go on their holiday as well, just to keep  
6 [this girl] company.'

7           'PVX ██████████, SNR ██████████, was really nice.  
8 He was all for making kids feel better about themselves  
9 and helping them to lead as normal a life as possible.  
10 He tried his hardest for everybody in there. We asked  
11 him if we could go to Spain. He compromised and took us  
12 to France. France was a good laugh. Someone from the  
13 Civic Centre, Gus Macintosh, tagged along as well.  
14 There weren't that many kids when I think about it. The  
15 adults got the better deal. There were about five  
16 adults and about eight kids. We camped in a tent. It  
17 was roasting.'

18           In relation to chores, she says:

19           'We had to do the dishes. There was a rota. They  
20 then moved the meals into the main dining room and we  
21 started to eat all together in there. I think the cook  
22 did the dishes after that. We had to keep our rooms  
23 tidy. My room was always tidy, so I was all right.

24           'I remember getting money for my birthday. We got  
25 a card and some of the staff would buy us presents as

1 well from their own money. There were decorations and  
2 a tree at Christmastime. We got a special meal. Your  
3 key worker would buy you a present. One Christmas we  
4 all got stereos. Everybody was playing them. We all  
5 played the song "Cecilia". We played it constantly when  
6 Celia was on nightshift. We'd all get in the corridor  
7 waiting with the stereos ready for when she came in.  
8 Every time she came in, we'd press the play button.

9 'As well as being given money to buy clothes, we got  
10 pocket money. We also got money to go out to the cinema  
11 and things like that. I can't remember how much pocket  
12 money we got. Pocket money used to be taken off us for  
13 swearing. If you had a rough day, you lost it all.  
14 That only happened for a while and I think PVX  
15 put a stop to it. I was lucky, I got more money than  
16 a lot of the people in the home. The way PVX looked at  
17 it was that he was rewarding me for going school. Some  
18 of the staff were a bit bitchy towards me because I did  
19 get on with PVX. I would ask them for money for  
20 something and they would say no. I hadn't done anything  
21 wrong, they were just trying to be smart. I would just  
22 go and ask PVX and he would give me it.

23 'I was allowed to go home whenever I wanted, but  
24 I didn't want to go home because my sister was horrible  
25 to me. I always ended up arguing with her. My mum kept

1 making excuses about coming to visit, but that meant  
2 I wasn't getting to see her. PVX sorted it out.  
3 He arranged for my mum to get picked up and brought down  
4 to me. PVX arranged a taxi for her to come to the home  
5 and a taxi back, so she had no excuse. She came every  
6 couple of weeks and sometimes my dad and auntie came as  
7 well. I saw them on my own and I was allowed to go out  
8 with them if I wanted, although I never did.

9 'Sheila Harris was my social worker throughout my  
10 time at Bellshill. She was really nice. The frequency  
11 of her visits depended upon how naughty I was. I went  
12 to a social work review four times a year. I can't  
13 remember inspections at Bellshill, although they did  
14 have meetings in the home. Janice Ballantyne and Susan  
15 were high up in the social work department based at the  
16 Civic Centre in Motherwell. They would come in for  
17 meetings and they would speak to the children. We knew  
18 who they were, although they didn't really ask us how we  
19 were getting on.

20 'I attended a Children's Panel about once a year.  
21 I was able to speak. My key worker in the home was Jean  
22 Richmond. When I went into the home, I pushed the  
23 boundaries. I decided that wasn't for me, so I just got  
24 on with my life. Jean Richmond was off, so I got a new  
25 key worker. She was then off, and Jean Richmond

1 prepared a report for the Children's Panel. It was  
2 terrible, despite the fact that she had been telling me  
3 I was doing really well. I had been getting glowing  
4 reports from everywhere else apart from the one that was  
5 prepared in the home. I went to a girls' group at  
6 Viewpark through the social work department.'

7 And she says:

8 'I got a good report from there. The only good  
9 thing that was in my report from the home was that my  
10 hygiene was impeccable and my room was immaculate.  
11 Everything else was terrible.

12 'I was absolutely fuming. It didn't reflect who  
13 I had been. I went nuts at the panel and walked out of  
14 it. It just made the home look daft. After that  
15 happened to me, PVX said it wouldn't happen to  
16 anybody again. He made sure that any reports being  
17 submitted to the panel went through him first so that he  
18 could read them.

19 'I was quite involved in Who Cares? Scotland when  
20 I was 15. In those days it was for kids in care. Now  
21 it also helps kids leaving care. PVX offered me  
22 20 cigarettes to go, so I said I'd go. I bet he wished  
23 he'd never done that because then I fought for  
24 everybody's rights. We used to have our own group  
25 meetings in the home. I'd go to meetings with other

1 groups in Glasgow as well. I also attended conferences.  
2 I went up to Napier University in Edinburgh for three  
3 days. It was giving a voice to children in care, which  
4 was good. I used to go with a member of staff, Claire  
5 Flannery. There was a girl from Carluke who went as  
6 well.

7 'We'd run meetings in the home and discuss what we  
8 wanted to do. Everybody in the home could attend. We'd  
9 discuss what we wanted to change and what was annoying  
10 us. We could then go to the staff and tell them what we  
11 wanted to change. Through Who Cares? I stopped the  
12 students who came in the summer from being able to  
13 access our records. We also wanted locks on our bedroom  
14 doors, so they brought that in as well.

15 'After I was admitted to the home, I was taken for  
16 a medical. It was at the local GP. I think it was to  
17 check for bruises but I didn't have any at that time.  
18 I didn't get any other health checks, but we could go to  
19 the doctor if we weren't well.

20 'John Blair accidentally reversed over me in the  
21 minibus one time when he was picking me up. I wasn't  
22 hurt or anything, but somebody saw it and reported it to  
23 the police. They were looking for me in all the  
24 hospitals in case I'd been kidnapped. The police ended  
25 up coming to the home.

1           'I think running away is when you're actually going  
2 somewhere. In the home, they classed not coming back in  
3 time as running away. I wouldn't say that's the case.  
4 I stayed out a lot. It was mainly [her friend from the  
5 home] and I staying out late. How late we stayed out  
6 depended upon how cold it was. In the summer we would  
7 come in with the birds. I wasn't running away, I just  
8 wasn't going back. They would send the police out to  
9 look for me but they never caught me. The police would  
10 just go to my mum's. That was the last place I was  
11 going to go. Eventually, they just stopped sending the  
12 police to my mum's because they realised I was never  
13 going to be there.

14           'At the start, when I wasn't going to school,  
15 I didn't really think the staff at the home could do  
16 anything. At home, if I got into trouble, I was getting  
17 leathered. They couldn't really top that, so I pushed  
18 the boundaries.

19           'Initially, pocket money was withheld if you swore,  
20 but PVX stopped that. PVX would get me into  
21 trouble and tell me if I was wrong. At the same time,  
22 if I was doing well, he would reward me for it. If  
23 I was in trouble, I wouldn't be given money, that was  
24 generally how discipline was carried out. Sometimes  
25 just giving you into trouble was enough. PVX was

1 always fair with me, so I didn't have any issues with  
2 him. I'm grateful to the staff who guided me and gave  
3 me into trouble when I needed it. I'm still in touch  
4 with those staff members.

5 'We did get restrained if we were acting out. Some  
6 of the staff were more heavy-handed than others. They  
7 would sit on top of us. Some of them were a bit rough,  
8 but at that time it was accepted. I think the staff  
9 were meant to be trained, but some of them were just  
10 getting their own back. That didn't happen to me a lot,  
11 but [her friend] and I used to come alive at night and  
12 annoy the life out of everybody. It depended who was  
13 there and if they thought they were hard men. One of  
14 them used to scratch. The staff also used to try and  
15 keep us in our rooms. There were no locks on the doors  
16 except upstairs in group one.'

17 And she then goes on to talk about abuse at  
18 Bellshill. She says:

19 'I don't know if what happened was physical abuse,  
20 but some staff members would lose control in the heat of  
21 the moment. I don't think it was directed at anybody.  
22 I got restrained and sometimes I felt it was over the  
23 top, but I don't think the staff member went out with  
24 the intention of hurting anybody. One member of staff  
25 in particular actually cut my arm when he restrained me.

1 I wanted out of my room and he wouldn't let me out.  
2 I got bravado and he had to stop it. He held me and  
3 jagged his nails into me. I just thought that was him  
4 losing control and being unable to regain control.  
5 I would say that I provoked it, but he lost control.  
6 I didn't see any unprovoked physical attacks on anybody  
7 else.

8 'The sexual abuse is just a story to me now. When  
9 I think back it probably started when I went into the  
10 home. Eddie Docherty, a staff member, stayed in  
11 Holytown and he knew my auntie. He was well into his  
12 40s. I don't know if he was divorced, but he was  
13 separated for a long time. He had told me that he was  
14 pally with my mum and they would talk and talk, but that  
15 wasn't true. He also said that his wife was friendly  
16 with my aunt, but they just knew each other from the  
17 village where they lived. He told me those things to  
18 groom me.

19 'He never seemed like an all right guy, but you  
20 could talk to him and he would give you cigarettes. He  
21 was obviously trying to gain my trust. He didn't give  
22 you into trouble the same way as the other staff. When  
23 you're young, you think that the staff like that are all  
24 right. When you're older, you realise it wasn't them  
25 that were all right, it was the staff who actually put

1 the foot down. I don't know how he managed to stay in  
2 a job like that because he had a potty mouth.

3 'It only happered once when I was 15. I was doing  
4 my exams at school. I was on study leave. I was bored.  
5 My friend never went to school so she had been placed in  
6 secure at Kerelaw. Eddie asked me if I wanted to go for  
7 a drink. It was a nice day so I thought, "Why not?".  
8 My gut instinct was that something bad was going to  
9 happen but I still went. I even said to him, "No funny  
10 business". I think my body told me that because of how  
11 he used to speak. He was a creep. At that time,  
12 I hadn't been aware of him doing anything to anybody  
13 else.

14 'I sensed it myself and I still put myself in that  
15 position. That was a big thing for me to deal with, the  
16 fact that I had a feeling something bad was going to  
17 happen, but I still went and done it. I thought we were  
18 going to go to a pub, but we got a carryout and we went  
19 down by the River Clyde. When we got there, he just  
20 pounced on me and raped me. His hands were everywhere.  
21 He entered me, but managed to get him off and away from  
22 me. I think he heard something or somebody's voice and  
23 I told him that I'd come back another time. I'd no  
24 intention of doing that, I just needed to get away. It  
25 happened, and I can't change it.

1           'After it happened, I was upset. He handed me £20  
2           at the train station, which was even worse. I remember  
3           getting the train back to the home. He was off work at  
4           the time, so I got off the train at Bellshill and he  
5           stayed on it until Motherwell. I couldn't get on  
6           a train for ages after it. I hated going to Glasgow.  
7           I'd feel sick and everything when I got to Uddingston.  
8           He had taken me out of the road where nobody would know  
9           him because I think he lived in Motherwell at this time.

10           'I was upset when I got back to the home. When  
11           I did get to see my file, there was nothing in my file  
12           about it. The pages had been taken out. If there had  
13           been, I would have known exactly when it happened,  
14           because I knew it had happened in May. Other members of  
15           staff would have seen that, and that I was upset, and it  
16           would have been logged.'

17           Pausing there, my Lady, it seems likely it was May  
18           1989, but we'll see some dates in relation to future  
19           evidence.

20   LADY SMITH: So that would be her second summer in  
21           Bellshill.

22   MR SHELDON: Yes:

23           'I didn't tell anybody why I was upset. I didn't  
24           tell anybody for a long time. I knew within myself and  
25           I put myself into that position. My whole body had told

1 me not to go and I had gone. For me that was hard.

2 I was too ashamed to tell anybody what happened.

3 I blamed myself.

4 'I must've come off differently after it happened.

5 A few of the staff did ask me what was wrong with me.

6 Kathleen asked [my friend] as well. She said that

7 I didn't seem myself and asked if anything was up with

8 me. [My friend] didn't know at that point. After it

9 happened, Eddie Docherty came back to his work as if

10 nothing had happened. Nothing like that ever happened

11 to me again. I never put myself into a situation where

12 it could happen. Sometimes he had to take us for a food

13 shop. He used to have his visa card. He would ask us

14 to give him our money and he would buy us extra.

15 'I told [my friend] what had happened with

16 Eddie Docherty but it was a long time afterwards.

17 I think it was about a year after it happened. We were

18 sitting in my room having a drink and I told her. [She]

19 then told me that she had been in a situation with

20 Eddie Docherty as well. The next night [she] pulled

21 Eddie Docherty up about it. She said, "I know what you

22 did to 'Sarah' and you're not getting it away with it".

23 That was the last time he was ever in the home.

24 Seemingly, he got a phone call saying that he had to

25 leave because he had something on his file. They said

1 he had a previous conviction for reset or something like  
2 that. He had been temporary staff and then he was made  
3 permanent, so I could never understand how that could  
4 have happened if he had something on his record.  
5 I think he got the full-time position after he had raped  
6 me. He had been there for years so I don't know why his  
7 record hadn't been known before.

8 'I also reported what happened with Eddie Docherty  
9 whilst I was still at Bellshill. I was talking to  
10 Muriel the cleaner and I told her what had happened.  
11 I told her a few months after I'd spoken to [my friend].  
12 She said that she'd need to tell somebody and she told  
13 Kevin Murphy. Kevin Murphy came and spoke to me. He  
14 said he couldn't leave it at that. It was at that point  
15 that it came out that [another girl, a third girl], had  
16 also been in a position with him. I think Kevin Murphy  
17 might have spoken to everybody in the home and that's  
18 when it came out about all three of us. It did affect  
19 [my friend], but it wasn't the same as what had happened  
20 to me so she felt like a fraud. She felt as if she  
21 shouldn't be feeling like she did. Abuse is hard.

22 'RBP [REDACTED], who was a senior, told us that nobody  
23 would believe us because we were from the home. He did  
24 it in a way that he was actually doing us a favour. We  
25 then said that we didn't want the police because we

1 didn't want to make a big hullabaloo and then get called  
2 liars. Now, I don't know whether I wanted to report it  
3 to the police. I just remember thinking that he was  
4 doing us a favour. RBP is also up for charges,  
5 but I never had any problems with him. I used to feel  
6 that he thought he was something, but never in a sexual  
7 way. Looking back, I can't decide. I can't see it.  
8 I was up at his house with [my friend] for dinner and  
9 nothing happened. The staff dropped us off and picked  
10 us up. I never felt threatened by him.

11 'Maybe RBP was looking out for us. At that  
12 point, the police had no time for some of the older  
13 laddies that had been in the home before us. Maybe his  
14 experience was that the police would just laugh at us.  
15 It could have been genuine advice on his part. Either  
16 way, it shouldn't have mattered if we were screaming  
17 that we didn't want the police involved. The police  
18 should have been called. It's procedure that should  
19 have happened.

20 'Nobody from outwith the home spoke to us about what  
21 had happened but they knew about it. I know that they  
22 had meetings about it involving Janice Ballantyne and  
23 Bernadette Docherty from the Civic Centre. I wasn't  
24 present at those meetings but I was told about them. It  
25 suited them if we didn't want to get the police involved

1 because it meant less publicity. Janice Ballantyne and  
2 Bernadette Docherty didn't do anything. They never  
3 bothered. PVX had become SNR  
4 when he was 30, so he was quite young to be in that  
5 position. I totally believe that the police should have  
6 been phoned. That decision should have been taken out  
7 of our hands. It was as if it had been covered up so as  
8 not to attract any negative attention.

9 'Afterwards, I could see how convenient it was for  
10 the home and the social work that we didn't speak up.  
11 I didn't see that at the time. We were offered  
12 counselling, so it wasn't as if they just did nothing.  
13 I went to Kirknowe Social Work Centre up in Cambusnethan  
14 for counselling. I saw a female counsellor, although  
15 she wasn't based there. I spoke about the abuse. It  
16 was supposed to help me cope.'

17 And she says that when she was 16, nearly 17, she  
18 fell out with a lassie and hit her, and she left  
19 Bellshill at that point and went to Carluke Children's  
20 Home. So I'll omit that part of the statement, my Lady,  
21 and move to page 19.

22 She talks about leaving Carluke at paragraph 80.  
23 She left there in 1992 after her 18th birthday. She had  
24 a son just after she left and had keys for a house and  
25 moved into the house just before she went into labour,

1 the house being in Carluke. At paragraph 81, she says:

2 'Sheila Harris, my social worker, continued to work  
3 with me for a wee while after I left Carluke, but  
4 I didn't really need her.'

5 And she notes that when she had her child, another  
6 three of the girls from care also had babies. And  
7 taking that short, she says:

8 'We would meet up and Joyce would take the group.  
9 We would maybe go and cook something. It was to help  
10 us. Joyce was my support worker for leaving.'

11 And says that she worked for Throughcare and that  
12 she was really helpful.

13 She says, paragraph 82, that she:

14 '... coped fine when I first left the home. I had  
15 been cooking for myself since I was 15 anyway and Joyce  
16 helped me with budgeting. I worked with her for a good  
17 while.'

18 At paragraph 83, she says:

19 'I stayed in the house in Carluke for 12 years [and  
20 says] I've been married for 16.'

21 She now works in home improvements, designing  
22 kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms, and works with her  
23 husband. And she says at the end of that paragraph:

24 'I enjoy it. I'm very blessed.'

25 At paragraph 84:

1           'When they shut Bellshill Children's Home down, they  
2 never even told us. For all of us who had stayed there  
3 for a long time, we were never even given a last  
4 opportunity to say goodbye. They just did it quietly  
5 and didn't even tell anybody. I thought that was  
6 terrible.'

7           At paragraph 85 she talks a bit about her  
8 relationship with her family and difficulties with that  
9 after care, but at paragraph 86 says:

10           'My mum was all right with [her son] and helped me  
11 out with him. I don't let myself get close to my mum  
12 because I don't want to get hurt. I see my brothers and  
13 sisters now and again, but I haven't maintained it.'

14           At paragraph 87, she says:

15           'Going into care was the best thing that ever  
16 happened to do me. I think it was one of the best  
17 decisions that was made for me. Despite everything that  
18 happened, I can take something out of it and think that  
19 it's a positive thing. I didn't at the time. I'm even  
20 able to take a positive out of the abuse now. The abuse  
21 made sure that I was always prepared. I never let my  
22 guard down. Lots of people are very promiscuous, but  
23 I never went down that road.

24           'If I had stayed with my mum and dad, I would have  
25 been a complete and utter waste of space because that's

1           how they looked at me. When I went into Bellshill, PVX  
2           PVX [and others] looked at me and said I was actually  
3           all right. They encouraged me to do things. If I got  
4           into trouble they still encouraged me. I had good role  
5           models to help me. I'm not ashamed that I was in  
6           a home. I don't care. It's part of who I am and it's  
7           moulded me.

8           'In general, I had a good experience of being in  
9           care. It helped to shape me into who I was. I don't  
10          know why I got on with PVX so well. I heard some  
11          people say that there was malice in it, but there  
12          wasn't. I'm still in contact with some of the staff.  
13          I totally appreciate what they did for me. If it hadn't  
14          been for them guiding me, I don't know what would have  
15          happened to me. A lot of the staff were just childish.  
16          They should never have worked in places like that.  
17          I'm grateful to the staff who got me into trouble when  
18          it was needed. Those are the ones that I'm still in  
19          contact with.'

20          Paragraph 90:

21          'After I had my son, my hormones were all over the  
22          place.'

23          She says:

24          'I had pushed the abuse out of my mind and didn't  
25          think about it.'

1           But after she had her son, she says:

2           'I kept getting flashbacks and I couldn't sleep at  
3           night. I felt like I needed to protect my baby.  
4           I've become more aware of things like that since  
5           I've had [a child]. That's when it really affected me.  
6           Because I went with Eddie Docherty when I knew  
7           I shouldn't have, I just felt so dirty. It was  
8           a horrible time, when I should have been enjoying my  
9           baby. I couldn't talk to anybody about it because  
10          I knew I shouldn't have gone. It was really hard when  
11          that's what I was telling myself, that it was my own  
12          fault.

13          'I reported the abuse to the police after I'd had  
14          [my son] because I felt like I needed to protect him.  
15          I hoped that reporting it to the police would be it, but  
16          it lasted. Sometimes I was suicidal. Sometimes I felt  
17          so bad. I felt like I was a terrible mum because I  
18          wasn't giving it my all. I was on Valium and  
19          anti-depressants. I had panic attacks. After the court  
20          case in 1996, I did get counselling through my GP.  
21          I didn't find it helpful because you just relive it. I  
22          could talk about it and talk about it, but unless I had  
23          it in a good place, I was never going to get over it.

24          'Medication didn't help me. The best thing I ever  
25          did was to go to see a life coach.'

1           And says that she found him on Facebook just over  
2 three years ago:

3           'By the time I went to see him, I was starting to  
4 get better and it wasn't as bad. After seeing him,  
5 I felt like I was able to put what happened to bed.  
6 I'm now able to talk about it without shedding one  
7 tear.'

8           Reading short to paragraph 93, she says:

9           'The abuse impacted upon my relationship. I had to  
10 get help having sex because I felt that it was dirty.  
11 I had to put myself and my husband through some therapy.  
12 I felt it was really hard to enjoy sex. That wasn't  
13 easy.

14           'I'm into angels as well, because I feel like  
15 somebody protected me when I was growing up. I've come  
16 out the other side and I don't have a drug or alcohol  
17 problem. I feel so blessed and I'm so grateful.'

18           Paragraph 95, she says more on reporting:

19           'I stayed in contact with ...'

20           The two friends from Bellshill who were also abused.

21           And says about two-thirds of the way down that  
22 paragraph:

23           'The three of us decided to contact the police. We  
24 contacted Motherwell Police Station in about 1995. CID  
25 took statements from us. After our allegations came

1 out, it came out about Ed Stanton as well. There was  
2 a big investigation and I had to go and speak to the  
3 police again.'

4 And pausing there, my Lady, that's what was known as  
5 Operation Sunflower.

6 LADY SMITH: Oh, thank you.

7 MR SHELDON: And again, I think we may hear some evidence or  
8 look at some evidence about that later:

9 'Eddie Docherty didn't get charged with anything  
10 serious, but the fact that he went to court was good  
11 enough. He went to court for lewd and libidinous  
12 behaviour. It was a trial and I had to give evidence at  
13 the end of 1996. The court case was really hard. I had  
14 to give evidence in front of him. There were no screens  
15 or anything. Some of the charges were not proven, but  
16 he was found guilty of other charges. He didn't get  
17 a jail sentence. I felt like I did the best that  
18 I could, but I was quite gutted that he didn't get the  
19 jail. There wasn't a lot that I could do.'

20 Pausing again there, my Lady, the indictment on  
21 which Docherty stood trial is JUS-000000322.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 MR SHELDON: That's the only document that could be  
24 recovered from the justiciary office.

25 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

1 MR SHELDON: And it seems, it's not entirely clear, that he  
2 was given probation.

3 LADY SMITH: But he was prosecuted on indictment?

4 MR SHELDON: Yes, but it was clearly a community disposal,  
5 my Lady.

6 LADY SMITH: Yes. For?

7 MR SHELDON: I'm sorry?

8 LADY SMITH: The charges, what was he prosecuted for?

9 MR SHELDON: I think it was lewd and lib, my Lady.

10 LADY SMITH: Lewd and lib.

11 MR SHELDON: I don't have the indictment in front of me, but  
12 I can check that.

13 LADY SMITH: We can check later. Thank you.

14 MR SHELDON: The indictment certainly included reference to  
15 highly inappropriate language used by Docherty and that  
16 seems to be what 'Sarah's' referring to when she said  
17 that he had a 'potty mouth'.

18 LADY SMITH: Oh, of course, mm-hmm.

19 MR SHELDON: Paragraph 97:  
20 'I know other allegations have been made about abuse  
21 at Bellshill. I never saw anything other than what  
22 happened to me with Eddie Docherty. I know there have  
23 been allegations made against John Blair. I just can't  
24 believe it. I thought he was a good guy. He didn't  
25 swear at anybody or anything. You get a feel for who's

1 all right and who's not all right. He was fair with the  
2 kids. He did spend a lot of time doing the extras but  
3 he was the only one who would take us anywhere. Anybody  
4 who was in the home with me at that time agrees with me.  
5 I honestly don't believe he would have done anything  
6 like that.'

7 In relation to records, she says:

8 'I don't have my records but I did get to see my  
9 file just after I left care. My social worker brought  
10 them to me but it was all photocopies. I wasn't allowed  
11 to keep them. I found it strange that there was no  
12 mention of the abuse at Bellshill. Lots of things were  
13 missing, like all the reports of abuse that they had  
14 done at the time.

15 'Nowadays, staff would be sent on courses for  
16 restraining so that they do it properly. I would also  
17 imagine that staff would be checked out properly. At  
18 that time, anybody could work in the home. Some of them  
19 had no qualifications or anything. Students used to  
20 come in the summer for summer jobs. They could read our  
21 files. I don't even think they were studying social  
22 work. That happened every summer.'

23 And in relation to her hopes for the Inquiry,

24 'Sarah' says:

25 'There are loads of people out there who just don't

1 know their way. Things will have happened to them.  
2 I wanted to give them a voice. There will be abusers  
3 out there just now. These people always get into the  
4 care system. Children in care are vulnerable and  
5 they're attacked at their most vulnerable. I came  
6 forward to give them a voice and to try and change it  
7 for other people. When this is in the papers and it  
8 starts to get bigger, they'll hear snippets of it.  
9 I hope it will maybe make them realise that abuse isn't  
10 right. It might give them a voice to speak out and say,  
11 "This happened to me".

12 'Abusers are clever, so I don't know what can be  
13 done to stop them. I think that kids should have life  
14 coaches in the homes. They should all be taken to  
15 seminars and things like that, so that they're hearing  
16 a different voice. They need to learn that it's all  
17 about them being strong and that only they can fix it.  
18 If children were hearing that when they were in care,  
19 they would have the confidence to say that something  
20 isn't right for them and therefore not to do it. It  
21 could help with the staff as well to have more open  
22 minds and be the best that they can be.'

23 'Sarah's' signed the statement and made the usual  
24 declaration, my Lady.

25 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

1 MR SHELDON: I think Ms Forbes has the next read-in.

2 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

3 Ms Forbes, wherever you're ready.

4 MS FORBES: My Lady, the next read-in is from an applicant  
5 who is anonymous and is known as 'Ryan'.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

7 'Ryan' (read in)

8 MS FORBES: And the reference for 'Ryan's' statement is  
9 WIT.001.001.6716.

10 My Lady, since giving his statement, 'Ryan' has  
11 sadly passed away.

12 LADY SMITH: Oh, I'm sorry.

13 MS FORBES: My Lady, 'Ryan' tells us he was born in 1964 and  
14 he talks about his life before going into care between  
15 paragraphs 4 and 15.

16 In summary, he tells us that he lived with his  
17 parents. He was an only child. His parents split up  
18 when he was 3 or 4 years old and his mother took him and  
19 moved to England, and his father stayed in Scotland.

20 He tells us his mother remarried and her second  
21 husband was a 'monster', he says. His mother suffered  
22 from a heart problem and died from a heart attack when  
23 he was aged only 14.

24 So after his mother died, he stayed with some family  
25 members in Coventry for a few weeks and then had to move

1 on. And he tells us he didn't know why then he had to  
2 move on, but he tells us he had a £20,000 trust fund  
3 that disappeared.

4 From there, he came to Scotland to live with an aunt  
5 and uncle in Wishaw, but that didn't work out and he  
6 went to live with his father in Wishaw, who he says was  
7 a stranger to him at that time. He had to share a room  
8 with his father.

9 'Ryan' says he joined the Salvation Army and he was  
10 going to become an officer and a candidate. However,  
11 there was physical abuse from his father and there was  
12 also sexual abuse. He realised he had to get away and  
13 he knew his only option was to put himself in care. So  
14 he went himself to Wishaw Social Services and asked to  
15 be taken into care when he was still only 14 years old,  
16 he says, and he was sent then to Cambusnethan Children's  
17 Home.

18 And he tells us about that between paragraphs 16 and  
19 21 of his statement. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

20 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

21 The records, my Lady, show he was admitted there on  
22 1980, so he was actually a bit older than he  
23 thought. He was 16 by then.

24 My Lady, 'Ryan' Secondary Institutions - to be published later

25 Secondary Institution then he was told he was going to Bellshill

1 Children's Home and that he would be sharing a flat for  
2 people 16 and over, which I think, given the dates,  
3 would make sense. So he's admitted to Bellshill on  
4 [REDACTED] 1980 still aged only 16 years, and he'd been  
5 in that previous home, first home, for just over four  
6 months.

7 My Lady, he then tells us about Bellshill between  
8 paragraphs 22 and 77 of his statement and I'm not going  
9 to read out all of what he says --

10 LADY SMITH: So if he was about 16, that would be about 1980  
11 that he went to Bellshill?

12 MS FORBES: It was [REDACTED] 1980 that he was admitted,  
13 my Lady, to Bellshill, still aged 16.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

15 MS FORBES: My Lady, in summary then, he tells us the move  
16 to Bellshill was a nightmare from start to finish. He  
17 shared a flat there with a boy who was a glue-sniffer  
18 and he says that the abuse of alcohol throughout the  
19 home was rife and particularly he talks about Buckfast.

20 He tells us he remained there for about a year.  
21 Now, my Lady, we do have records, but the records don't  
22 tell us exactly when he left. We know that he was still  
23 there in [REDACTED] 1981, when they were talking about moving  
24 him into a flat, but that hadn't happened yet, so it  
25 would appear he would have been 17 by the time he

1 actually left Bellshill.

2 'Ryan' tells us he was one of the older boys so  
3 there were no issues with bullying, but at paragraph 25  
4 of his statement, he tells us that he thought initially  
5 the move to Bellshill was going to be the start of his  
6 life and laying down roots. He tells us that Mrs GCH  
7 was SNR .

8 At paragraph 27, he says he remembers thinking that  
9 the home appeared to be more like a Glasgow pub, as it  
10 was chaotic and messy.

11 At paragraph 29, he tells us it was explained to him  
12 that he was there to learn how to live independently and  
13 that when he was ready and old enough and ready to  
14 leave, he'd be getting a council house.

15 If I could then take your Ladyship to paragraph 30  
16 of his statement.

17 My Lady, at paragraph 30, 'Ryan' says:

18 'There was easy access to the home over a back fence  
19 and in a back door, which could be opened with a kick.  
20 All the local boys knew this and you could come back to  
21 the flat to find a whole load of strangers. People were  
22 using the flat to abuse solvents and drink Buckfast.  
23 I didn't like the solvents but I was into drinking  
24 Buckfast. We devised ways to smuggle the Buckfast into  
25 the flat.

1           'I remember that they used to allow the other  
2 residents of the home to sleep out in the back garden in  
3 tents that had been erected for the boys. The boys  
4 sleeping there were all ages. These were just glue and  
5 Buckfast parties. The attitude of the staff was that  
6 they knew where you were so they didn't have to worry  
7 about you. They knew exactly what was going on. Some  
8 of those boys were only 8 or 9.'

9           'Ryan' then goes on to tell us at paragraph 32 that  
10 he -- there was no advice or help for him and he was  
11 essentially dumped there by the social work and told to  
12 get on with it.

13           At paragraph 33, he says the only advice he got was  
14 from his flatmate's social worker when he'd attempted to  
15 commit suicide by cutting his wrists and the social  
16 worker told him how he should [REDACTED] in future to  
17 be more successful.

18           At paragraph 36, 'Ryan' says there was no real  
19 routine. He was left to his own devices and could just  
20 come and go as he pleased.

21           At paragraph 37, 'Ryan' recalls a time when he was  
22 caught by the staff with beer in the flat and he was  
23 told that they would be reported to the social work, so  
24 they littered the surfaces with all the empty alcohol  
25 cans and bottles, but the social work did nothing but

1 shake their heads and left.

2 'Ryan' tells us whilst he was there, he worked at  
3 the Co-op but just for a few weeks, that's at  
4 paragraph 38, and at paragraph 39 he said that some of  
5 the locals in Bellshill would spit on them, whilst  
6 others would give them food.

7 At paragraph 40, he tells us about New Year and  
8 wandering about the home in a drunken state and he says  
9 that everyone in the home from the age of 8 upwards was  
10 'spangled', is the way he puts it, and he says most of  
11 the senior staff were also drinking.

12 If we go to paragraph 41 of 'Ryan's' statement, he  
13 says:

14 'I spotted [and he names a boy], one of the other  
15 boys, going into the girls' room. I was going out with  
16 one of the lassies that stayed in the room [and he names  
17 her]. I went to the room and I saw [him] getting into  
18 [her] bed. I pulled him out and took him to the back  
19 garden where I gave him a few hits. I seriously believe  
20 that I stopped a rape, as [she] was unconscious with  
21 drink.

22 'Every time I came back to the flat, there would be  
23 a load of other people there sitting, sniffing gas and  
24 glue. I came back one day to find my flatmate's sister  
25 sniffing some gas. I can't remember her name.

1 I remember [a boy who he names] threatening to set her  
2 on fire. He put his lighter near her. She went up in  
3 a fireball. I remember attacking [him]. He was  
4 laughing about it. Fortunately, the only injury was  
5 a slight burn to her lip, and the hair on the back of  
6 her head was singed.'

7 And he says that boy was always in trouble with the  
8 police.

9 'Ryan' goes on at paragraph 43:

10 'The girls at the home were in and out of the place  
11 all the time [and he names a girl] who was about 16, was  
12 covered in tattoos. She was quite a buxom girl and you  
13 would see her being picked up by big flash cars driven  
14 by businessmen. The cars used to pull up outside the  
15 staff offices. She would be taken away for the weekend  
16 to various hotels. She used to wear a cardigan to cover  
17 up her tattoos. I am sure that the staff at the home  
18 must have known exactly what was going on. She made no  
19 secret of what she was doing. [She] was doing what she  
20 could to improve her life and get out of the home.

21 'The staff knew that I was growing cannabis in the  
22 flat. They were happier knowing I was taking cannabis,  
23 because it kept me a lot calmer than drinking Buckfast.'

24 He then tells us at paragraph 46 that whilst he was  
25 living in that independent flat at Bellshill that they

1 had to buy and prepare their own food with the allowance  
2 they received, and that there was a time when there was  
3 a dispute between the social services and the government  
4 about the payment of that allowance, and the social work  
5 refused to pay them the allowance. They had no money to  
6 live on and they were caught up in the dispute.

7 If we go to paragraph 47, 'Ryan' says:

8 'It was only when the 16-year-olds living at the  
9 home told Malcolm Day that they would go to the press  
10 with regard to what was happening that it got sorted  
11 out. It lasted a week and we were living on handouts  
12 from neighbours and sympathetic staff at the home.

13 I recall one of the staff members, RBN  
14 suggesting that we go into town and beg.

15 'I spent most of my living allowance on Buckfast but  
16 would also buy food that would last, like loaves of  
17 bread.

18 'I never had occasion to run away as I could come  
19 and go as I pleased. Some of the other kids did run  
20 away from time to time. I know that the younger girls  
21 were not keen on running away as they would be subjected  
22 to an internal examination when they were brought back.  
23 I suspect that this was done to deter them.

24 'The staff were terrible. Mrs GCH was SNR  
25 and RBN was the assistant. RBN was mad as

1 a brush. Mrs Gibson was night staff along with another  
2 man. I had very few dealings with the day staff but did  
3 deal with the senior staff. Some of the staff lived at  
4 the home and the staff cover was 24 hours a day.

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

10 'I remember at Christmastime, we were all taken into  
11 the lounge to celebrate. The three people who were all  
12 over 16 and living in the flats were invited to come  
13 down for presents. They asked if they could use my  
14 stereo to play music. The young ones all got presents  
15 and then we thought it would be our turn. Mrs GCH  
16 said that we were over 16 and didn't qualify for  
17 a present. It was another humiliation in front of  
18 everyone. I think that Mrs GCH intended for me to  
19 react and take back the stereo. Instead, I swore at her  
20 and left. She accused me of being too sensitive. We  
21 were not invited for Christmas dinner.

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

25 'Ryan' then tells us at paragraph 55 that he would

1 get visits from Malcolm Day, the Head of Social Work,  
2 and the odd visit from him own social worker. And if we  
3 could go to paragraph 56 of his statement, 'Ryan' says:

4 'On one of the occasions, I again challenged  
5 Malcolm Day about getting a flat. I challenged him in  
6 front of other members of staff at the meeting. He told  
7 me that the only way that I would get a flat was to get  
8 a girl pregnant. He then laughed in my face along with  
9 the rest of the staff. There is no way to describe what  
10 I was feeling.'

11 Now to paragraph 58, 'Ryan' says:

12 'A couple of days after the meeting where I was  
13 humiliated, I was at a very low edge. I bought a bottle  
14 of Buckfast which I drank in one go. I then [REDACTED]  
15 [REDACTED] slashed both my wrists. My suicide note was  
16 "Fuck you all" written [REDACTED] on the wall of the flat.  
17 I didn't want to make a mess for my flatmate, so [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED].

19 'When I came to, I saw all these lights and  
20 I remember being happy because I thought that I was dead  
21 and it was all over. After a short time, I realised  
22 that I was still alive. I was lying in hospital  
23 recovering. I think that the hospital was Monklands  
24 Hospital. I was very angry as I was alive. I was angry  
25 with Malcolm Day for all the false promises. I was

1 angry with my father. The doctor tried to [REDACTED]  
2 [REDACTED]. I was on my  
3 own and there were no members of staff from Bellshill  
4 with me.'

5 'Ryan' then says that he left the hospital himself  
6 and went in a taxi to his father's house and he threw  
7 stones at his windows and then put a half-brick through  
8 a window, and he decided to go to [REDACTED] to  
9 end his life but the police caught up with him and took  
10 him back to Bellshill.

11 If we go now to paragraph 62, 'Ryan' says:

12 'I was in the flat a short time when Mrs GCH [REDACTED] came  
13 in to see me. She had a bucket of hot water, carbolic  
14 soap and a scrubbing brush. I was lying on the settee.  
15 She insisted I got up and cleaned the carpet. She was  
16 shouting at me and I was shouting at her. I eventually  
17 got really upset and broke down. I told her about  
18 everything that had happened to me involving my father.  
19 She listened to me and after I had finished telling her  
20 my story, her only words were, "You'll need to get the  
21 fuck over it. Now, get up and get the carpet cleaned".

22 'I started to clean the carpet but my wounds, which  
23 were [REDACTED], opened up and the blood pumped out.  
24 I was making more mess. She told me to go to the  
25 bathroom and clean up. I managed to stop the bleeding

1 and came back through to the lounge. She had already  
2 left.

3 'I stayed in the bedroom for the next three days.  
4 A lot of the other kids came to see me but I told them  
5 to fuck off and leave me alone. Things then went back  
6 to normal, which was the usual chaos involving drink,  
7 drugs and solvents. It was just another shovel of shit  
8 being heaped on my grave.'

9 He then says that what happened with his suicide  
10 attempt must have caused them to do something, because  
11 he was then told he had been moved to a brand-new,  
12 state-of-the-art, independent living unit at  
13 New Stevenston.

14 'Ryan' then goes on to tell us about abuse at  
15 Bellshill and at paragraph 68, he talks about staff  
16 winding up kids to turn against one particular girl the  
17 staff didn't like, and them trying to get the other kids  
18 to assault her and make her life a misery.

19 If I can now read from paragraph 69 of 'Ryan's'  
20 statement, he says:

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

1 would hold back the allowance.

2 'Mr RBQ was married to Mrs GCH and lived in  
3 a flat with her and their children in the home. He was  
4 equally as bad as his wife. He [REDACTED] nearby  
5 List D school, nearby, and had a reputation for being  
6 a tyrant. On one occasion I was standing outside the  
7 staff office talking to other residents when Mr RBQ  
8 came out of the office. He was shouting and swearing  
9 and he slapped me across the face. There were lots of  
10 stories about him hitting other kids but I didn't  
11 witness any of those incidents.

12 'RBN was a member of staff. I was slapped in  
13 the face by RBN the first time that I met her.  
14 I was sitting in my flat with one of the other residents  
15 called [and he names her, it's a girl]. RBN came in  
16 and was obviously unhappy that I was alone with this  
17 girl. She slapped me and I turned on her, asking why  
18 she had done it. I was swearing at her. She seemed  
19 quite impressed that I had reacted in this way and I had  
20 no further problems with her.

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

1 on several occasions.

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

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

15 'There were kids as young as 7 or 8 who would be  
16 pissed out their brains by abusing alcohol or glue.  
17 They would allow them to stay in tents in the back  
18 garden so they were out of sight and mind.

19 'There was a day when I was still living at  
20 Bellshill but was about to move into the New Stevenston  
21 independent living unit. I had been going back and  
22 forth to do some painting and decorating at the new  
23 flat. I was stopped by the police and they accused me  
24 of being on the railway line. I told them that it was  
25 not me and that I had been painting in my new flat.

1 I was covered in paint and smelling of turpentine.  
2 I showed the officers the flat I was decorating. They  
3 then took my details and I told them that I was still  
4 resident at the Bellshill Children's Home. They came  
5 back a while later and told me that the Bellshill  
6 Children's Home didn't know me.

7 'It took about an hour to sort out but Mrs GCH  
8 had done this deliberately to cause me hassle with the  
9 police. I was taken back to the home and had a verbal  
10 row with Mrs GCH in her office. I swore at her and  
11 told her that I wanted nothing more to do with the home  
12 or the social work department. I moved out and went to  
13 the new flat where I slept on the bare floorboards.'

14 He then tells us that he left Bellshill for the unit  
15 in New Stevenston and it was agreed that he would be  
16 there until he was 18.

17 And if I go to paragraph 80, he says:

18 'I couldn't believe when I was leaving Bellshill  
19 that a year earlier I was about to join the Salvation  
20 Army. Before that I was a mummy's boy and had a trust  
21 fund and was on a course to go to university. Here  
22 I was now, a very angry, hard-drinking young man with  
23 scars on my wrists from suicide attempts. What had  
24 happened to me to cause this? I was an animal created  
25 by the system. It didn't matter what they said to me,

1 I knew that they didn't care. It was a constant fight.'

2 'Ryan' then tells us about being in the unit at

3 New Stevenston between paragraphs 81 and 90, Secondary Institutions -

4 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

5

6

7

8

9 And at 19, 'Ryan' says he got the opportunity to  
10 move into a flat in Edinburgh and he took it.

11 He then tells us about his life after care between  
12 paragraphs 105 and 114. He got involved in artwork. He  
13 tells us about health problems that he encountered, but  
14 he also says that he developed an online art festival as  
15 part of the Edinburgh Festival and he also tells us  
16 about working as a volunteer with an online charity for  
17 older people for about 14 years.

18 He tells us about impact between paragraphs 115 and  
19 121 and, in summary, he says he thought about his life  
20 in care every day and he didn't sleep at night and he  
21 had major trust issues.

22 He tells us about lessons to be learned between  
23 paragraphs 122 and 125, and if I can go to paragraph 125  
24 of 'Ryan's' statement, he tells us:

25 'I wasn't beaten black and blue by the staff whilst

1 I was in care and I didn't suffer the same physical  
2 abuse that other survivors have, but not all the bruises  
3 are on the outside and not all the scars are visible.  
4 The way I was left when I was crying for help has left  
5 me with a feeling of being of little value. Other  
6 times, I feel that I am nothing more than  
7 an inconvenience to others.'

8 And at paragraph 127, he tells us:

9 'The attitudes at the time I was in care were that  
10 the kids in care are a problem, and not, as it should  
11 have been, that the kids in care have problems. We were  
12 the lowest of the low. God knows how but I actually  
13 managed to get through the care system without getting  
14 a criminal record. This was very rare amongst survivors  
15 of institutional care. I think that since my time in  
16 care, I have been having an unlearning experience.

17 'I know what is going to happen in the future of  
18 this Inquiry. It will be the same as the last time.  
19 The report will be published and the MSPs will wring  
20 their hands in dismay. They will make promises and very  
21 little will happen. I feel that if any good comes of  
22 this, and the stories from the survivors, it should be  
23 channelled into a creative project. This may be the  
24 only way to stop the suicides that are happening.

25 'I would like to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

1 I have absolutely no problems with anonymity and would  
2 be happy for my name to be used at any time.'

3 But as I said earlier, my Lady, 'Ryan' passed away  
4 before he got the opportunity to give evidence.

5 LADY SMITH: Such a shame.

6 MS FORBES: He made the usual declaration and he signed his  
7 statement and it's dated 5 June 2017.

8 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

9 MS FORBES: My Lady, Mr Sheldon now has a statement.

10 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

11 MR SHELDON: My Lady, before I come on to the next  
12 statement, just to follow up on the matter that we  
13 discussed briefly in relation to the last read-in, this  
14 was Eddie Docherty's indictment. It was a sheriff and  
15 jury indictment, Hamilton Sheriff Court.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

17 MR SHELDON: Initially the case was deserted pro loco in  
18 September 1997 but then presumably brought back, and  
19 that would suggest a trial in '98 or thereabouts.

20 LADY SMITH: Thank you. Yes.

21 MR SHELDON: The charges on the indictment were essentially  
22 of sexual assault, including one, the terms of the  
23 narrative of which are plainly serious. That was the  
24 charge in relation to 'Sarah'.

25 LADY SMITH: Yes.

1 MR SHELDON: But we don't know, my Lady -- and I'm sorry, to  
2 complete that, sexual assault and breach of the peace by  
3 uttering lewd and indecent remarks.

4 LADY SMITH: Oh, yes. Yes.

5 MR SHELDON: But we don't know, my Lady, what happened at  
6 trial, whether any parts of the indictment were deleted  
7 or found not guilty.

8 LADY SMITH: She seemed to have a memory of some of it being  
9 not proven but she doesn't say what, and she probably  
10 wouldn't know.

11 MR SHELDON: Indeed. But if the more serious elements in  
12 the charge were found not proven or deleted by the jury,  
13 then that may account for it.

14 And also just to note that Docherty is deceased and  
15 seems to have died in about 2006.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

17 Thank you for those details, Mr Sheldon.

18 MR SHELDON: So, my Lady, the next statement is that of  
19 'Jordan'. 'Jordan's' statement reference is  
20 WIT-1-000001295.

21 'Jordan' (read in)

22 MR SHELDON: 'Jordan' seems to have had three stays at  
23 Bellshill between [REDACTED] 1983 and [REDACTED] 1989,  
24 although the latter stay, the period of that stay isn't  
25 entirely clear from the records. And it may be worth

1       noting, my Lady, that according to 'Jordan's' records,  
2       if one counts multiple stays at Bellshill and other  
3       establishments, between 1983 and '89 he had nine  
4       different placements and according to his statement, he  
5       may well have had more than that, that haven't shown up  
6       in the records.

7               He does say at paragraph 2 of his statement that  
8       it's difficult to say when -- for him to say when he was  
9       at various places because he moved around so much, and  
10       certainly some parts of his statement don't seem to be  
11       in quite the right order, as it were.

12              At all events, my Lady, 'Jordan' was born in 1972.  
13       He tells us about his life before care at paragraph --  
14       starting at paragraph 3, and he says he grew up in West  
15       Lothian with his parents and three siblings. His father  
16       was a miner.

17              Paragraph 5 says that:

18              'As a kid, I thought my family life was fine. My  
19       mother and father didn't have a lot of money but we got  
20       by. I don't really remember how we all coped. None of  
21       my siblings were placed into care. I was the only one  
22       who was taken away. I don't know the circumstances that  
23       led up to me being placed in care. I had my records  
24       read to me in adult life. The social worker said that  
25       the records said that it was because my mother couldn't

1 control me. However, I don't remember anything like  
2 that. I don't know what it was that I was doing, if  
3 that's what was going on.'

4 And he tells us at paragraph 6 about going into  
5 care, which, taking that short, clearly was a traumatic  
6 experience for 'Jordan'. And he says at paragraph 7, he  
7 was taken from the house to a Children's Hearing in  
8 a wee building in Shotts:

9 'My father wasn't there but my mother was. The  
10 hearing didn't last that long. All I remember is  
11 sitting in a room with a few other people who were  
12 introducing themselves to me. My mother couldn't read  
13 or write, so she would have just signed anything that  
14 was placed in front of her.'

15 And it seems likely that 'Jordan' was about 7 or 8  
16 when he first went into care, my Lady.

17 And he says he was taken straight from the hearing  
18 to a children's home in Torphichen, likely Wallhouse  
19 Children's Home in Torphichen in West Lothian. He says  
20 that would have been 1980 or '81.

21 So, moving on in the statement to page 4, at  
22 paragraph 14, he says that:

23 'It could be that I was taken to Bellshill after  
24 I left Torphichen, but I'm not 100 per cent sure about  
25 that. I've been in a lot of places so it is difficult

1 for me to say whether there was a Children's Hearing  
2 before I went to Bellshill the first time I was there.  
3 If I was there, it would have been for something like  
4 a couple of years between the ages of 8 and 11 or  
5 12 years old. That means I would have been there at  
6 some juncture between 1980 or 1981 and 1984.'

7 And as I say, my Lady, the records suggest the first  
8 stay was from [REDACTED] 1983, so that's about right.

9 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

10 MR SHELDON: He says:

11 'I think I was placed in the unit on the ground  
12 floor during the first time I was at Bellshill. I have  
13 a memory of them trying to get me to go to a local  
14 school the first time I was there, but I didn't last  
15 very long. I don't recall the name of the school, but  
16 it wasn't far away from the home.'

17 And taking that paragraph short, he says at the end:

18 'I would just hang about in my unit during the  
19 period I wasn't going to school. There was a big  
20 playroom full of toys where I would just muck about  
21 during the day.'

22 He talks about running away at paragraph 16, going  
23 to Ayr on a couple of occasions, and at paragraph 17  
24 says:

25 'I think we left in the morning. The train station

1 was a 10 to 15-minute walk up the street. We skipped  
2 a train to Glasgow before changing there for another  
3 train down to Ayr. It took us a long time to get there.  
4 We didn't have any money so we just ended up walking  
5 about in Ayr until it got dark. I know we were back  
6 late because we ended up handing ourselves in at  
7 a police station in Ayr at the end of the day. We had  
8 nowhere else to go. On both occasions we did the same  
9 thing.

10 'The police didn't say anything. All they did was  
11 sit us down and arrange for a social worker to come and  
12 collect us. A social worker came on both occasions down  
13 to Ayr to collect us in a car. On both occasions, they  
14 drove us straight back to Bellshill. I don't really  
15 remember the social workers asking us why we had run  
16 away after picking us up. I do remember them being  
17 annoyed about having to come all the way down to collect  
18 us though. Nothing happened when we got back to  
19 Bellshill. I don't remember what the staff said to us,  
20 if anything, when we got back. What they did in  
21 response can't have been much, otherwise I would have  
22 remembered it.'

23 And he then says he doesn't remember leaving  
24 Bellshill the first time and had a period in foster care  
25 in Shotts, but the records would tend to suggest his

1 period in foster care was actually rather earlier,  
2 my Lady. But at all events, he then, at paragraph 27,  
3 page 8, talks about a period at Ballikinrain School near  
4 Balfron, and his evidence in relation to that was read  
5 in on Day 442, 1 May 2024, and the transcript reference  
6 is TRN-12-000000075.

7 And if we turn then to page 9 and his second stay at  
8 Bellshill, we think that started in around [REDACTED]  
9 1986, so he'd be around 13 at that time.

10 Paragraph 36, he says:

11 'Again, I don't remember going to school throughout  
12 the second time that I was there. The second time when  
13 I was at Bellshill could well have been the time when  
14 I ran away to Ayr on two occasions. I don't recall  
15 anything surrounding how I ended up being at  
16 Calder House. I don't remember a Children's Hearing.  
17 I think I was sent to Calder House for periods during  
18 the week and I eventually just ended up staying there  
19 permanently.'

20 And again, my Lady, his evidence about Calder House  
21 was read in previously. That was Day 463,  
22 TRN-12-000000096.

23 And if we then go to page 18, we see that he was, at  
24 some stage, placed in Cecil Street Children's Home in  
25 Coatbridge. Again, it's not clear precisely whether

1           that is in the correct order, my Lady, but at all events  
2           he had a placement there, he says.

3           And then he seems to have been -- had a placement at  
4           St John's, Springboig while staying at Cecil's  
5           Children's Home and then, page 23 --

6   LADY SMITH: That was him going to St John's as a day pupil,  
7           I think, wasn't it?

8   MR SHELDON: Yes, my Lady.

9   LADY SMITH: Yes.

10   MR SHELDON: Page 23, paragraph 95, he talks about his final  
11           time at Bellshill. This, we think, would have been  
12           around [REDACTED] 1989, so he'd be around 16 or 17 by this  
13           stage.

14   LADY SMITH: He'd probably be 16. I think his birthday is  
15           [REDACTED] and he was born in 1972.

16   MR SHELDON: Yes.

17           He says at paragraph 96:

18           'Bellshill was located near to the maternity  
19           hospital. It was a big brick building and quite a basic  
20           place. It had two floors. On the ground floor was the  
21           office, kitchen, dining hall and a unit which was  
22           attached by a long corridor. Upstairs were another two  
23           units. Units consisted of long corridors with bedrooms  
24           and big living rooms in the centre. There was a toilet  
25           and bathroom for each unit on the landing attached to

1           them. There was a wee back garden with a fence around  
2           it. It wasn't that big. There wasn't anything in the  
3           garden other than grass.

4           'It wasn't a secure place like Calder House. We  
5           weren't locked inside the place like we were there. It  
6           was quite a different set-up in that way. People could  
7           just walk in and out of the front door. I think they  
8           locked the front door at a certain time at night, but  
9           there were still fire exits everywhere. It was one of  
10          those places where it was easy to sneak in and out.  
11          People could and did just jump over the wall, then  
12          freely get into the place. I remember that a lot of the  
13          kids were terrified of the folk that lived in the area.  
14          I remembered getting off the bus back from school  
15          feeling terrified. There were gangs that operated in  
16          the area and there were times when gang members freely  
17          walked into the home.'

18          He says he only vaguely remembers the staff. There  
19          were male and female staff of different ages. And about  
20          halfway down, he says:

21          'I'm not 100 per cent sure but I think they slept in  
22          a room that was next door to the office on the ground  
23          floor. I wouldn't really be able to say who was and  
24          wasn't the senior members of staff. I think I thought  
25          that those members of staff who sat around in the office

1 were the more senior ones, but I wasn't certain of that.  
2 I couldn't say who was in charge at Bellshill on any of  
3 the occasions that I was there.

4 'There was some staff change over the times I was  
5 there. I never really got to know any of the staff.  
6 The impression I got was that they were there just to  
7 watch you, rather than interact with you. They didn't  
8 really have much to do with any of the children and  
9 wouldn't hang about the units. They didn't care what  
10 was going on and would just sit in their office. It  
11 sometimes felt like you were in the middle of a riot and  
12 the staff just weren't about. It was up to you to get  
13 staff members from the office if you needed them, rather  
14 than them coming to you. They occasionally came out to  
15 get kids, but that didn't happen with me. I don't  
16 remember sitting about with any of the staff members  
17 while I was there.

18 'Mr Doherty is the only member of staff who  
19 I remember the name of. I can't remember his first  
20 name. He was a care worker in Bellshill. His role was  
21 to look after us. I don't think he was a senior member  
22 of staff. I think he was only there during the last  
23 time that I was at Bellshill. He was either in his 30s  
24 or 40s. He looked like a man to me at that age. He was  
25 quite tall, but was quite thin. He had dark brown hair.

1 I can't remember any other of his features.'

2 He says there were about 30 children at Bellshill at  
3 any one time, both boys and girls:

4 'A lot of the children were teenagers. I didn't see  
5 any children younger than about 11. I know they had  
6 teenagers up until the age of 16 because that was around  
7 the age that I left. I don't know how the children were  
8 divided up between the units. Over the times I was at  
9 Bellshill, I was in all the units, and there were  
10 between eight and ten children per unit.

11 'There were different children there each of the  
12 times I was at Bellshill. There were folk coming and  
13 going all the time. You would see someone, then a few  
14 weeks later they'd be gone. I was probably one of the  
15 kids who spent the longest amount of time in total at  
16 Bellshill. I don't recall any of the names of any of  
17 the other children there. I don't know what the  
18 circumstances behind the other kids being at Bellshill  
19 were. When we did talk, it wasn't something that we  
20 really talked about. I don't really remember making any  
21 friends in there. A lot of the time I kept myself to  
22 myself.'

23 And he goes on then, my Lady, to talk about the  
24 daily routine and I'll take that short to paragraph 104.  
25 He says:

1            'If I was going to school, I would either walk or  
2            take the bus to school. I would travel on my own. They  
3            gave you a bus pass so you could get there. If I was at  
4            school I would have lunch there, rather than returning  
5            to Bellshill. I would get the bus or walk back to  
6            Bellshill in the afternoon after school. After having  
7            tea in the dining hall, we were left to run riot around  
8            the home and the local area. Bedtime was a certain time  
9            but there was nobody there watching you. You could just  
10           get up during the night and do what you wanted to do.'

11           In relation to sleeping arrangements, he says:

12           'We all had individual rooms. I don't think anyone  
13           shared. Inside your room was just a bed, a wardrobe and  
14           whatever else you had accumulated over your time in  
15           care. I think there might have been a sink as well.  
16           That could have been just one of the rooms that I was in  
17           over the years. There weren't locks on our doors and  
18           anybody could have access.'

19           He says there was a bathroom and toilet for each of  
20           the units. Those were shared amongst all the children  
21           in the unit:

22           'It was a bath with one of the taps connected to  
23           a shower head. I remember mostly taking baths. You  
24           just got yourself washed or bathed using the bathroom on  
25           your landing. I don't remember anyone making sure I was

1 well or hygienic.'

2 At paragraph 107, he talks about meal times and he  
3 says that during this time in care, just before he left,  
4 this is paragraph 108, he started cooking his own meals:

5 'The older children in the unit were made to do  
6 that.'

7 And reading short to the end of that paragraph, he  
8 says:

9 'Looking back, that was about the only thing that  
10 Bellshill did to prepare you for leaving.'

11 Over the page, at paragraph 111, he says that:

12 'We wore normal clothes in the home. A grant was  
13 provided by social services so staff could buy clothes  
14 for you. That was the same in all the places that  
15 I went to whilst in care. Sometimes the staff took you  
16 out to buy your clothes, but I don't really have any  
17 memories of picking things. They would just give you  
18 things and that was you. You just had to wear whatever  
19 they gave you. I don't remember whether I wore  
20 a uniform during the times I was attending school.'

21 I'll skip over paragraph 112 about laundry  
22 arrangements.

23 Paragraph 113, he says:

24 'I remember taking things with me on the times I  
25 moved out of Bellshill. I remember having a Hi-Fi and a

1 weights bench which I'd brought with me from Cecil  
2 Street during my final time at Bellshill. I kept those  
3 in my room.

4 'I'm not sure whether we were given pocket money or  
5 given money to go swimming. I think I was provided  
6 an allowance at some time, but that could well have  
7 started after I left Bellshill at the last time.'

8 My Lady, I'm conscious that this statement has some  
9 way to go.

10 LADY SMITH: Yes, it has got a little bit to go, and I think  
11 we could take the morning break now and then pick up the  
12 end of this statement after the break. Very well,  
13 I'll do that.

14 But before I rise, just to do a names catch-up, as  
15 we've used quite a few this morning in relation to  
16 people whose identities are protected. RFG [REDACTED],  
17 MVN [REDACTED], PWR [REDACTED], also referred to as PWR [REDACTED].  
18 PVX [REDACTED], INH [REDACTED] and Mr and Mrs GCH-RBQ and  
19 RBN [REDACTED]. And RBP [REDACTED], that was the other one, yes,  
20 thank you very much.

21 And we can catch up on any others, although I'm not  
22 sure they will be different for this current statement,  
23 but, if necessary we can catch up on the others later.

24 Thank you.

25 (11.32 am)

1 (A short break)

2 (11.52 am)

3 LADY SMITH: Now, Mr Sheldon.

4 MR SHELDON: My Lady, before we had the morning break, we  
5 were at page 29, paragraph 115.

6 LADY SMITH: Yes.

7 MR SHELDON: And he says there that the last time at  
8 Bellshill, he was still attending day school at  
9 St John's, Springboig. That had continued from his time  
10 at Cecil Street. And he says:

11 'St John's was all right. Looking back, it's the  
12 only place I remember being educated during my time at  
13 Bellshill.'

14 In relation to leisure time he says:

15 'There was a toy room full of broken toys and  
16 a broken pool table. I remember spending hours of my  
17 time playing Pacman on the games console they had in  
18 there. There were no books or magazines. Most of the  
19 time was spent playing and running about in the local  
20 area. You could walk in and out when you liked, but you  
21 had to be back by a certain time. Towards the end,  
22 I was a bit more wary about going out because of the  
23 local gangs in the area.'

24 He says, para 117:

25 'I think you could ask to be taken swimming.'

1           But taking that short:

2           'I think that only happened during the second time  
3 I was there.'

4           118:

5           'They sometimes took you to play football.'

6           And reading that short, he says at the end of that  
7 paragraph:

8           'Being taken out to play football happened very  
9 rarely. Quite possibly only happened a couple of times.  
10 It's one of the few positive memories I have of  
11 Bellshill.'

12          At paragraph 120:

13          'I think I was taken away for an overnight trip on  
14 one occasion, but I can't remember whether that was at  
15 **Secondary Institutions - to** Bellshill. I think about 10 or 12 kids  
16 went and we were all taken in a van. We were taken to  
17 stay in a house in, I think, Aviemore for three days.  
18 It was a big old house. I don't know what the purpose  
19 of the trip was, but I think it was a holiday.  
20 I remember walking up burns and rivers. I think that is  
21 mostly what we did. I don't remember it being  
22 enjoyable, but it was something different.'

23 LADY SMITH: They certainly did seem to try to take children  
24 on trips from Bellshill and not just the same place  
25 every time. They had a variety.

1 MR SHELDON: Yes. He says:

2 'I didn't visit home during any of the times I was  
3 at Bellshill. Going home to visit my family was never  
4 discussed at any time.'

5 In relation to birthdays and Christmas, he says:

6 'I don't remember the staff making a fuss over us at  
7 any time or on any occasion. I don't recall anything  
8 being done to mark my birthday. I think you were given  
9 a certain amount of money to buy yourself a Christmas  
10 present.

11 'I think my mother and father came to visit me twice  
12 over the times I was in care. I think they visited me  
13 once at Bellshill. I can't remember which time it was.'

14 And reading short to paragraph 124:

15 'I had a lot of different social workers over my  
16 time in care. There was never enough time to get to  
17 know any of them because they were constantly being  
18 replaced. I can't remember any of their names. There  
19 would have been more than one social worker who would  
20 have been attached to me over the times I was in  
21 Bellshill. The only time I remember a social worker  
22 visiting me at Bellshill was towards the end when I was  
23 playing up. I don't think I had any visits prior to  
24 that.

25 'I don't remember there being any inspectors or

1           anybody inspecting the place. I don't ever remember  
2           anyone asking how I was doing while I was at Bellshill.  
3           I would have had a key worker, but I don't remember  
4           them. Nobody sat me down to ask me what I wanted.  
5           I don't remember anyone sitting me down and telling me  
6           what was happening when it came to my time in care.'

7           Just pausing there, my Lady, certainly the only  
8           record we have of an inspection at Bellshill is from  
9           1992 and it appears to be the only record of  
10          an inspection at any time.

11 LADY SMITH: My goodness, thank you.

12 MR SHELDON: We'll look at that, I think, on Tuesday.

13 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

14 MR SHELDON: Paragraph 127:

15           'I didn't run away during the last time I was at  
16           Bellshill because I knew that if I ran away, I wouldn't  
17           have anywhere to go to. I was beyond the age where  
18           I would run away for fun and realised that I was just  
19           stuck at Bellshill.'

20          Paragraph 129:

21           'Apart from towards the end, I felt I was a quiet  
22           kid during my times at Bellshill. I don't think I was  
23           a bad kid overall. I don't remember there being  
24           anything done if you misbehaved or there being anything  
25           they did to discipline you. We were mostly just left to

1           our own devices. There was nobody there watching you  
2           and you could do what you wanted.'

3           He goes on then to talk about abuse at Bellshill:

4           'The last time at Bellshill is the only time that  
5           I consider I suffered abuse during my time in care.  
6           Looking back, I should have been getting looked after at  
7           that time. I was about to be getting ready to leave the  
8           care system. I should have been getting taught how to  
9           cook and being prepared for the outside world. Instead  
10          I had to experience what I did at Bellshill.'

11          He goes on under the heading of 'Mr Doherty':

12          'I would have been 14 and 16 during the time  
13          Mr Doherty was working in the home. I would have been  
14          in the unit that was located on the first floor to the  
15          front of the building. It was the only unit with  
16          a kitchen, because it was the unit where they taught you  
17          cooking in preparation for leaving.

18          'Mr Doherty brought us alcohol to drink and would  
19          get us drunk. He would either bring the alcohol in  
20          himself or he would give you money to get it. If I was  
21          buying the alcohol, I would get it from the shop round  
22          the corner. I'd stand outside and wait for someone who  
23          looked old enough to go into the shop for me. Getting  
24          alcohol from the shop never seemed to be a problem. It  
25          was usually half-bottles of Buckfast that I was

1 drinking. That was what Mr Doherty would bring in and  
2 what I would buy at the shop. I remember that, at that  
3 time, I thought he was one of the all right members of  
4 staff because of that. Looking back, he shouldn't have  
5 been doing what he was doing.

6 'Mr Doherty bought alcohol for the other children at  
7 Bellshill. I think he did that with at least a couple  
8 of other people. I went to the shop with the money  
9 Mr Doherty gave me to buy alcohol with other kids, but  
10 I never said to them where I'd got the money.

11 I remember sitting down and drinking the alcohol with  
12 them. I remember us sitting in the kitchen, which was  
13 shut at night, and the games room, doing that. However,  
14 we drank anywhere we liked to. There was nothing like  
15 us trying to hide our drinking because there were never  
16 any staff members around. There was no hiding away to  
17 do your drinking in your room or anything like that.  
18 Mr Doherty wouldn't sit with us if we were drinking.  
19 Looking back, I think he watched out for children who  
20 were looking drunk, then took his opportunity.

21 'Getting us to drink was how he managed to start  
22 doing what he did. He would only do the things that he  
23 did after he had given you alcohol. If he was giving  
24 the alcohol to me directly, he would come into my room  
25 and give it to me. If it was at the weekends, that

1           could be at any time of the day. Sometimes it was in  
2           the morning. If it was during the week, it would be in  
3           the evenings and at night. I don't know whether it just  
4           depended upon what shift he was on. A lot of the time  
5           it was happening at nighttime, because I remember it  
6           being dark outside.

7           'Mr Doherty would let me get drunk, then come into  
8           my room and show me his penis. He would get me to take  
9           out my penis so that he could compare sizes. He would  
10          masturbate my penis so that he could do that. He made  
11          it all seem as if it was fine. He would then get me  
12          into positions. That happened a good few times over the  
13          last time I was at Bellshill. He might be in my room  
14          for only 10 or 15 minutes when he was doing what he was  
15          doing. There were other times when he would take me  
16          into the toilet and do the same to me. I don't know  
17          whether staff were around when Mr Doherty was going into  
18          my bedroom or when he followed me into the toilets.  
19          There weren't any staff members about to see the things  
20          he was doing to me. Looking back, a lot of the time he  
21          was the only staff member about on shift.

22          'I remember that he would try and get me to go into  
23          the girls' rooms to get them into compromising  
24          positions. He'd try to get me to convince them to take  
25          their clothes off. I remember him trying to get me to

1 do that on two occasions. I refused to do that, and  
2 I don't remember ever seeing him go into the girls'  
3 rooms. However he must, at the very least, have wanted  
4 to do that, otherwise why would he be trying to get me  
5 to get the girls to take their clothes off?

6 'Mr Doherty wasn't ever physically abusive towards  
7 me. He didn't hit me or restrain me. However, he was  
8 verbally abusive. He used to say that if I told anyone  
9 what happened, he would speak to members of the local  
10 gang in the area and arrange for them to come in and get  
11 me. He started saying those things towards the end of  
12 the time I was at Bellshill. I don't know whether he  
13 was saying those things because he saw that I didn't  
14 like what he was doing and noticed that my behaviour was  
15 changing in the home. As my behaviour got worse, those  
16 threats became increasingly frequent.

17 'The local gang was a real thing. The gang was made  
18 up of teenagers who were either 15 or 16 years old.  
19 Everybody was terrified of the people who were in the  
20 gang. Gang members coming into the home happened a few  
21 times over the time I was at Bellshill. They were  
22 coming into the home and attacking people. I remember  
23 sitting in the living room and a gang member walking  
24 into the building. I remember them coming up to the  
25 living room door and trying to kick the door in.

1 I remember kids holding the door shut. I don't know  
2 where the staff were when these things were happening.

3 'I don't know whether it was connected to  
4 Mr Doherty, but I remember an occasion when one of the  
5 gang members got into Bellshill, ran up the stairs after  
6 me and tried to get into the toilet I had locked myself  
7 in. I remember the gang member trying to kick the door  
8 in to get me. That incident terrified me and felt as if  
9 it lasted forever. I don't know where the staff were  
10 then for that to be allowed to happen. The toilet was  
11 right above the staff office, so I don't know how they  
12 didn't hear what was happening. At the time, I was  
13 convinced that it was all to do with Mr Doherty. The  
14 incident all the more made me think that I needed out of  
15 the place.'

16 On reporting, he says:

17 'I never said a word to anybody about what  
18 Mr Doherty did. There were other staff members at  
19 Bellshill, but I didn't feel I could talk to any of them  
20 about what was happening. There was no one from the  
21 outside who I felt comfortable speaking to. I had that  
22 many social workers over my time in care that I never  
23 felt I had the relationship with any of them where  
24 I could go and speak to them. I didn't speak to any of  
25 the other children about it. The other children spoke

1 about Mr Doherty to me, but they never talked about him  
2 in the way that they would say he was abusing them.  
3 There were no conversations like that.

4 'Over time, I started cracking up from the abuse  
5 I was suffering. I just wanted away from Bellshill so  
6 I could escape it. I had a female social worker during  
7 the final time I was at Bellshill. I can't remember her  
8 name. I didn't tell her about the abuse I was  
9 suffering, but I told her that I wanted to be moved out  
10 of Bellshill. She wouldn't listen to me and in the end  
11 I had to find other ways to try and get moved on.

12 'The only way I could stop Mr Doherty doing what he  
13 was doing was through misbehaving. I thought that if  
14 people thought I was bad, they would move me out of  
15 Bellshill. I realised that if I was as difficult as  
16 I could be, then I would be moved on. I just went  
17 berserk. I remember smashing the place up, breaking  
18 windows and climbing on the roof. I continually upped  
19 the ante until they could put up with me no longer.

20 'I remember that on the occasion I was on the roof,  
21 I was breaking the slates and throwing them down.  
22 I can't remember whether anything was damaged because of  
23 me doing that. The police were called out and I was  
24 happy to see them. When the police came, they talked to  
25 me and persuaded me to come down. The police didn't

1 take me away and I wasn't charged with anything. I just  
2 went to my room. I don't remember staff members  
3 speaking to me following the incident. No one came in  
4 and sat with me. I'm not sure whether Mr Doherty was  
5 there that night or not. I can't remember whether  
6 anybody asked me why I did what I had done. That could  
7 be just because I don't remember though.

8 'I was chucked out of Bellshill within the space of  
9 a few days after that incident. It all happened very  
10 quickly. The following day, a social worker came to  
11 speak to me at Bellshill. I remember being taken by my  
12 social worker to a Children's Hearing and the panel  
13 taking the supervision order off me. I can't remember  
14 the name of the social worker, but it was a woman.'

15 Reading that short, he says:

16 'That was me off supervision and out of the care  
17 system. I was glad after the hearing because I was away  
18 from everything. I remember feeling relieved.'

19 He then talks about life after leaving Bellshill and  
20 being taken by a social worker to collect his things,  
21 and was shown to a flat in Cumbernauld. And he says  
22 that was the last time he had any contact with social  
23 workers. There wasn't anyone from Bellshill who came to  
24 check on him or provide support. There was no  
25 through-care.

1           At paragraph 146, he says that he thinks the flat  
2 was a YMCA place, and reading to paragraph 147 he says:

3           'I attended a couple of placements on YTS schemes  
4 for about a year.'

5           And talks about that and he notes that the first  
6 placement, this is line 4:

7           '... involved just going to sit in a building.  
8 I would go in, put on some overalls and boots and then  
9 just sit around doing nothing all day before going back  
10 to my flat at night. I did that for a while before  
11 finding another placement where I could actually do some  
12 work. It was working for a company doing landscaping.  
13 They would pick you up in the morning in a van and drop  
14 you off. I was based in a massive garden attached to  
15 a nursing home. After that placement, I got a job  
16 working in a greenhouse that farmed tomatoes. By that  
17 point I would have nearly turned 17.'

18           He says that at that point he formed a relationship  
19 and moved in with his girlfriend in Kilsyth.

20           He then talks about a period in Longriggend  
21 Detention Centre and that chapter was read in on  
22 Day 399, 14 December 2023, and it's TRN-12-000000031.

23           Turning then to page 39, 'Jordan' talks about life  
24 after care. And he says that he was at his parents'  
25 house in Harthill after splitting from his girlfriend

1 and he then did a number of jobs, did some berry picking  
2 in Blairgowrie for a summer, but at that point, he says:

3 'My life spiralled out of control because I was  
4 spending a lot of time drinking. My life just went  
5 AWOL. I lost control and nearly ended up killing myself  
6 with liver failure.

7 'By the time I was in my late 20s, I was in and out  
8 of hostels for a while before getting a house in  
9 Edinburgh. I was looking for work in a job centre and  
10 was offered the opportunity to train in the food  
11 industry. It was all to do with service and food  
12 preparation.'

13 And reading that short, he says he ultimately  
14 obtained an HNC in professional cooking and says:

15 'I did well on the course and ended up excelling at  
16 it. I later worked for companies such as Sodexo in  
17 catering.'

18 He says that he met a girl with whom he had three  
19 children. There was a period when his life felt a bit  
20 stable, but he was still drinking. He says:

21 'I never drank in front of my kids. I always made  
22 sure that I went away when I did that. I would  
23 disappear for a couple of days so people couldn't see me  
24 drunk. My partner couldn't put up with that and that  
25 led to us splitting up. After splitting up with my

1 partner, my drinking continued. That was when I started  
2 taking heroin. Heroin helped me blank everything out.  
3 I did that for about 10 years.'

4 And he talks about spending further periods of time  
5 in prison and, at paragraph 156, talks about impact, and  
6 I'll take that short, my Lady, but it's clear that these  
7 periods in care had a profound impact on 'Jordan'. He  
8 says:

9 'I find it difficult to trust people. I have trust  
10 issues, because those people who were supposed to care  
11 for me didn't.'

12 Line 4:

13 'I think back to the abuse that I suffered. It's  
14 always there. Thinking about it isn't something that is  
15 easy to deal with, so I've had to find ways not to think  
16 about it. My drinking and drug use helped me block out  
17 my memories of my time in care. Heroin blanked that  
18 part of my life right out of my head.

19 'I especially think about my time in care when I see  
20 my siblings doing well for themselves. I see them doing  
21 well and think that I should have been left in the  
22 environment they grew up in. If I had been left with my  
23 parents, I wouldn't have led the life that I have led.  
24 My time in care ruined that for me.'

25 At paragraph 158:

1           'My time in care has affected my relationship with  
2 my family.'

3           Line 3:

4           'I had limited contact with them and sometimes there  
5 were years went by without me seeing them. By the time  
6 I was at Bellshill the last time, my parents were like  
7 strangers to me.'

8           Paragraph 159, he says:

9           'I have a good relationship with my children. Being  
10 in care has made me a lot more protective when it comes  
11 to them. I had to make sure that they didn't end up in  
12 children's homes or anything like that. I'm happy that  
13 they've all come through fine, they're all doing  
14 brilliantly for themselves.'

15           160:

16           'My time in care affected my education. When I left  
17 the care system, my reading and writing was poor.  
18 I could read and write, but I wasn't that great. There  
19 wasn't anyone through my time in care who really made  
20 the effort to help me out with my reading and writing.  
21 It wasn't until I was about 30 years old that I decided  
22 I needed to do something about it. I attended college  
23 to train to be a chef and they helped me out with that.  
24 It was there that one of the tutors saw my writing and  
25 worked out that I may be dyslexic. After a computer

1 test, I was diagnosed as having that. It was tough, but  
2 I got through it. In the end, I got more help as  
3 an adult with my reading and writing than I ever did as  
4 a child.

5 'My time in care left me with a lot of anger. That  
6 combined with my drinking and drug-taking has resulted  
7 in me becoming physically violent. It just comes out at  
8 certain times. I can deal with it now, but there have  
9 been times when I just can't deal with things and crack  
10 up, and that has led to me spending time in prison.'

11 In relation to treatment and support, he says:

12 'I have never really spoken about my time in care,  
13 but I have been diagnosed with PTSD. One of my doctors  
14 filled out a form and came up with that diagnosis.  
15 Although I didn't speak about what happened, the doctor  
16 said that my PTSD likely came about from things that  
17 happened over the course of my childhood.

18 'My latest prison sentence has worked out for me.  
19 It's allowed me a bit of breathing space. It has  
20 allowed me to get away from drink and drugs and to  
21 properly thinking about my life. I'm learning to cope  
22 with my anger a bit more. I don't want to continue the  
23 way I was before I went back to jail. I haven't  
24 received any psychological help or counselling during my  
25 time in prison and I haven't asked for it. I feel

1 better now that I have spoken to the Inquiry about what  
2 happened.'

3 And he says again at paragraph 164:

4 'I haven't spoken to the police or anybody else  
5 about what happened. I don't know whether I will do  
6 that. The first time I have ever spoken about the abuse  
7 I suffered was providing this statement. I knew that  
8 I needed to get things out of my head, and that was why  
9 I spoke to the Inquiry. I think speaking to the Inquiry  
10 will be beneficial for my own mental health.'

11 Paragraph 165, he talks a bit about records and then  
12 over the page, paragraph 166, on lessons to be learned  
13 and hopes for the Inquiry, he says:

14 'I should have been taught how to do things and how  
15 to live as an adult when I was in care. That should  
16 have been especially happening when I was at Bellshill.  
17 However, when I was barely 16, I was chucked into a flat  
18 and expected to get on with things. It was if they were  
19 saying, "There you go, have a nice life", without having  
20 prepared me at all.'

21 Paragraph 167, he wonders whether the fact that his  
22 family lived on the border between West Lothian and  
23 North Lanarkshire was what resulted in him being placed  
24 so far and wide in different establishments over the  
25 course of his time in care.

1 Paragraph 168, he says looking at his records left  
2 him with more questions than answers. Taking that  
3 short:

4 'I just can't understand how I could have been  
5 outwith parental control. I've had kids and been able  
6 to control them when needed. I don't know how my  
7 parents weren't able to do what I have been able to do  
8 with my kids.'

9 169:

10 'It should be professional people who look after  
11 children. That's especially so if the children have  
12 come from broken homes. Children are complex at the age  
13 I was when I was placed into care. They shouldn't be  
14 shoved in front of just anybody. There should be  
15 stringent checks undertaken on any person that works in  
16 childcare and children's homes. The things that  
17 happened to me should never have been allowed to happen.  
18 I don't think there should be any care homes. Families  
19 break down, but that shouldn't result in a whole load of  
20 kids just being lumped together. Doing that just  
21 doesn't help anybody.

22 'Looking back [he says], if things had worked out in  
23 my foster care placement, I might have had a better  
24 chance at life. I just couldn't cope with them being my  
25 mother and father when I knew they weren't.'

1           And reading short to 171:

2           'I should never have been taken away from my  
3           parents. I was let down during my time in care.  
4           I shouldn't even have been placed in care. There were  
5           times that were better than others, but I hated all my  
6           time in care. Everywhere I went, I thought, "I'm not  
7           going to be here that long", because I was moved that  
8           many times. I was always unsettled. I just didn't want  
9           to be at all the places I was placed, because I just  
10          wanted to be back home.

11          'The things that happened to me should never have  
12          happened. I hope that through speaking to the Inquiry  
13          I have managed to get things out of my head and am able  
14          to move on. I hope that things will be better for me.'

15          And 'Jordan's' signed his statement and made the  
16          usual declaration, my Lady.

17   LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

18   MR SHELDON: I'll hand over there to Ms Forbes once again.

19   LADY SMITH: Ms Forbes, thank you.

20          Whenever you're ready, Ms Forbes. It's all right,  
21          take your time.

22   MS FORBES: My Lady, the next statement is from an applicant  
23          who is anonymous and is known as 'Kal'.

24   LADY SMITH: K-A-L for 'Kal'.

25   MS FORBES: Yes. The reference for 'Kal's' statement is

1 WIT.001.002.7163.

2 'Kal' (read in)

3 My Lady, 'Kal' tells us he was born in 1975 and talks  
4 about his life before going into care between  
5 paragraphs 2 and 10. And, in summary, he says he was  
6 born in Bellshill in Glasgow. He initially lived with  
7 his parents. He was the youngest of seven children to  
8 his parents, and I think he tells us that later on there  
9 were some step-siblings. But he says they lived in  
10 Stevenston, had a normal family life, and he says he  
11 always --

12 LADY SMITH: Yes, he was the youngest of seven and he'd got  
13 two half-brothers and two half-sisters.

14 MS FORBES: Two half-sisters, yes. I think later, to later  
15 relationships with his parents.

16 LADY SMITH: From his mother. But it means that generation,  
17 there were 11 of them. Yes.

18 MS FORBES: Yes. My Lady, he says that he always wondered  
19 why he was put into care and he said that social  
20 services always said it was his mum's fault. He tells  
21 us his mum and dad split up. His dad then was drinking  
22 a lot and couldn't look after them, and he also says his  
23 dad was violent with them.

24 And then 'Kal' tells us they all ended up going into  
25 care except his two eldest brothers to his parents.

1 He then talks about Bellshill Children's Home  
2 between paragraphs 11 and 41 of his statement.

3 My Lady, we know from his records that we have  
4 an admittance day to Bellshill of [REDACTED] 1984 when  
5 he would have been 8 years old, I think, at that time.

6 LADY SMITH: [REDACTED]?

7 MS FORBES: [REDACTED] 1984.

8 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

9 MS FORBES: And then a discharge date of [REDACTED] 1985.

10 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

11 MS FORBES: When he would have been 10.

12 'Kal' tells us he was there twice. He thinks, when  
13 he gave us his statement, that he was there in 1982 so  
14 he thinks he was 6 or 7, so a bit younger than the dates  
15 that we have.

16 'Kal' tells us that at Bellshill he was in a room  
17 with four or five others and his two brothers were in  
18 the same room as him to begin with.

19 If I could go to paragraph 13 of 'Kal's' statement,  
20 he says:

21 'I only recall two of the staff, one of whom was  
22 a guy called MVM [REDACTED], who was either SNR [REDACTED] or  
23 SNR [REDACTED]. He was in his 30s, had brown hair,  
24 was well-built and said he was an ex-policeman. The  
25 other was MVN [REDACTED] who was in her 40s, had ginger

1 hair which was always messy, a big nose and reminded me  
2 of Cruella de Vil. Her job was to look after the  
3 children.

4 'I would say there were about 40 or 50 children in  
5 the home. They were aged from about 6 to 16. Certain  
6 places were kept locked. There was a wee house at the  
7 side of the school which you weren't allowed in, though  
8 **MVM** sometimes took me there.'

9 'Kal' then tells us at paragraph 20, when he was at  
10 Bellshill -- sorry, if I can go to paragraph 16 first,  
11 my Lady, sorry.

12 'Kal' tells us at paragraph 16:

13 'All I recall about the food was that one of the  
14 punishments we would get was not being fed. We all ate  
15 together in the dining room. Most of the food I recall  
16 I was glad to get because I didn't get much at home. If  
17 you didn't eat what was put in front of you, it wasn't  
18 a problem, you just went hungry.

19 'When we first went to Bellshill, we would get  
20 breakfast, but that stopped when we went to school as we  
21 would get school dinners, so they didn't think they  
22 needed to give us breakfast. The problem with that was  
23 I was forever skipping school, which meant I wasn't  
24 getting fed throughout the day.

25 'This was one of the reasons I fell behind at

1 school, because I wasn't eating during the day and I was  
2 losing concentration, and that's why I lost out on a lot  
3 of education.'

4 'Kal' tells us at paragraph 20 that when he was at  
5 Bellshill the second time, he didn't go to school as  
6 much, as he was always getting bullied.

7 At paragraph 21, he talks on going on a trip to  
8 Butlins. If we go to paragraph 22 of his statement,  
9 'Kal' says:

10 'The only other sort of trips I went out on was when  
11 **MVM** used to take a few of us out in his car. The  
12 oldest of us always sat in the front. It was just  
13 around the nearby countryside and he used to drive  
14 really fast. When we told him he was going too fast, he  
15 would say that he was an ex-policeman and could do what  
16 he liked.'

17 If I can go to paragraph 24, my Lady, 'Kal' says:

18 'I remember I got a bike for the second Christmas  
19 I was there, but within half an hour somebody had bent  
20 the front wheel and nobody would fix it for me. I don't  
21 know if it was the home or the social who bought the  
22 bike for me. That same year, my brother got a pair of  
23 roller skates.

24 'That's all I recall about Christmas, other than  
25 playing with toys or watching television. I do remember

1           that nobody shared any of the toys they were sent by  
2           relatives.'

3           He goes on to tell us at paragraph 26 that social  
4           workers only came along if something had happened. They  
5           didn't just come to see how you were.

6           He tells us at paragraph 28 that his dad visited  
7           them on the odd occasion, 'but nobody else came to see  
8           us'.

9           He tells us about running away at paragraph 31 and  
10          he says:

11          'I ran away quite often with my brother [and he  
12          names the brother] and when we did, the school would  
13          punish us. The punishment depended on what time we  
14          returned. If it was late, then we would just be sent to  
15          our bed with no supper. If it was earlier, we would be  
16          put in the cupboard to do everybody's washing up.'

17          I don't know if he, when he refers to 'school'  
18          there, he means the home.

19   LADY SMITH: Yes, it must be, I think.

20   MS FORBES: He tells us at paragraph 32:

21          'My brother [and he names another brother who was  
22          there with him] wet the bed. He never got any help with  
23          it and staff just treated him like a child. They would  
24          give him a rubber sheet and make sure everybody knew he  
25          had wet the bed. You would get a punch or a clout round

1 the ear, but it wasn't as bad as I was getting at home,  
2 so that was normal to me. MVN was particularly  
3 vicious that way, but I don't recall the names of the  
4 other staff who would hit us.

5 'The other ways they would discipline us was to send  
6 us to our bed without supper or lock us in the cupboard  
7 for hours at a time. It was just a cupboard with a sink  
8 in it. Sometimes the staff would change shift and they  
9 would forget they had put us in there.'

10 'Kal' then talks about abuse from paragraph 35:

11 'The first thing I remember is getting hit on the  
12 head with a shoe. It was MVN who did it and my  
13 brother [and he names that brother] saw her do it.  
14 I had jumped on the bed and she threw the shoe, which  
15 hit me on the head. I complained about it, as [my  
16 brother] said he would back me up, but then they gave  
17 him a bedroom on his own and he then denied seeing the  
18 incident.

19 'When I say it was MVN who did that Secondary Ins

20 Secondary Institutions - to be published later

21  
22 'On another occasion, I fell off a balcony and ended  
23 up with a fractured skull. I was unconscious, but  
24 I don't know how long for. I nearly died. I recently  
25 got a copy of my records and there's no mention of that

1 incident in them, which I think is a disgrace.

2 'Sometimes when we were locked in the cupboard as  
3 a punishment, the door would be unlocked and opened and  
4 the light would go off. A man would then come into the  
5 cupboard and grope my bum, then leave. It was as if  
6 they were doing a police search of me, but more  
7 intimate. This was a regular occurrence. You never  
8 knew who it was that was doing it because the light was  
9 turned off.

10 'When I think back to the abuse I suffered at  
11 Bellshill, it's always MVM's face I see. I can't  
12 remember his second name, but he was the one who would  
13 come into my dorm and take off my pyjama bottoms, and  
14 used to take me into the wee cottage next to the school  
15 and do the same thing.

16 'This happened several times. I can always remember  
17 him taking my pyjama bottoms off, but I can never recall  
18 any further detail about what else he did once he took  
19 them off. Maybe I've just blanked it out of my memory.

20 'I remember I used to use my bed and the drawers  
21 under it to make a wee den where I would hide to get  
22 away from MVM.

23 'I complained when I got hit on the head with  
24 a shoe, but only did so because [my brother] said he  
25 would support me. I would complain to whichever member

1 of staff would listen to me. However, it got to the  
2 point it wasn't worth complaining, as nothing was ever  
3 done. I also reported things like residents having sex  
4 in the rumpus room or people getting touched up, but the  
5 only reason I complained was because I had been thrown  
6 out of the room.

7 'I never complained about what MVM was doing to  
8 me, but that was only because I was too scared of him to  
9 complain about him.'

10 I think we know, my Lady, that he was there -- he  
11 says he was there the first time a few months, and that  
12 the second time he was there for about a year.

13 LADY SMITH: Yes.

14 MS FORBES: He says he left the first time and he thought he  
15 was going back to stay with his dad for good. His dad's  
16 girlfriend had moved in and he says they were heavy  
17 drinkers and they had a baby, but the social worker took  
18 the baby from them and then one day 'Kal' says they were  
19 all picked up by social work and taken back to Bellshill  
20 and he was there for about a year the second time. And  
21 he says his brothers and sisters were separated from him  
22 and he was told they couldn't accommodate such a large  
23 family.

24 He then says he, on that occasion, went to Wooddean  
25 and he talks about Wooddean between paragraph 52 and 75.

1 He was admitted there on [REDACTED] 1986. I think he was  
2 10 then, nearly 11, and he was there until [REDACTED] 1986.  
3 He was there with one of his brothers, it would appear,

4 [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

5 [REDACTED]  
6 [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later that resulted in them being moved to  
7 Rosslyn Children's Home. He tells us about that  
8 paragraph 77 and 117.

9 We know from his records that he was admitted there  
10 on [REDACTED] 1986, aged 11, and he was there until  
11 [REDACTED] 1988, aged 12, nearly 13. So he was there  
12 almost two years. [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later

13 [REDACTED] Secondary Institutions - to be published later that led to him then  
14 being placed with foster carers. And he talks about his  
15 time in foster care between paragraph 120 and 147.

16 We know from his records that he was admitted there  
17 on [REDACTED] 1988, aged nearly 13, and he was there until  
18 [REDACTED] 1992, when he was 17-and-a-half or so.

19 And he says he was at -- with the foster parents  
20 with one of his brothers. That brother was older and he  
21 left the home first, because of that. He tells us that  
22 he was assaulted badly by another foster brother whilst  
23 he was there. And at paragraph 152 he then tells us  
24 about what happened after he left foster care, and he  
25 says he moved in with his brother for a while before

1 moving back with his father and the brother that he was  
2 mostly in care with.

3 He says he had no contact with the social work after  
4 leaving foster care. There was no support.

5 He tells us then about his life after being in care  
6 between paragraphs 153 and 156. He tells us he moved to  
7 England and met his wife. And he talks about an assault  
8 on him where he was stabbed in the eye, it was quite  
9 a serious injury he received. And then he tells us  
10 about impact between paragraphs 157 and 166 and this  
11 relates to his entire time in care.

12 He tells us about his physical health issues and his  
13 mental health issues, the effect being in care had on  
14 his education and the amount of time he spent away from  
15 his family.

16 If I could go to paragraph 167 of 'Kal's' statement.  
17 And he says there:

18 'I have no recollection of ever reporting anything  
19 that happened to me other than speaking to the police  
20 about Bellshill. In 1993, I was questioned by the  
21 police about Bellshill but I couldn't remember much.  
22 But even if I had remembered anything, I doubt if  
23 I could have opened up to them.'

24 If I can then go to -- again he tells us about  
25 lessons to be learned and we have that there. My Lady,

1 I'm not going to read that out. It relates to his  
2 entire reflections on his time in care.

3 However, if I can go to paragraph 174, in relation  
4 to hopes for the Inquiry, he says:

5 'I hope we get some answers. There is so much about  
6 my younger life that I don't know about. It shouldn't  
7 be down to social workers to decide what happens to  
8 families. It should involve a third independent party  
9 that can look at things objectively.'

10 And then 'Kal's' made the usual declaration and he  
11 has signed his statement and it's dated 11 July 2019.

12 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

13 MS FORBES: My Lady, I think Mr Sheldon now has a statement.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 If you want to swap over.

16 MR SHELDON: Yes, my Lady. This -- next statement is the  
17 statement of 'Jane'.

18 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

19 'Jane' (read in)

20 MR SHELDON: The reference for her statement is

21 WIT.001.001.6002.

22 'Jane' was born in 1972.

23 On the first page of the statement, she tells us  
24 that she had four siblings, one older, three younger.  
25 And she talks about her father who she says was

1 a violent man and reading that:

2 'My mother was terrified of him. She met him when  
3 she was only 14 and he was 22. My mum's mother died  
4 when she was only 12 so she was quite vulnerable. After  
5 I did counselling, I sat my mum down and explained to  
6 her the fact my father had gone near her at that age  
7 that made him a paedophile, and there was no reason to  
8 have expected him to change.'

9 She notes that his violent behaviour, in particular,  
10 became normal to them. Pausing, my Lady, it's quite  
11 clear from 'Jane's' statement that her experiences with  
12 her father were particularly dreadful.

13 LADY SMITH: Yes.

14 MR SHELDON: And quite a lot of the statement is taken up  
15 with that, understandably. But I will concentrate in  
16 reading this on the material relating to Bellshill, but  
17 I think it's worth noting what 'Jane' says at  
18 paragraphs 5 to 6, where there was a particularly  
19 traumatic incident with her father in which he seems to  
20 have essentially dug graves for the family and she  
21 thinks her father had a weapon, but can't remember what  
22 it was.

23 And at paragraph 7, with some justification, she  
24 says:

25 'My father is a psychopath.'

1           And there is only one of her siblings who didn't  
2           experience, physical, sexual or mental abuse at the  
3           hands of her father, and she says:

4           'I've blocked lots of things out from my childhood.  
5           I'm hoping to get my full social work file to go through  
6           it with my psychologist.'

7           My Lady, 'Jane' appears then to have had periods at  
8           home and then periods in foster care and certainly in  
9           one of the foster care placements, she was quite  
10          seriously physically abused by the male foster carer.  
11          She talks about that at paragraph 11.

12          But if we then go to page 6, paragraph 22 -- but  
13          just noting, as it were, in passing, that each time  
14          she's returned home she is further abused by her father.

15          Ultimately, at page 6, she is placed in Bellshill  
16          Children's Home and says she was there for three or four  
17          years. The records suggest that she was there from  
18          about [REDACTED] 1985 to [REDACTED] 1987.

19          LADY SMITH: Thank you.

20          MR SHELDON: 'Jane' says that, in fact, she was placed there  
21          in 1984 and that the records are wrong, so she's  
22          obviously thought about that and it's just not clear  
23          what the correct position is.

24          So from paragraph 22, she says:

25          'I was in the home for three or four years. The

1 head of the home was Edward Stanton. He lived in the  
2 flat attached to the home. He was a paedophile and was  
3 convicted years later. So as a result of being  
4 assaulted by my father, I was taken off my mother and  
5 put into a home which was run by a paedophile.

6 'When I first went in I was under a Place of Safety  
7 Order to keep me safe from my dad. It felt like I was  
8 being held prisoner as they wouldn't let me out of the  
9 home. They eventually relented and let me go out  
10 running with some other kids.

11 'My key parent was Kathleen Irvine. I'm still in  
12 contact with her now. She's like a second mum to me.  
13 I was treated fairly well by most of the staff.  
14 Kathleen and her husband, John, took me home with them  
15 for the weekend once when I wasn't well. I had a high  
16 temperature and didn't feel safe in the home.  
17 I wouldn't let Kathleen leave me and I kept saying that  
18 I didn't feel safe. Because I was in such a state about  
19 it, John then demanded that the home got the terms of  
20 the insurance changed so that they could take me home  
21 with them.'

22 And she says there is another member of staff who  
23 she's also in contact with. She tells us quite a bit  
24 about the routine of the home on page 7, including the  
25 cooking arrangements.

1           At paragraph 29, she says that she would eat  
2 anything one of the cooks made, but the other was a  
3 'lousy cook' and they used to do sports on a Friday and  
4 had a dance class after school.

5           At paragraph 30, my Lady, she says:

6           'The social services actually defrauded the social  
7 security department so that my mum could get money to  
8 feed me. I provided the Inquiry with a letter showing  
9 that they wrote to the social security department saying  
10 that I went into the home and came back out again in  
11 1987. That wasn't true. I went in there in 1984.  
12 According to the letter, I got out of the home before  
13 I went in.'

14           My Lady, we haven't been able to find that letter,  
15 but that's certainly 'Jane's' position about that.

16 LADY SMITH: Yes.

17 MR SHELDON: At paragraph 33:

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

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

1           She says:

2           'Group meetings were held to deal with problems.  
3           For example, you could call a group meeting if something  
4           belonging to you went missing. Anyone could call  
5           a group meeting, but you couldn't have one without  
6           a staff member present. I called a meeting once because  
7           there was a smell in my room and I couldn't work out  
8           where it was coming from. It turned out that a girl in  
9           the room had been hiding her pants under the pillow.  
10          This was discussed in front of the whole group. It was  
11          humiliating for her. I can't understand why adults  
12          allowed that to happen.

13          'If a kid was out of line, the staff would call  
14          a group meeting and use the rest of us to bully them.  
15          It was ritual bullying. ['Jane's' sibling] was bullied  
16          for cutting himself, running away and being gay, started  
17          cutting his arms in the home.

18          'There was a book for group meetings. Minutes were  
19          taken by a staff member and everybody's names were  
20          written in the book. The staff member on duty for the  
21          group attended the meeting. They had to sit there and  
22          take part like the rest of us. Ed Stanton was in charge  
23          of the home and the rest of the staff did what they were  
24          told. It was his idea to hold group meetings. Kathleen  
25          had to attend the meetings if she was on duty. That was

1       just the way it was. It was almost like  
2       a Children's Panel for the kids in the house. You'd get  
3       to sit there and slag off someone for whatever they had  
4       done, and it would all get written in the book. You  
5       were allowed to tear into people. It was mob justice.

6       'Sometimes they'd pull us all into a group meeting  
7       and tell us that we weren't getting any recreational  
8       money because of what other kids had done. At one  
9       point, there were three kids who were doing dirty  
10      protests and wrecking their room. We were told that we  
11      weren't getting any money because they had caused so  
12      much damage and it had to be paid for. Those kids were  
13      dogging school, running away and "behaving  
14      inappropriately". That's the term they used when they  
15      told us that they were writing in poo on the walls.  
16      They were behaving inappropriately, so we had to be  
17      inappropriate to them. We were used to make those weans  
18      jump into line. Every child in that home was  
19      manipulated into bullying those weans. I've a real  
20      problem with this row. Those kids had managed to take  
21      their metal beds and wardrobes apart. The wardrobes  
22      were like kindling and the beds were reduced to metal  
23      spars. They didn't have a hacksaw, hammer or any kind  
24      of tool, yet they managed to do that. They also  
25      shredded their pillows and mattresses. You would wake

1 up to the smell of poo and pure chaos. The staff would  
2 be going mental and then they'd pull these kids into  
3 a room with a pile of other kids who had just lost their  
4 privileges. Obviously there was a major problem with  
5 those weans, but nobody tried to find out what was going  
6 on. It was a massive cover-up. Instead of bringing in  
7 a psychologist, doctor, or somebody who could help them  
8 to understand what was going on, they used peer pressure  
9 to break those weans. They punished every other kid to  
10 make sure those kids were punished. We were used to  
11 bully and intimidate those kids into submission, into  
12 behaving.

13 'All of the staff would have known what those three  
14 kids were being punished for. The staff who had been at  
15 the meetings passed the information on as part of the  
16 handover when the shifts changed. At times, the staff  
17 would just shut the big fire doors and go away for  
18 a cuppa, while those three weans were getting bullied  
19 senseless. The staff made it worse for them and so did  
20 we. I'm surprised none of those weans killed  
21 themselves.'

22 She goes on to talk about abuse by Edward Stanton:

23 'My key worker was responsible for providing me with  
24 all my toiletries at first. Ed Stanton changed that  
25 after a while so that we all had to go to him when we

1 needed any toiletries, including sanitary towels. It  
2 didn't make sense. All of a sudden, he needed to know  
3 when we had our periods. One day when I went to get  
4 sanitary towels from him in his flat, he had a video  
5 camera set up in the hall recording me asking for them.  
6 I went to Kathleen and went mental about it. The same  
7 thing happened to other girls that day and they reported  
8 it too. We all reported it to the female staff member  
9 who was on duty that day. We were told that they would  
10 deal with it and that we weren't to mention it again.  
11 If it had been a kid who had done that, we would have  
12 had a big meeting about it. But because it was the head  
13 of the home, it wasn't to be spoken about.

14 'Ed Stanton was a big fat man. He was like a beach  
15 ball with arms and legs. When I went into that home, he  
16 all of a sudden became dead sporty and liked to go  
17 swimming with us three or four times a week. He took me  
18 and about eight others.'

19 And she mentions the names of some of the children:

20 'We were taken to the Dollan baths in East Kilbride,  
21 the Magnum Centre in Irvine and to Wishaw and Bellshill.  
22 Ed Stanton never swam, even though he always got changed  
23 into his swimming trunks. He just leched over us.

24 'He would stand me at the side of the pool and bend  
25 me over in front of him as if he was teaching me to

1       dive. He did it with all of us, but he paid particular  
2       attention to teaching me. He did it every time we went  
3       swimming. He used to stand behind you and rub himself.  
4       Back then, you didn't realise what he was doing.  
5       I don't know why the other people in the swimming baths  
6       didn't do anything. There were lifeguards and other  
7       members of the public there. They must have thought he  
8       was a dad or something.

9           '[There was a particular small boy that Stanton used  
10       to take] into the baby pool and sit him on his knee.  
11       I now understand that there was something wrong there.  
12       [The boy] would be sat there frozen, with a look of pure  
13       shock on his face. He did that with [another child,  
14       female child] as well. She was around 7 or 8.

15           'I was really close to [the] wee [boy concerned].  
16       He used to love being cuddled. He'd lie up and cuddle  
17       with me and watch TV. He was a few years younger than  
18       me. He was like a wee brother. He was really close to  
19       my mum, too. He used to sit on my mum's knee and get  
20       a cuddle when she came to visit me at the home on  
21       a Thursday. His mum had abandoned him in a lift and  
22       nobody visited him. He was one of the kids who had  
23       absolutely nobody. [He] started to draw away from  
24       everybody. There came a point when you tried to touch  
25       him he would flinch and jump through the roof. It

1       wasn't right. My mum said to Kathleen and other staff  
2       members that she was really worried about [his]  
3       behaviour. His personality had totally changed.  
4       I think she suggested that he should see a psychologist.  
5       I now believe that the ones who had nobody were the ones  
6       who Ed Stanton abused the most.

7               'Stanton also took us walks round Lanark Loch and  
8       Strathclyde Park. He'd take his favourites everywhere.  
9       He took us camping one time. I can't remember if there  
10      were any other staff there. The problem I have with  
11      that now is that I think he gassed us. He had a Calor  
12      gas burner to heat his hot chocolate and I think he left  
13      it on in a communal room which led to all the bedrooms  
14      in the tent. We were all asleep by 8.30. It doesn't  
15      make sense. A load of kids from a children's home were  
16      asleep at that time, instead of being up all night  
17      carrying on. Also, when we got up the next day, we all  
18      had a sore head and just didn't feel right. He was  
19      trying to blame the food we had eaten, but I think he  
20      did something to us. As an adult, I've been in a house  
21      where there's been carbon monoxide poisoning because of  
22      a dodgy fire. You get a sore head, feel nauseous and  
23      there's a taste in your mouth. I had the same kind of  
24      sore head the day after we camped out. All of those  
25      kids came back from camping not well and we all had the

1 same symptoms. We were all vomiting on the way home.  
2 Nobody ever questioned Ed Stanton's explanation about  
3 why we were all ill.

4 'On one occasion in his office, he had me on his leg  
5 and was using it to dry-hump me. He said he was  
6 comforting me. A member of staff walked in and just  
7 walked back out and closed the door. It was one of the  
8 office staff. I'm not sure [which one].

9 'I didn't give evidence at Ed Stanton's trial and  
10 I don't know anybody who did. I think he just groomed  
11 me. I think I'm quite lucky, because I had my mum who  
12 came to visit me and I had a good relationship with her.  
13 From what I can remember, I don't think he actually put  
14 a hand on me apart from when we went camping. I think  
15 something happened to all of us that night.  
16 I have flashbacks.

17 '[The little boy that she has been talking about]  
18 and another wee boy stick out in my head. [The latter  
19 boy] had nobody either. He was one of the kids who did  
20 the dirty protest. He was severely bullied in the home  
21 by the other kids. Those two kids were the most  
22 vulnerable in the home. I had a parent who came and  
23 visited me, and I had Kathleen and Paul. I had people  
24 I could talk to. Those kids had nobody.'

25 She goes on to talk about abuse by other staff and

1 she says that her older sibling had a relationship with  
2 a male member of staff, who she names, and she says her  
3 sibling actually believes it was a relationship and that  
4 this person is not a paedophile. Her sibling was 14 or  
5 15 and the staff member was in his 20s:

6 'I've said to [my sibling] that this man was paid to  
7 look after her, not sleep with her, but she still  
8 believes that it was a normal home and that she was in  
9 a normal relationship. It's up to [them] if [they] want  
10 to tell people what went on with him. I witnessed some  
11 things. He used to take her and other kids to football  
12 matches. I saw them holding hands and kissing while  
13 walking to the matches. Looking back, I'm astounded  
14 that he got away with this. It's not as if it was done  
15 secretly. It was in plain sight. I don't know if [this  
16 staff member] did anything to any of the other kids.  
17 I imagine [my sibling] wouldn't have been the only one.  
18 As far as I'm concerned, [that staff member] was  
19 a paedophile. Obviously I knew what he was, so I kept  
20 out of his road. I didn't have any kind of relationship  
21 with him at all. Other kids' heads were warped into  
22 thinking it was a normal relationship. Living in that  
23 home warped all of our heads. I don't think anybody  
24 would have come out of there and gone on to a normal  
25 relationship. We were all set up to fail.'

1           She talks about her time at school. She says she  
2 went to Bellshill Academy and didn't pose any problems.  
3 She notes that she enjoyed being away from the home and  
4 there were various activities that they were able to do.

5           She says at paragraph 52:

6           'The system worked for me. I knew how to play it.  
7 I did what they wanted to keep them off my back. All  
8 the other weans couldn't figure it out as quickly as  
9 I did and they weren't as lucky as me.'

10          Reading short:

11          'I realised that you couldn't beat the system so  
12 I learned to play the system. Those kids who were doing  
13 the dirty protests didn't learn like I did. They fought  
14 the system. If you do that, the system breaks you.'

15          She says that her mother got access to her every  
16 Thursday. At paragraph 54:

17          'Social workers were trying to make me go for access  
18 with my father when I was in the home, and I kept  
19 telling them that under no circumstances did I want to  
20 be in the same room as that man. Whenever I said that,  
21 they would tell me that it was the same as a tooth being  
22 taken out by the dentist. They would say [that]: "When  
23 a tooth is removed, the place where it was removed from  
24 closes over, "and it's the same when we take a child  
25 from a family. You will fit back in, it will just take

1 time to make the space". That's what they used to say  
2 to me when I was saying things like I would end up in  
3 a jail because I would kill him.

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

13 She talks a bit about contact with her other  
14 siblings and with people outside the home, and she notes  
15 that she saw a child psychologist in the  
16 North Lanarkshire area but didn't really speak to him or  
17 build any kind of relationship, so social services just  
18 let it go; that's paragraph 57.

19 Paragraph 58, she talks about a social worker from  
20 the Bellshill Social Work Department and says:

21 'I didn't have a good relationship with him. He was  
22 going to hit me at a Children's Panel one time because  
23 he was trying to make me do something I didn't want to  
24 do. I think he was trying to make me have access with  
25 my dad. He never went back to another panel after

1           that.'

2           And she wonders whether this social worker and her  
3           father were in league with each other.

4           At paragraph 60:

5           'There was social work involvement in my family  
6           before I went into care, but I wasn't allowed to speak  
7           to them. My father threatened me [and] he would have  
8           killed me if I had spoken to them. He made it clear  
9           that we were not allowed to speak to those services.'

10          Towards -- just past the middle of that paragraph:

11          'He would tell social workers how manipulative we  
12          were. He tried to justify his behaviour and give  
13          excuses. According to him, he assaulted me because  
14          I manipulated him into it. He told the social workers  
15          a load of rubbish. The fact of the matter is that he  
16          beat me because he's of lower-than-average intelligence  
17          and that's how he deals with things. I wasn't allowed  
18          to speak to social services because of him, yet he was  
19          talking to them and feeding them his story. He had  
20          control of the whole situation, of them and everybody  
21          else.'

22          She says a bit more about that and her father's  
23          behaviour at paragraph 62, and reading over the page to  
24          paragraph 64, about Children's Panels she says:

25          'I went to Children's Panels but I never told them

1 or any social workers about Ed Stanton. What was the  
2 point? He was the person in charge. He was a trusted  
3 person. They had their own ideas as to why we were in  
4 that home. I was classed as an undesirable child  
5 because I was in a home. I wasn't classed as the  
6 victim, I was classed as unruly. It was me who was the  
7 problem, not people like Ed Stanton. It was the same  
8 for the rest of the kids. You didn't talk about the  
9 people in positions of trust and power. Who was going  
10 to listen to us?

11 'I did tell the Children's Panel that I didn't want  
12 access with my dad and I didn't want to return home.  
13 They would have seen that in the social work reports as  
14 well.'

15 It seems, paragraph 66, my Lady, that she was in  
16 fact sent back to live with her father, and at  
17 paragraph 67 she notes that they did that in spite of  
18 knowing that her father was a violent man. At  
19 paragraph 68, she says about life after Bellshill  
20 Children's Home:

21 'I was basically kicked out and sent back home.  
22 They didn't have space upstairs in the teenage unit for  
23 me or [my sibling], so rather than going back to the  
24 local council to try to find us somewhere safe to live,  
25 they just gave us back.'

1           And she says:

2           'My dad went back to his normal, violent ways. The  
3           only physical contact we ever got from him was  
4           violence.'

5           Paragraph 70, she says:

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

10          'After a few months, I presented as homeless and  
11          moved into a homeless flat and [my sibling] moved in  
12          with me.'

13          Paragraph 72, she talks about records and has only  
14          managed to find limited records so far, and she was  
15          told, paragraph 74, that her file had accidentally been  
16          destroyed. And at paragraph 76 says she 'thinks that  
17          they're lying to me', because she went to the police to  
18          report her father and Bellshill Social Services, and the  
19          police have obtained her file.

20          She goes on at paragraph 78 to talk about the impact  
21          of her experiences. She says that:

22          'I suffer from sleep problems. I wake up about ten  
23          times a night and look around to see where I am. I have  
24          to make sure I'm safe before I go back to sleep. I can  
25          be woken out of sleep by somebody walking by and casting

1 a shadow over me. When something like that happens,  
2 I sit bolt upright in my bed. It frightens the life out  
3 of people. I've had input from psychological services  
4 a few times as an adult because of sleep problems.'

5 She says:

6 'I've been diagnosed with PTSD. I have flashbacks  
7 and nightmares about being taken out of school and  
8 strip-searched.'

9 Which she talks about earlier in her statement.

10 Paragraph 80:

11 'I have flashbacks and bad dreams about what we did  
12 to those kids in the home. It really bothers me that  
13 they used me to abuse those kids. We were used to play  
14 with their heads and cause even more damage to them.  
15 Before the dirty disputes, those kids did actually have  
16 friends in the home, but they had nobody afterwards.  
17 They got told all day by us and the staff that they were  
18 dirty wee bastards. I also threatened to beat them up.  
19 I actually feel physically sick whenever I think about  
20 it or wake up from a nightmare. Those kids will have  
21 more psychological damage than the rest of us, as we  
22 were used to put the boot in when they were at their  
23 lowest. I've seen [one of these boys'] sister and said  
24 to her that if [her brother] ever wants to talk, he  
25 knows where I am. He's still suicidal over all this.

1 I've never had any physical contact with him. I've only  
2 spoken to his sister.'

3 She says at paragraph 81:

4 'Being told by social services in 2015 that my  
5 records had been accidentally destroyed made my mental  
6 health much worse.'

7 She was referred to a psychologist and she talks at  
8 paragraph 83 about certain health issues that she  
9 suffers, and about difficulties obtaining benefits and  
10 the stress that that process put her under.

11 She says at paragraph 84:

12 'My ability to form relationships with other people  
13 has also been affected. It's been a long time since  
14 I was in a relationship. All I do is give other people  
15 my sleep problems and I want to fix my problems, not  
16 give them to someone else. I don't trust people.  
17 I don't actually like people that much. I prefer  
18 animals. They don't let you down as much. My  
19 relationship with my kids' dad broke down because he  
20 drank. As far as I'm concerned, if you drink, you're  
21 volatile, and I don't want to be around that. I broke  
22 up with him just before the millennium and I've been on  
23 my own since. It's easier being on my own. I've got  
24 some good friends and I don't mind being on my own.'

25 She says that she's been seeing a psychologist and

1 that speaking to her helps at times, but she says that:

2 'The sleep problems can't be fixed because I woke  
3 from my sleep to pandemonium in childhood and I learned  
4 to sleep in a particular way to keep me safe. It's like  
5 I'm on a knife edge. The behaviours have gone on for  
6 a long time now. My full family has sleep problems.'

7 She then talks about her current life. She has  
8 children who she says are good kids, and says a bit  
9 about them.

10 At paragraph 90, she says that she reported abuse to  
11 the police in 2016 and the police told her that they  
12 would need to work through her file systematically and  
13 that they would get back to her once they found what  
14 they were looking for.

15 She says in relation to the Scottish Child Abuse  
16 Inquiry:

17 'I think the Inquiry should put an advert in one of  
18 the papers asking for all the kids who were  
19 strip-searched by Bellshill Social Work to come forward.  
20 I know that it was normal practice for them. It  
21 happened to loads of kids.'

22 I think she names some of the children affected by  
23 what she describes there, that practice. She says:

24 'That practice was in place throughout all those  
25 years and they still haven't moved on. They're still

1 taking kids out of school and removing their clothing.  
2 They're still grooming kids and it's still wrong.  
3 Things have to change. They shouldn't be allowed to  
4 take kids out of school. There also needs to be  
5 an advocate in the social work building who watches what  
6 they are doing.

7 'I would like also to see something done about  
8 social services hiding files when they've done wrong.  
9 That has to stop, too.

10 'Social services wrote in a report about me as  
11 a child that my behaviour was giving cause for concern.  
12 You shouldn't just write that and do nothing about it.  
13 If you have to write those words about a child, then  
14 there is a problem and something needs to be done. You  
15 have to talk to the kid, ask them what's wrong and find  
16 out if there's anything you can do for them. Sometimes,  
17 because of what's involved, they don't want to ask the  
18 right questions. They don't want to embarrass  
19 themselves. I don't know why they kept the secret that  
20 I was being taken out of school to be strip-searched.  
21 There should be no secrets. Kids need to be told that  
22 you do not keep secrets, especially when it's an adult  
23 who wants to keep the secret.'

24 And 'Jane' has made the usual declaration and signed  
25 her statement, my Lady.

1 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

2 Well, that's neatly 1 o'clock, Mr Sheldon, so  
3 I'll rise for the lunch break now. I think we've still  
4 got some of the reading in, have we, planned for today?

5 MR SHELDON: We do, my Lady, yes.

6 LADY SMITH: Yes, we'll sit again at 2 o'clock.

7 Did I mention MVM and MVN? Maybe not.  
8 In case I didn't, that's the names of two people who  
9 can't be identified as referred to in our evidence  
10 outside this room. Thank you.

11 (1.02 pm)

12 (The luncheon adjournment)

13 (2.00 pm)

14 LADY SMITH: Ms Forbes, where now?

15 MS FORBES: Good afternoon, my Lady.

16 The next statement is from an applicant who's  
17 anonymous and is known as 'Linda'.

18 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

19 'Linda' (read in)

20 MS FORBES: The reference for 'Linda's' statement is  
21 WIT.001.002.2111.

22 My Lady, 'Linda' tells us she was born in 1973 and  
23 talks about her life before going into care between  
24 paragraphs 2 and 13. But in summary, she tells us that  
25 she lived with her family in Forgewood near Motherwell.

1 She lived initially with her parents, her two brothers  
2 and a sister, and she was the youngest.

3 She tells us that on the day of her christening, her  
4 father [REDACTED] and went to  
5 prison, and because of that, her family had to escape  
6 from it and they moved around a lot, so there was a lot  
7 of upheaval.

8 They moved to England and her mother didn't get out  
9 of bed a lot of the time, didn't get them ready for  
10 school. They had to do everything themselves. She  
11 talks about being taken to hospital once when she was  
12 a baby because her mother had beaten her, and being  
13 taken into foster care when she was 2 years old.

14 She then tells us that she didn't want to return  
15 home from foster care, but she was taken back home and  
16 she tells us that her mother was physically abusive  
17 towards her. It seemed to be on a daily basis and she  
18 would beat her all the time and would sometimes throw  
19 a hot cup of tea over her.

20 She says that her mother was a great mother to her  
21 brothers and sisters, but she kept her segregated and  
22 she would be locked in her room out of the way most of  
23 the time.

24 She would take her brothers and sisters on trips and  
25 leave her in the house on her own, and she would have to

1 do chores while they were away.

2 She tells us that her mum told them that their dad  
3 was dead and she says they then moved back to Scotland  
4 when she was in Primary 7. They were homeless and  
5 stayed with an auntie for a while and then were in  
6 a homeless unit before moving to an address.

7 She says she then went to primary school and on to  
8 high school and, at paragraph 11, talks about being  
9 dishevelled and being bullied and then having to move to  
10 a different high school, Cardinal Newman High School.

11 She saw a child psychologist at school and she says  
12 teachers noticed she had bruises, and then she just told  
13 them what her mum had told her to say, that she had  
14 fallen or walked into a cupboard.

15 She tells us that the social services became  
16 involved around that time and she was taken into care,  
17 she says, when she was 13. She told her social worker  
18 she was very unhappy and was feeling suicidal, and her  
19 mum agreed that she should go. So it was done with her  
20 mum's consent. And she was the only child, she says, in  
21 the family taken into care.

22 And 'Linda' says she was taken to Bellshill  
23 Children's Home. She tells us about that from  
24 paragraph 14. She thinks it was in 1986, and it may be  
25 her records are incomplete, my Lady, but the record we

1           have says she was admitted there [REDACTED] 1988, so she  
2           would have been aged 14.

3   LADY SMITH: Thank you.

4   MS FORBES: And she will talk about being there on two  
5           occasions with a break home in between, but from her  
6           records we know that she was there until around 1991,  
7           but we don't have a definite date, so I think she would  
8           have been 16 or 17 when she left finally.

9   LADY SMITH: Thank you.

10   MS FORBES: 'Linda' tells us at paragraph 14 that, she says:

11           'I was scared when I went in because I had been  
12           enclosed away from everyone all of my life. Suddenly  
13           there were lots of adults and kids. It was alien to me  
14           and I didn't know how to behave in front of other  
15           people.'

16           She tells us then about her first day and at  
17           paragraph 17, she says:

18           'I was shown my room and it was just a case of  
19           getting on with it. At first, I was in a room on my  
20           own. I got moved into another room with another girl  
21           [and she gives us her full name] because a family had  
22           come into the home and needed my room.

23           'There was a woman in charge but I can't remember  
24           her name. She would come in and get us up. We had to  
25           get up at 6.00 in the morning to make sure that the

1 stairs were brushed, the beds were made and the windows  
2 were clean. The woman would tell us to do that. We did  
3 that before going to school. If you didn't do them, you  
4 didn't get to school. If you were clever, you did your  
5 chores the night before. I remember using a toothbrush  
6 to get dirt out of the cracks in the stairs.

7 'Everybody had a chore to do. There was a rota  
8 system pinned on the wall at the back stairs. I think  
9 that was the way of life in any children's home at the  
10 time.'

11 She then tells us about staff at paragraph 20 and  
12 talks about support workers, and she names MVN  
13 John Blair, Claire McCluskey and RFG and  
14 a member of staff called Joe Sloan, who we've heard  
15 about before.

16 She says there was always at least one member of  
17 staff who stayed overnight and there was a woman called  
18 Celia who worked the nightshift, and the kids used to  
19 single Celia out and play practical jokes on her.

20 She talks about having her own individual key  
21 workers, at paragraph 21, and hers was called  
22 Kathleen Irvine and she says:

23 'She was lovely and tried to be like a parent to  
24 me.'

25 At paragraph 22 she says:

1            'The man in charge was called Eddie Stanton. I used  
2            to get butterflies when I walked into the room when he  
3            was there. I didn't know why, but he made me uneasy.  
4            He would often have a young boy sitting on his knee.  
5            The boy was called [and she names him]. Eddie would  
6            have his hands in his pockets jangling his keys. [The  
7            boy] wouldn't be moving at all. He used to scare me.  
8            I remember he used to drink Earl Grey tea and he would  
9            tell us how to stir it properly. I don't know why  
10           I remember that.

11           '[The boy] would have been about 7 at the time. He  
12           had a little sister [and she names her]. I used to  
13           think every time I walked into the room, even at that  
14           age, that it wasn't right.

15           'I don't know if he ever hurt [the boy], but I later  
16           found out that Eddie Stanton had gone to prison. He had  
17           worked in a children's home in Wales before coming to  
18           Bellshill. [The boy] and his sister eventually went to  
19           live with their grandparents.'

20           She then tells us she had been there for about  
21           six months when her mum wanted her back because her  
22           money had stopped, and then she says that her mum hadn't  
23           visited her once, and she turned up one day and told her  
24           to pack her things. And she says she went home and she  
25           thinks things were better for about 24 hours.

1           She goes on to say at paragraph 26 that things  
2           hadn't changed and she tried living at home for five  
3           months, thinking it was going to get better, but it  
4           didn't. And she went back to social services in  
5           Motherwell and told her social worker she couldn't take  
6           it anymore and that it was getting worse.

7           And a few weeks later, the social worker came to the  
8           house with the police and she said that her mum -- she  
9           heard the police outside, telling her mum that they  
10          would gain entry if she didn't let them in, and her mum  
11          dragged her out of her room and told her to get out, so  
12          she packed her things.

13          She was then taken back to the home with the social  
14          worker and one of the police officers. She says she  
15          didn't want to go back to Bellshill. She thought she'd  
16          be taken to a different home, in Carluke or somewhere  
17          else.

18          She then tells us about going back to Bellshill from  
19          paragraph 29 and we do have a record saying she was  
20          re-admitted on [REDACTED] 1989, so she would have been  
21          about 15-and-a-half.

22   LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23   MS FORBES: And she says from 29:

24                 'When I went back, I had to share a room with [and  
25                 she names the same girl as before] again.'

1 She says:

2 'I was a bed-wetter at home because I was terrified  
3 of my mum. I hadn't wet the bed in Bellshill but I wet  
4 it the night before I left to go back to my mum's.  
5 I had hidden the sheets and my underwear under my bed  
6 before I left so that no one would see them. When  
7 I went back in, [the girl] told me she'd found them and  
8 called me a "clatty bastard". She told me that she  
9 couldn't believe I'd hidden my dirty knickers and  
10 battered me.

11 'I had a wardrobe and a chest of drawers in the  
12 room. I had a single bed with a quilt on it. We  
13 weren't allowed to lock any of the doors. The staff had  
14 keys to lock the door. The bedrooms weren't nicely  
15 decorated. They got decorators in once a year and just  
16 papered over the cracks with emulsion paint.

17 'I was bullied by some of the other kids.'

18 And then she tells us about some of the other  
19 children and their names, and she tells us that she got  
20 bullied when she got her pocket money too, so it was  
21 easier just to give it to them.

22 Paragraph 33, 'Linda' says:

23 'By the time I went back in, Eddie Stanton [REDACTED]  
24 [REDACTED] PVX [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED]. RFG [REDACTED] used to  
25 see them hitting me. He reported it to PVX [REDACTED] all

1 the time, and he just said "Kids will be kids". He  
2 didn't do anything about it. I knew nothing would  
3 happen, even though staff were writing it down in  
4 logbooks.

5 'They had stopped doing chores. They had been  
6 abolished.'

7 She says that she doesn't know why and she thinks  
8 there was something in the news about children not being  
9 allowed to do chores anymore. But she says that  
10 everyone had lost respect for the staff and people knew  
11 there'd be no consequences if they did something wrong.  
12 But she tells us the staff were more relaxed, but the  
13 kids were out of control and there was only one or two  
14 members of staff who implemented any discipline.

15 She tells us at paragraph 36 that there were issues  
16 with the chefs a lot, so she used to do the cooking for  
17 everyone. And at paragraph 37, she says she used to  
18 make a big dish of lasagne and chips, and she would get  
19 keys off the staff for a cupboard in the kitchen that  
20 had all the goodies in it.

21 She tells us about getting pocket money every week,  
22 £6.50, and she says she smoked, so her money went on  
23 cigarettes and she'd not have money for lunch.

24 And she says at paragraph 38:

25 'We all had to give them £10 towards independent

1 living. They would give us £15 back on top of that so  
2 that we could have £25 for food. A member of staff  
3 called RBP would ask us for the money and take us  
4 out with it at night.'

5 She goes on and says there was one shower, and then  
6 she names the same girl she shared a room with and she  
7 said:

8 'She used to always get in before me, which used to  
9 annoy me.'

10 She tells us she was finding it hard at school, so  
11 she left Cardinal Newman School and went to an IT school  
12 when she was 15, and she says that she would get dropped  
13 off by the minibus and taken back after school. But she  
14 says that even though she was quite intelligent, she had  
15 a lot of distractions so she couldn't concentrate.

16 She says she passed her exams, but didn't get any  
17 qualifications because it wasn't a recognised school.

18 She tells us about some trips and holidays from  
19 paragraph 43 and she says they went to Skegness on  
20 holiday once, and she remembers going to Blackpool with  
21 two individuals, I think one staff member and a girl  
22 that she shared a room with.

23 She tells us about going on holiday to the south of  
24 France twice at paragraph 44 and she says:

25 'It was a disaster. We were kicked out of the

1           campsite and some people beat up a security guard. It  
2           wasn't like a holiday. We were only taken there because  
3           we had been talking about the abuse and were going to go  
4           to the police.'

5           And she says that the girl she shared a room with  
6           'bribed the staff into taking us'.

7           She then says at paragraph 45 that they would go  
8           ice skating up Moffat Hills sometimes and at  
9           paragraph 46, she says:

10           'Once you were in the independent unit, there were  
11           different rules. You were allowed to stay out a few  
12           nights per week. The staff would allow us to pretend we  
13           were going somewhere and record it in the logbook so  
14           that they didn't get into trouble.'

15           She talks about getting £100 at Christmastime at  
16           paragraph 47, but other than that, it was a normal day,  
17           there was no fuss. And she remembers having Christmas  
18           dinner once, and it was one in many years. And one  
19           year, she bought a TV for her bedroom with the money,  
20           but someone stole it so she only had it for three days.

21           At paragraph 48 'Linda' says:

22           'I got tickets to see Kenny Rogers in concert for my  
23           16th birthday. I always remember that birthday because  
24           they had made me a big cake. They didn't usually --  
25           I didn't usually get anything for my birthday. I think

1 they tried to make it special because it was my 16th.  
2 It was good.'

3 She says she remembers one inspection. At  
4 paragraph 49 she says:

5 'There were people going around taking notes.  
6 I don't think they knew that they were coming, so it was  
7 sprung on them. They didn't speak to any of us.'

8 She says that her social worker didn't come to visit  
9 her, but she came to see her once because she asked to  
10 see her, and they were left to their own devices.

11 She says at paragraph 51 they were supposed to have  
12 group meetings to discuss her care every week but that  
13 didn't happen, and it was lucky if they happened once  
14 every six months.

15 At paragraph 52, she says:

16 'One day I was called into the office. I was told  
17 that I had a phone call. I took the call and the voice  
18 said, "Hello, it's your daddy". I was so confused.  
19 I thought he was dead. My father told me what my mum  
20 looked like and he said that he had pictures of me, so  
21 she must have been sending him pictures.

22 'After that, the children's home arranged a visit  
23 for me to see him. I was 15 at the time. I went to see  
24 him in Greenock Prison with RFG. My father  
25 would make promises, but I could see in his eyes that he

1 didn't mean a word of it. I didn't go back to see him  
2 again. I didn't have any contact with my family during  
3 my second time in the home. As far as they were  
4 concerned, I was dead to them.'

5 She tells us about running away at paragraph 55.  
6 She says:

7 'I ran away once with a girl [and she names her].  
8 We were picked up by two men.'

9 And she tells us the name of one of them:

10 'I wanted to get back, so I ended up calling the  
11 home. The staff came to get us and took us back. They  
12 didn't ask us what had happened. They didn't care.'

13 'Linda' then talks about abuse at Bellshill from  
14 paragraph 56. She says:

15 'Eddie Docherty worked in the home. He was around  
16 48 years old. I remember, because he told me his age  
17 once. He was short and slightly overweight. He always  
18 wore the same blue jeans, a T-shirt and trainers. He  
19 had a set of keys dangling at his side all the time.  
20 I remember that because you could hear him coming. In  
21 my first spell in the home, Eddie used to come into my  
22 room and ask me if I had clean knickers on. I didn't  
23 realise why he was asking.

24 'A few nights later he came into my room again.  
25 I was practising dancing because we were doing

1 a Christmas show for old-aged pensioners in the  
2 community. He used to come into my room all the time.  
3 He would sit and watch me dancing. I was so stupid and  
4 naive. I was 13, nearly 14. At the time, I found it  
5 a bit freaky, but I didn't see what lay ahead.

6 'When I was 15, I needed some work done on my teeth,  
7 so Eddie took me to the dental hospital in Glasgow.  
8 I was feeling drowsy on the way back and I tripped going  
9 down an escalator. He grabbed my chest to stop me  
10 falling. I remember on the way back he put his arm  
11 around me on the way to the train station. It didn't  
12 feel right.

13 'A few days later, after I'd been taken to the  
14 dental hospital, Eddie Docherty took me back to Glasgow.  
15 He took me to a couple of pubs and bought a bottle of  
16 Buckfast. We were sitting drinking it along the  
17 riverbank when he grabbed me and put me down on the  
18 grass. At first I thought he was just playing. He  
19 tried to kiss me. I tried to pull myself away and he  
20 tried to get my jeans undone. I thought I was going to  
21 die and that was why he had brought me down to the  
22 water.

23 'My mind was racing. I was screaming for him to get  
24 off me and telling him to stop. I remember a couple  
25 walked past and they didn't even stop to help. I think

1 the woman said something about prostitutes. I felt so  
2 degraded. All I wanted them to do was help. I told  
3 Eddie that I was on my period to try to make him stop.  
4 He did, and just walked off. I sat there in disbelief.  
5 It took me about an hour to find my way back to the  
6 train station because I didn't know Glasgow.

7 'When I got back to the home, I was crying my eyes  
8 out. PVX and Claire McCluskey were working in  
9 the office, but they didn't come out to ask what was  
10 wrong. I had a shower and I remember I didn't want to  
11 get out. I must have sat in the shower for  
12 an hour-and-a-half. I was scrubbing my arms so much  
13 that they were bleeding. I couldn't believe that it had  
14 happened. It was bizarre. I kept thinking that it was  
15 my fault because I had been drinking and I'd been  
16 friendly.

17 'About two days later, I phoned Kate McCallum and  
18 told her that I needed to see her. She didn't come up  
19 for about 10 or 11 days. I told her about the incident  
20 in Glasgow with Eddie. We were in the group one waiting  
21 room. She wrote it down. She asked me if I had  
22 misconstrued things because I'd had a drink. I felt  
23 like she was giving me into trouble. After that,  
24 I never saw Kate in the home again.

25 'I was moved into the independent unit, but Eddie

1 used to come on to our floor whenever he could. He  
2 would say that they were short-staffed.'

3 She then names two girls and said:

4 'They would go up and punch him between the legs and  
5 take money off of him. They would do it in front of  
6 everyone so that they knew. He abused them too, but  
7 they handled it differently. I didn't want anyone to  
8 know, so I just stayed in my room.

9 'Eddie had been coming into my room a couple of  
10 times a week. It would be whenever he was on shift. He  
11 would touch me in my bed. He would put his hands under  
12 my clothes and touch in between my legs. I remember him  
13 asking me if I was wet. I knew what he was doing wasn't  
14 right. We weren't allowed to lock our bedroom door, so  
15 I moved my bed and the wardrobe in front of my bedroom  
16 door to stop Eddie coming in. He stopped trying after  
17 that.

18 'RFG [REDACTED] became my key worker when I moved  
19 into the independent unit. He knew what was going on  
20 and told me to speak out about it. I told him that no  
21 one would believe me.

22 'RBP [REDACTED] was another member of staff. He was 42.  
23 He was very thin and looked like a drug addict. He had  
24 lost his front teeth. He used to take us to pubs and  
25 nightclubs with another three staff members: John Blair,

1 PVX and . I was 13 the first time.  
2 I looked older because I was tall and heavily built.  
3 They would take [and then she names another three girls]  
4 and I to the Hattonrigg Hotel and Valenti's Italian  
5 restaurant. He would buy us meals and wine to get us  
6 drunk. I became dependent on alcohol.

7 'If it was a nice day, they would take us out in the  
8 minibus and we would stop off at pubs. There was no one  
9 regulating what we were buying, so we would buy alcohol  
10 and drink it in the van.

11 'RBP would buy alcohol with our pocket money.  
12 He would tell us to ask other staff to give us more  
13 money and say it was for the cinema. He'd take us back  
14 to his house in Stonehouse. He lived in a top flat. He  
15 used to put music on and the drinks would be flowing.  
16 He would tell us that we could take whatever we wanted  
17 out of his house, but I didn't take anything. Some of  
18 the girls would take records.

19 'He used to take a lot of girls back to his flat.  
20 At the time, it felt like someone cared about you, but  
21 they didn't. Now that I'm an adult, I think it was  
22 grooming. I heard from other people that he was  
23 interested in boys too, but I didn't see anything like  
24 that.

25 'He had drugs lying around his house. I didn't take

1       them. I used to have the odd spliff, but it made me  
2       feel sick. I just drank. I didn't take any pills, but  
3       they were around. He used to have ecstasy and diazepam.  
4       On one occasion, he had a lot of cocaine. The other  
5       staff knew because he didn't even hide it.

6                'His house was broken into, so he moved into the  
7       independent unit for a few months. I remember he tried  
8       to give [and she names another girl] and I drugs for the  
9       first time in the office.

10               'RBP' ended up getting a flat beside [REDACTED]  
11       [REDACTED]. He got into a relationship with one of our  
12       friends. They had an argument one day when I was there.  
13       We were in the bedroom putting new covers on the bed.  
14       All of a sudden, he pulled the quilt over my head and  
15       dragged me on to the bed. He tried to kiss me and open  
16       buttons on my trousers. I froze. I told him to leave  
17       me alone. I started to walk out the door and he said  
18       that he was just kidding. I took my things and left.

19               'He had tried to kiss me once before in Stonehouse  
20       but I had put it down --'

21               I think that should say 'to drunkenness'.

22       LADY SMITH: 'To drunkenness'.

23       MS FORBES: 'I was stupid for going in the first place, but  
24       I thought that those people cared about us. I didn't  
25       speak to RBP' again after that.

1           'One day RBP took [and she names two girls] and I to  
2 the hotel. RFG and John Blair turned up  
3 after about an hour. RFG went to the bar and told  
4 the staff that we were underage so we were asked to  
5 leave. I think he recorded that incident in the  
6 logbook.

7           'I was aware that [she names two girls] that they  
8 were being abused. They were talking openly about the  
9 abuse. I think the staff knew it was going on. When we  
10 were in France [she names one of the girls] had  
11 an argument in front of everyone about it. She was  
12 demanding money from PVX and threatening to tell  
13 people what was going on. RFG wanted to know  
14 what was wrong with her, but she wouldn't tell him.

15           'When we got home from France, the police were  
16 contacted. I think it might have been [the girl] who  
17 phoned them. The police came to the home. They took  
18 a statement from me. I told them about Eddie and RBP.  
19 The police told us that there wasn't enough evidence.  
20 Eddie was suspended from the home because he hadn't  
21 filled in his job application properly.

22           'I remember MVN, a member of staff, asked  
23 me what Eddie had done to me. I didn't know that she  
24 knew about it. The only people who knew were [and she  
25 names two girls]. MVN told me that nobody had told

1 her, but she could see it for herself.

2 'We had our own logbooks along with a group logbook.  
3 They were stored in boxes in the loft. Two days before  
4 the police came to the home, I saw RBP removing  
5 the boxes from the loft. I asked him what he was doing  
6 and he said they were having a clear-out. He took the  
7 boxes outside and I saw him putting [I think that should  
8 say "them"] in a car. Luckily, I found out recently  
9 RFG had taken copies of them. He told me  
10 that he had given them to the police.'

11 She then goes on to say at paragraph 79:

12 'I met my boyfriend not long after the incident with  
13 Eddie. I was 16. He was older. I didn't want to be in  
14 the home anymore. I had been staying at my boyfriend's  
15 house a lot because I didn't want to sleep there  
16 anymore. I knew what would happen if I stayed there.

17 'The police would come to get me every day from his  
18 house and take me back to the home in the morning. They  
19 used to pick me up at 7.00 am because I started work at  
20 9.00 am. I was working as a chef [and then she tells us  
21 where].'

22 And she says:

23 'I wasn't paid but I enjoyed it.'

24 She then tells us at paragraph 81 she fell pregnant  
25 with her first daughter when she was nearly 17. And she

1 just wanted to have a baby to get out of there. She  
2 wanted an escape and felt that was her only option at  
3 the time. She was then housed next door to the  
4 children's home. She tells us her boyfriend had become  
5 abusive towards her by then and she went back to the  
6 home once because he'd given her a kicking when she was  
7 pregnant.

8 She tells us she then had three children with him,  
9 in 1992, 1993 and 1996, and then she had two further  
10 daughters later to different people.

11 She says at paragraph 83 that she decided to go to  
12 the police again when she was 21 and she says:

13 'The case against Eddie went to court. Eddie was  
14 convicted of sexual abuse of two minors. The case  
15 involving me was not proven. He wasn't sent to prison.  
16 They gave him a new flat next to a high school. He's  
17 dead now.'

18 She then tells us she requested a meeting with  
19 social workers after the court case and she says one  
20 person in particular, Fred Edwards, was head of the  
21 social work department at the time, and she says:

22 'I asked him why [I think that should be "they"]  
23 allowed the abuse to go on for so long. He didn't  
24 answer and instead told me that once I stopped having  
25 kids he'd give me a job. It was about three weeks after

1 the court case. I felt as if he wasn't listening and  
2 I was being paid off. He was deflecting from it.'

3 She then tells us about her life after being in care  
4 from paragraph 85, and she says that she had a fight  
5 with her neighbour after Eddie's court case and she was  
6 charged by the police with assault with a weapon.

7 She then packed up and moved in the middle of the  
8 night to England, but she was brought back to Scotland  
9 to face the charge. But she was admonished and she says  
10 she recognised that it was the same judge who had heard  
11 the case against Eddie.

12 She says after she moved to England, she went to  
13 social services for help because she was drinking and  
14 she wasn't coping. She had five kids by then and she  
15 told them about the sexual violence that she'd  
16 experienced in Scotland and they wanted to take her  
17 children off of her.

18 She tells us later at paragraph 91 that her children  
19 were taken from her and she says that that was the  
20 beginning of the end for her. She had contact with them  
21 four times a year. And they'd separated some of the  
22 kids, which caused, she says:

23 'It's caused a lot of problems for them.'

24 She says she was drinking and became so depressed  
25 that she was trying to kill herself several times a week

1 and she finally decided to stop drinking the day before  
2 her 40th birthday.

3 She tells us then about impact from paragraph 94 and  
4 says she wasn't able to be a mum, and she gives us more  
5 details about why she thinks that was.

6 She talks about not being able to have close  
7 relationships and not trusting people, at paragraph 95.  
8 And she says she has eight children altogether and  
9 a stepson. She talks about having different jobs, but  
10 says that she couldn't get normal jobs because she  
11 couldn't work with people and she doesn't know how to  
12 behave in front of people and she gave up working at the  
13 time of this statement in October the year before, due  
14 to her health.

15 She talks about missing out on getting her GCSEs and  
16 regrets that, but she says at paragraph 98 that she has  
17 a social services law degree and she has counselling  
18 skills and health and safety in the workplace, but she  
19 didn't have the confidence to go to college so studied  
20 at home.

21 She says at paragraph 99:

22 'There isn't a day that goes by when my time in care  
23 isn't a part of my life. The only thing Bellshill  
24 taught me was how to be an alcoholic. I was taught that  
25 it was a coping mechanism. I carried that on until

1 I was 40. I couldn't do anything for myself, because  
2 I thought that I was worthless. Everything that I tried  
3 to do in my life came back to the abuse.'

4 She then says that she struggled with her mental  
5 health for years, she's been in trouble with the police,  
6 she's been sectioned four or five times, but she says  
7 that at the time of this statement she had a CPN and  
8 a support worker from Free From Violence and Abuse.

9 She tells us about a heart condition that she has  
10 and at paragraph 105, she says:

11 'I told my heart specialist that I was in  
12 a children's home. He told me that I had been born with  
13 my condition and that someone must have known about it.  
14 He said that if I had been given treatment when I was  
15 younger, it wouldn't have deteriorated.'

16 She then talks about reporting abuse, from  
17 paragraph 106, and said she spoke to police officers  
18 about RBP [REDACTED] and at the time of this statement, that  
19 was the year before.

20 And, my Lady, since then, we have records from  
21 Justiciary that show that RBP [REDACTED] was convicted. And  
22 we know that she gave evidence at the trial against him  
23 in 2019.

24 LADY SMITH: Yes, I was going to say, I think it was 2019,  
25 wasn't it?

1 MS FORBES: Yes.

2 LADY SMITH: Yes.

3 MS FORBES: And he was convicted after trial of five charges  
4 and received a period of 30 months' imprisonment, and  
5 that was imposed on [REDACTED] 2019. And that included  
6 a charge relating to 'Linda', and some of what she's  
7 told us about in her statement.

8 Some matters were deleted by the jury, but it does  
9 relate to some of what she's told us.

10 She then talks about lessons to be learned, from  
11 paragraph 109, and she says:

12 'I hope the Inquiry changes the care system enough  
13 to enable kids who are taken into care today to have  
14 another parent figure in their lives. I think children  
15 who are 14 or 15 should be put into a safe place where  
16 there are boundaries, so that if anything happens, they  
17 can talk to people about it.

18 'I'm hoping a lot of other kids don't need to go  
19 through what I went through. I think that it is still  
20 going on. I think that will haunt me until my death.  
21 I think people who have been through it need to be given  
22 long-term therapy and someone who will be there to  
23 listen to them. The abuse affects you years later.

24 'I also want the people who were involved in my care  
25 to be held accountable. It didn't need to go on for so

1 long. I think the social workers, Kate McCallum and  
2 Fred Edwards, should be held accountable. I think that  
3 [REDACTED] is still employed in social care and I don't  
4 understand why, because I told the police about him too.  
5 They could have whistleblown at any time.

6 'The people employed in these roles are supposed to  
7 protect children. My time in care has not only impacted  
8 on my life, but it has impacted on my kids' lives too.'

9 And then 'Linda' has made the usual declaration,  
10 she's signed it, and her statement was dated 30 October  
11 2018.

12 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

13 MS FORBES: My Lady, Mr Sheldon now has a statement.

14 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

15 Mr Sheldon, whenever you're ready.

16 MR SHELDON: My Lady, the next statement is the statement of  
17 'Rob'. 'Rob's' statement reference is WIT.001.002.0695.

18 'Rob' (read in)

19 MR SHELDON: 'Rob' was born in 1977 and the records  
20 available suggest that he was at Bellshill on three  
21 occasions between [REDACTED] 1991 and [REDACTED] 1992. The  
22 first two visits were short, the longest one being in  
23 [REDACTED] 1991 for about two weeks. But the third visit was  
24 longer and appears to have been about three months,  
25 [REDACTED] 1992 to [REDACTED] 1992.

1 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

2 MR SHELDON: 'Rob' tells us on the first page of his  
3 statement about his early life. He was the youngest of  
4 six children. His mother was a binge alcoholic and his  
5 father a heavy drinker and was violent.

6 He says at paragraph 3 that:

7 'We didn't have much as children but we were kept  
8 clean and quite happy. There was a lot of violence and  
9 general chaos in the relationship between my mum and  
10 dad. When they were off the drink, everything was fine  
11 at home, but when they'd been drinking, it was  
12 frightening.'

13 At paragraph 4 he says:

14 'I was terrified of my dad. He was an animal.  
15 I got battered regularly by him if I did anything bad.  
16 One of the first beatings I remember was when I was  
17 around 7 years old. He had a metre-long piece of  
18 plastic. He beat me with it until it broke into pieces.  
19 I rarely saw any of my brothers or sisters getting  
20 a beating. I was the only one who got the beatings. As  
21 I got older, the beatings were getting harder and  
22 harder.'

23 And he says that two of his siblings went into care  
24 when he was very young. They went to Quarriers.

25 And he talks about school. He says that when he was

1 around 14, he was diagnosed as being hyperactive and was  
2 put on a special diet.

3 At paragraph 6 he says:

4 'I know exactly when my life changed dramatically  
5 for the worse. I would have been about 13 and I was  
6 taking a shortcut home from school. I saw two boys who  
7 I knew from primary school but who didn't go on to the  
8 same high school. They were sniffing solvents.  
9 I didn't know anything about it but I started doing it.  
10 That was me hooked. Initially I was doing it with  
11 deodorant and then gas, air freshener and then nail  
12 polish. I started dogging school and would just sit  
13 about sniffing nail varnish. I had a social worker  
14 because of my truancy. I was going to the  
15 Children's Panel every week because of it. They were  
16 only interested in my school life. They didn't care  
17 about my family life or ask me why I was dogging school.

18 'I was getting beaten regularly by my dad. The  
19 violence was unbelievable. I started running away,  
20 usually with a friend.'

21 And reading short to paragraph 8, he says:

22 'By the end, I was too frightened to even look at my  
23 dad. The final straw was when he smashed a plate over  
24 my head and poured a glass of milk on me. I just wanted  
25 out of that house. It was a few days before my 15th

1 birthday.'

2 And he says:

3 'I went into the social work offices in Bellshill.'

4 And paragraph 9:

5 'The social work department found a bed for me that  
6 night at Carluke Children's Home as a place of safety.  
7 They drove me there, then came back for me the next day  
8 and took me to Bellshill Children's Home.'

9 And he talks about Bellshill from paragraph 10 and,  
10 at the start of that paragraph, says something about the  
11 layout and what was in the home. He said, for example  
12 at line 4:

13 'There was a games room which was wrecked. It had  
14 been trashed at some point and it was never used.'

15 And he says, fourth line from the foot of that  
16 paragraph that:

17 'There were six boys and seven girls when I first  
18 went there. At 15, I was probably the youngest until  
19 William McGovern came. He was three years younger than  
20 me.'

21 And pausing there, my Lady, William McGovern is  
22 someone whose -- the GRO has been lifted in relation to  
23 him, for reasons that become apparent later in this  
24 statement.

25 LADY SMITH: Yes. Thank you.

1 MR SHELDON: 'Rob' goes on:

2 'The oldest was probably 17 or 18. They were just  
3 waiting to get housed somewhere.

4 'My bedroom was at the end of the corridor upstairs.  
5 There were two single beds in it. I had a bed and  
6 a chest of drawers and that was it. There was one other  
7 boy in there the first night, then he left, so I was in  
8 the room on my own after that.'

9 Paragraph 12, he talks about other children and  
10 names one in particular, the oldest boy, who made, and  
11 he says 'made my life a misery'. And at some point  
12 repeats that at some point William McGovern arrived, he  
13 was only 12 or 13.

14 He talks about members of staff and indicates that  
15 at least one of them, George, was a really good guy.  
16 Each key worker was allocated probably two children  
17 each. He says, paragraph 14:

18 'Initially I thought everything in Bellshill was  
19 okay. I didn't have any fear and there was no violence.  
20 When I was there, I continued to occasionally abuse  
21 solvents.'

22 He talks about the routine at mornings and bedtime  
23 and says that:

24 'The staff used to come in every morning, wake up  
25 and tell us to get ready for school.'

1           But taking that paragraph short, he says, in  
2           essence, that he started simply to crawl under the bed  
3           with a pillow and says he used to lie in there all day:

4           'Nobody knew I was there until the cleaners found  
5           me. The staff thought I was away to school. I did it  
6           for days and days. I used to only come out when it was  
7           late in the afternoon. The school wouldn't have been  
8           looking for me because they had washed their hands of me  
9           and didn't care.'

10          He talks about meal times and food and, at  
11          paragraph 17, says that at this time, he was dogging  
12          school and abusing solvents:

13          'By the time I got back to the home, the chef had  
14          gone and dinnertime was over. I didn't really eat when  
15          I was at Bellshill. I wasn't even offered food. If you  
16          were there on time you got food, but if you weren't, you  
17          got nothing. Staff didn't open the kitchen up or offer  
18          to make you anything to eat. I was high on solvents and  
19          that was my food at that point. I wasn't interested in  
20          food.'

21          Paragraph 18:

22          'In Bellshill there was a room with a shower,  
23          a toilet and a sink. We had to look after ourselves.'

24          Reading short:

25          'No one checked or made sure we washed.'

1            'The home never bought me clothes when I was there.  
2            If I needed anything, the social worker would contact my  
3            mum and she would buy it for me. She couldn't always  
4            get me whatever it was that I wanted because she  
5            struggled and never had a lot of money. I believe  
6            I could have got a special clothing grant, but nobody  
7            ever applied for one for me. If your clothes had holes  
8            in them, you just had to wear them.'

9            Taking paragraph 20 short, he says that he continued  
10           going to Bellshill Academy but hated it and learned  
11           nothing. He says at the end of that paragraph:

12           'I learned to read and write later in life when  
13           I was in prison.'

14           Paragraph 21:

15           'If ever we went anywhere, we travelled in the  
16           home's yellow and blue minibus which had  
17           "Strathclyde Regional Council" written on the side.  
18           This made people think we were the local handicapped  
19           children.

20           'It wasn't safe to go out and play football outside.  
21           The local boys were always hanging about. They wanted  
22           to batter us because we lived in a children's home. The  
23           local gangs couldn't get us when we were in the home,  
24           but as soon as we stepped outside we were fair game.

25           'In the beginning the staff would sometimes take us

1 ice skating. They would come round and say if anyone  
2 wanted to go, the minibus was leaving in five minutes.  
3 I always checked to see if [a particular boy] was going.  
4 If he was, there was no way I would go. If he wasn't,  
5 I went, because I didn't want to be left in the home  
6 with him.'

7 He says that his family were barred from coming in  
8 to visit him:

9 'My mum had come to see me but she was drunk. She  
10 had her own problems.'

11 Paragraph 25, he says:

12 'I saw the social worker Campbell Duke every now and  
13 then. He came to see me when something happened. He  
14 came when William hung himself and came most often  
15 because I wasn't going to school. He didn't just  
16 randomly pop in to see me. He only came if there was  
17 a reason.

18 'I didn't go to a Children's Panel again when I was  
19 at Bellshill. The next time I went was when I was at  
20 St Mary's secure unit at Kenmure.'

21 He says that there were two occasions when he ended  
22 up in hospital, paragraph 28, the second time more  
23 serious, when he and some other boys were inhaling the  
24 contents of a fire extinguisher, and says that they  
25 never saw the staff because they were in another room

1 drinking alcohol.

2 He says, paragraph 29:

3 'William McGovern and myself started running away.  
4 I never forced him to come with me and sometimes he  
5 suggested it. I feel guilty because I think he started  
6 abusing solvents because of me. I told staff about [the  
7 boy he's mentioned previously] bullying me, but they did  
8 nothing. My choice was to either stay there or put up  
9 with it or run away. I chose to run away. As time went  
10 on, I was more and more hating having to go back to the  
11 children's home. Almost every time I ran away, the  
12 police caught me and I started fighting with them  
13 because I didn't want to go back. I would have done  
14 anything I could to get away from the police because  
15 I didn't want to go back. I would end up black and blue  
16 after fighting with the police.'

17 He goes on to talk about abuse at Bellshill and at  
18 paragraph 30 says:

19 'One time I was in the home and was made to go into  
20 the dining room to eat my dinner. Staff told me to get  
21 in and eat it, and ended up dragging me in. They sat  
22 the plate of food in front of me and told me to eat it.  
23 I don't know what was on the plate, but there was  
24 nothing wrong with it. I was just in a bad mood and  
25 pissed off at getting forced to be there. I refused.

1 The chef got involved and said that he was going to come  
2 over and kick my balls. He called me a wee cunt.  
3 I still refused to eat it. The argument escalated and  
4 my brothers were brought into the conversation. The  
5 chef knew my family and he just said they would get it  
6 as well.

7 'I had been there about two weeks and I remember  
8 going to my key worker. She was a woman, but I can't  
9 remember her name. I told her that I needed my school  
10 clothes washed for the next day. She came with me and  
11 put my clothes in the washing machine. I didn't know  
12 how it worked. When I went to put my washed clothes in  
13 the tumble dryer, there were clothes already in there.  
14 The key worker told me to take what was in the machine  
15 out and put my clothes in. About half an hour later  
16 when I'd finished, [the bully] came into the room where  
17 I was, like a raging bull, and asked who had removed his  
18 clothes from the tumble dryer. I told him I had done it  
19 and tried to tell him that the key worker told me to.  
20 He didn't listen or care. He grabbed my throat and  
21 pinned me to the floor and told me never ever to do that  
22 again. I was terrified. He was a lot bigger than  
23 I was. Staff, I can't remember who, were just sitting  
24 there watching and eventually pulled him off me.

25 'From the day I took his clothes out of the tumble

1 dryer, [this boy] bullied me. It happened on a daily  
2 basis. He did it constantly, at every possible  
3 opportunity. He wouldn't do it in front of the staff.  
4 It went from him saying things when he was passing me in  
5 the corridor to pinning me to the floor, spitting in my  
6 face and threatening to kill me. He hated me and  
7 I hated him. Other children would have been there when  
8 I was getting bullied, but they never stood up for me.  
9 He was the top boy in that home and everyone feared him.  
10 His girlfriend spat in my face sometimes too. I was the  
11 only one that [he] bullied.

12 'At one time, I was lying in my bed sound asleep in  
13 the early hours of the morning. All of a sudden, I felt  
14 a presence and I opened my eyes. The room was dark but  
15 he was so close I could see it was [this boy]. He  
16 pinned me down on to my bed and I let out a scream.  
17 I'm not sure if this spooked him but he just turned and  
18 ran out. For a while I actually thought I may have just  
19 dreamt that this had happened. Two or three nights  
20 later it happened again. It was in the early hours of  
21 the morning when everyone else was asleep. This time he  
22 put a pillow over my head and he battered me. He  
23 punched and slapped me.

24 'I was frightened even in my own room, so I  
25 barricaded my door. This was my way of protecting

1 myself and telling everyone that they weren't coming in  
2 my room. The staff ended up forcing my door off the  
3 hinges to get in. They more or less said that I was  
4 being disruptive. After that, I couldn't even close my  
5 door. I had to just prop it up in the doorway. It was  
6 like that until I left.

7 'There were some nights in Bellshill when the home  
8 would be in chaos. Some of the boys were running about,  
9 going into people's rooms. They were peeing on the  
10 walls and in people's beds.'

11 And reading short, he says:

12 'Staff weren't interested. They told everyone to  
13 stop stealing coffee, jam and sugar. They didn't care  
14 about the children this had happened to. At one time,  
15 I went back into my room and [a different boy] was  
16 peeing on my bed. I couldn't do anything. I couldn't  
17 batter him. I was just a wee boy. He just laughed at  
18 me.

19 'There were times when staff locked me in offices to  
20 stop me from running away. Other times, if I was out my  
21 face on solvents, they would have me pinned to the  
22 floor, spread out, holding my arms and legs. They would  
23 do this for two hours until I came off the solvent.  
24 This was all to stop me from running away. There was  
25 one time when I had some money, so I bought alcohol for

1 me and a few of the other boys. This was the first time  
2 I had drunk alcohol. I was steaming with the drink.  
3 I made my way back to the children's home and I was  
4 lying beside a 6-foot metal fence at the back of the  
5 home. I was too frightened to go in because I was  
6 drunk. A member of staff passed me and he told me to  
7 watch what I was doing and to sober up before I went in.  
8 He never tried to help me. I could hardly walk.

9 'William McGovern was 12, going on 13. He was just  
10 a wee boy but was about the same size as me. We both  
11 supported the same football team and we got on really  
12 well. He became a good friend of mine. I think he was  
13 there as a place of safety to protect him from his  
14 violent father. William had his own anger issues.  
15 William started getting bullied by the majority of other  
16 children in the home. He was getting teased and pushed  
17 and pulled about, but it was mostly verbal. It was all  
18 done in front of staff. They didn't stop it.

19 'William had a key worker, RJU, who had worked  
20 with him in a previous children's home. RJU used to  
21 take William McGovern out for the day. One time William  
22 came back from a day out with RJU and he had money in  
23 his pocket and a new Walkman cassette player. As soon  
24 as the others saw this, the bullying started. They  
25 teased him constantly that he was doing sexual things

1 for RJU and getting special treatment and gifts in  
2 return from him.'

3 And pausing, my Lady, it's perhaps interesting that  
4 children might have -- their minds might have gone to  
5 that possibility.

6 LADY SMITH: Of course, yes.

7 MR SHELDON: At that time and in those circumstances.

8 LADY SMITH: Yes.

9 MR SHELDON: Continuing with paragraph 38:

10 'They laid into him constantly about it. It was  
11 mostly the boys who did it. I saw William getting  
12 bullied and it happened in front of staff. Afterwards,  
13 he was upset, angry and crying. William McGovern later  
14 hung himself and I think it was because of the bullying.

15 'Less than a week after William died, I was sitting  
16 in the TV on my own. [The bullying boy] came in and  
17 shut the door behind him. He asked me why my dad had  
18 been in the home looking for him. I told him I knew  
19 nothing about it, because I didn't. He told me my dad  
20 had been there looking to give him a 'doin'. The staff  
21 had told him, but hadn't said anything to me. [this  
22 boy] picked up a great big heavy glass ashtray and tried  
23 to smash me over the head with it. It smashed into  
24 bits. He grabbed me and pinned me to the floor and he  
25 was battering me. I was wearing a football top and he

1 started burning me on my back and chest with his  
2 cigarette. I managed to get away from him and ran into  
3 my room and I got a knife and stabbed him in the leg.  
4 I had burn marks on my back and chest. I ran away.

5 'I didn't have a life when I was in Bellshill.  
6 I was just surviving. You were waking up in the morning  
7 and you were planning how you were going to survive that  
8 day without taking a beating, without somebody spitting  
9 in your face or whatever. I didn't eat my meals because  
10 people were spitting in my face. They could have been  
11 spitting in my dinner. That was just the way it was.'

12 And he goes on to say more about the death of  
13 William McGovern and says:

14 'I had been at Bellshill probably about four months  
15 when me and William McGovern ran away. We were walking  
16 about Bellshill. When we were ready to go back, William  
17 phoned the police and told them a shop was getting  
18 broken into. We waited until the early hours to phone  
19 because we knew the home wouldn't send us to school the  
20 next day. The police arrived and caught us. We were  
21 taken back to the home.

22 'The next morning, the staff woke us up and told us  
23 we were going to school. We were virtually dragged out  
24 of our beds and made to get ready. We were starving and  
25 didn't get any breakfast. We were then put in a staff

1 car. William was still at school but by that time I was  
2 at Craigneuk Etna Centre which is near Wishaw. Before  
3 we got dropped off, I arranged to meet William McGovern  
4 at midday at a big advertising sign, because we were  
5 going to run away again.

6 'I went to the sign as arranged and waited, but  
7 William didn't appear. I assumed he had changed his  
8 mind. I went to Motherwell, stole some nail varnish and  
9 went solvent-abusing on my own. I went to my brother's  
10 bedsit and slept on a mattress on his floor. The next  
11 morning, I heard on the radio that William McGovern had  
12 hung himself. I headed back to the children's home.  
13 When I got there, Scotland Today was recording and the  
14 police were there. As soon as I went in the building,  
15 I was grabbed and taken into an office. I was  
16 interviewed and they accused me of being there when  
17 William hung himself. I denied it and I think the  
18 police believed me.

19 'After William died, all the staff and all the other  
20 children turned against me and blamed me for William  
21 dying. I was treated like a leper. I spent most of my  
22 time in my room because I wanted to be on my own.  
23 I went into the kitchen and I took a knife out of the  
24 drawer and I hid it in my curtains in my room. I just  
25 knew something bad was going to happen to me, and that

1           was the knife I used to stab [the boy that he had spoken  
2           about earlier].'

3   LADY SMITH: That was the stab in the leg, I think, wasn't  
4           it? Yes.

5   MR SHELDON: Yes, that's right, my Lady.

6           On reporting, he says:

7           'I was sometimes standing beside staff when [this  
8           boy] spat in my face. They did nothing about it.  
9           I told my key worker about some of the stuff that went  
10          on with [this boy]. She said she would have a word with  
11          him about it. I don't know if she did or not, but  
12          things just got worse after that. I never told my key  
13          worker about the time [the boy] had come in my room  
14          through the night and put the pillow on my head and  
15          battered me. I'd lost all confidence in them by that  
16          point. The staff at Bellshill knew what was going on  
17          between me and [him] but they did nothing about it.  
18          I did the right thing and I told them, and told them  
19          that the situation was getting out of order and I needed  
20          help. They said that I wasn't to worry and they would  
21          sort it out, but they never did.

22          'After the time I stabbed [this boy] in the leg,  
23          I ran away and went to my brother's house. I was  
24          an emotional wreck and I was in tears. Everything had  
25          just built up. George from the children's home came to

1 my brother's house. George was a good guy, so I went  
2 back to the home with him. The police were there and  
3 I told them that I had stabbed [the bully]. They didn't  
4 know anything about the stabbing. They found [the boy]  
5 and he had a small cut on the outside of his right  
6 thigh. They asked me why I had stabbed him in the leg.  
7 I told them it was because he was bullying me. The  
8 police weren't interested. The staff also knew and they  
9 let me down. It didn't matter who I told, no one helped  
10 me.

11 'I told Campbell Duke, my social worker, most of  
12 what went on, but again he didn't do anything. He  
13 wasn't interested. He was just my social worker on  
14 paper. He only came to Bellshill when the staff asked  
15 him to. He would never come out of his way to help me  
16 or just to see how I was doing.

17 'No one ever asked me why I was running away. The  
18 staff at Bellshill hated me. After William killed  
19 himself, I became a bit of a recluse. I just wanted to  
20 be by myself. I didn't want any interaction with  
21 anybody. I didn't trust the staff.

22 'Sometimes when I ran away, I cut my arms. I hid it  
23 from the staff. One time, I ended up in hospital, but  
24 no one asked me why I'd done it.'

25 At paragraph 50:

1           'The home managers, I can't remember their names,  
2           had an office. I may have spoken to them twice about  
3           being bullied. They said to me that they knew I was  
4           getting bullied. They knew but, again, they did nothing  
5           about it.

6           'In Bellshill Children's Home the staff basically  
7           were not interested in what went on. The older children  
8           ran the home and got to do what they wanted. In my  
9           opinion, the staff were just there for their wages and  
10          would do anything for an easy life. I was let down by  
11          the care system, and William McGovern was let down by  
12          the care system.

13          'Two days after the incident where I had stabbed  
14          [the boy] in the leg, I left.'

15          And he talks about that and says:

16          'No one said goodbye, wished me well, shook my hand  
17          or said anything.'

18          And he didn't know where he was going, and he ends  
19          up at Newfield Assessment Centre in Paisley.

20   LADY SMITH: Yes.

21   MR SHELDON: And his dates at Newfield seem to be around  
22   ██████████ 1992 to the ██████████, so it's a fairly short stay  
23   there.

24          He's then at St Mary's, Kenmure, and he says,  
25   paragraph 54:

1           'There were boys in there acting like hard men and  
2           they were a lot bigger than me. I just kept out of  
3           their way.'

4           Over the page he says nothing really happened in  
5           there compared to Bellshill. There was no mistreatment.  
6           But although he says in theory he was there on a Place  
7           of Safety Order, he says that there was another  
8           Children's Panel and he was taken there in handcuffs.  
9           And at this panel:

10           'I was told my supervision was continuing and I was  
11           sent to Cardross Assessment Centre.'

12           Taking that briefly, he says he spent five or six  
13           weeks at Cardross, it wasn't secure and he could have  
14           run away at any point:

15           'But for some strange reason, I didn't.'

16           He's then back home with his parents, but says that  
17           within weeks of getting home, it all went 'pear-shaped':

18           'I was getting beatings again from my dad.  
19           I started stealing cars and hanging around with the  
20           wrong crowd and still abusing solvents.'

21           And says he ended up in prison.

22           Paragraph 57, he was in Polmont Young Offenders  
23           Institution when his social worker came and told him he  
24           was no longer under supervision at the age of 16 or 17,  
25           and says he was in and out of prison until he was about

1 21.

2 He did -- yes, he says there was drinking in pubs,  
3 violence and fighting:

4 'If I was out for the night it wasn't a good night  
5 unless there was a fight at the end of it. I was  
6 a really nasty person with drink.'

7 He talks a little bit about his life after care at  
8 paragraph 58, and at paragraph 59 he talks about impact.  
9 He says:

10 'I've cut my wrists and self-harmed a number of  
11 times. When I was 16 or 17, I felt I had nothing to  
12 live for. I took overdoses.'

13 He notes that when he was 17 or 18 and intoxicated  
14 with alcohol, he self-harmed:

15 'I wasn't in a happy place. I'd just got out of  
16 prison. I was going to cut my throat but my pal grabbed  
17 [REDACTED] and I cut my arm. It was all to do with my  
18 state of mind at that time and I think I was cutting  
19 myself because of the violence I was witnessing between  
20 my parents.'

21 He talks at paragraph 62 about seriously considering  
22 suicide when he was 22, but he managed to snap out of  
23 that thought.

24 Paragraph 63:

25 'When William McGovern killed himself, this had

1 a massive impact on me. I blamed myself for years after  
2 he died that I was responsible partly for his death.  
3 I still feel like that now. If I hadn't become his  
4 friend, got him involved in solvent abuse and running  
5 away, he might not have killed himself. I was never  
6 offered any sort of bereavement counselling. I should  
7 have been. For a while I lost all respect for adults,  
8 police, social workers, care workers, courts,  
9 everything. I believed that they all hated me, so  
10 I hated them.'

11 Taking that short:

12 'I don't trust anybody, but I've learned to trust my  
13 partner, my dad and my brother.'

14 65:

15 'I went through periods of drinking and I used  
16 cannabis for a while. There was a time when I was  
17 drinking and I used to get really angry about things.'

18 Reading to page (sic) 66, he says:

19 'Whenever I used to go out, or at a party, I had to  
20 sit somewhere that I could see the door. I had to be  
21 able to see an exit so I could get out quickly if  
22 something happened. I just needed an escape route.  
23 This stems back to when I was at Bellshill. I used to  
24 sit there and wonder how I would get out of there if  
25 something kicked off. I would have to consider every

1 scenario.'

2 And reading to the end of that paragraph:

3 'If I'm in a busy room and there are people there  
4 and I know nothing about them, I feel uncomfortable  
5 because I can't trust them. I just think bad things are  
6 going to happen.'

7 And going to paragraph 68:

8 'The staff at Bellshill knew that I was addicted to  
9 solvents. They never offered me any help for my  
10 addiction. When William McGovern killed himself, I was  
11 really upset and emotional. I needed some help then.  
12 I was never -- it was never offered and the staff never  
13 spoke to me about it. All the staff were interested in  
14 was they wanted me to tell them I was there when Willie  
15 killed himself. Different staff came in and kept asking  
16 me. They kept making me cry. It was torture.

17 'I suffer from anxiety and depression. I have been  
18 on various medications. I've spoken to various  
19 psychiatrists, but nobody could sort the problems out in  
20 my head.'

21 Paragraph 72, on reporting, he says that:

22 'Since I left Bellshill Children's Home, I have  
23 never reported anything that went on to the police or  
24 anybody. I have never opened up and told anyone in  
25 authority what really happened in there. I didn't trust

1 anyone. I hoped to have my say when I went to William  
2 McGovern's inquest when I was 16, but I wasn't asked to  
3 give evidence.'

4 And he talks about records and then onto lessons to  
5 be learned at paragraph 74:

6 'Staff at Bellshill and social workers knew that  
7 I was getting bullied. There is no doubt about that.  
8 They should have done more to help me. If staff know  
9 who is being bullied and who is doing the bullying, they  
10 should be kept separate. I should have been moved away  
11 from the boy who was bullying me.

12 'My biggest hope I have for the Inquiry is that  
13 William McGovern's family get the chance to read my  
14 statement and see what really happened to William.  
15 I just want them to get a bit of closure about his  
16 death. I still visit his grave. I'm still trying to  
17 find his family because I want them to know the truth.  
18 What came out at the death inquest was not the truth.

19 'Children in care homes have to be given some care  
20 and looked after. There was no care in Bellshill.  
21 I know there are a lot of staff who have a lot to answer  
22 for and they might think they have got away with it.  
23 I know deep down they haven't, and I want them to answer  
24 some questions.

25 'If William McGovern hadn't hung himself, I wouldn't

1           have come forward to the Inquiry. I have not come  
2           forward for me. I have come forward for him. I want  
3           the real truth to come out about why he killed himself.  
4           People were saying it was because he was getting  
5           sexually abused. I'm fairly certain he wasn't.  
6           I believe he did it because he was being bullied.

7           'When I was 16, I went to the inquest into the death  
8           of William. I was there for five days. Despite the  
9           fact I was probably the last person to see and speak to  
10          him and who knew him better than most, I never actually  
11          gave evidence. I didn't get the chance to go in and  
12          tell them what really happened. I don't think there was  
13          any sexual activity between him and his key worker.  
14          I think it was because of the bullying. I think they  
15          tried to brush it all under the carpet.'

16          And he then says something about reconciling really  
17          with his father, and his father told him ultimately that  
18          the past was in the past. And 'Rob' has signed the  
19          statement and made the usual declaration, my Lady.

20   LADY SMITH: Thank you.

21   MR SHELDON: And I may say that we will try to, if time  
22          permits, to look at some passages from the determination  
23          in the FAI which --

24   LADY SMITH: You have second-guessed what my next question  
25          was going to be. That would be helpful actually.

1 MR SHELDON: Yes, we have it, my Lady --

2 LADY SMITH: -- yes, thank you very much indeed.

3 MR SHELDON: -- and we'll look at that on Tuesday with

4 organisational witnesses.

5 LADY SMITH: Well, let's stop now for the afternoon break

6 and we're still going to do another read-in, are we? Or

7 are we going to leave it there?

8 MR SHELDON: If we can fit them in, my Lady, there's two

9 more to do and we'll see how far we can get.

10 LADY SMITH: Let's see if we can do that then and just take

11 a breather now.

12 I'm now losing track of whether I've mentioned these

13 names already, maybe not. RFG or RFG.

14 MVN, I have mentioned her before, and

15 PVX. These are individuals whose identities are

16 protected by my General Restriction Order and they're

17 not to be identified as referred to in our evidence

18 outside this room. Thank you.

19 (3.10 pm)

20 (A short break)

21 (3.15 pm)

22 LADY SMITH: Ms Forbes, next one.

23 MS FORBES: My Lady, the next statement is from an applicant

24 who is anonymous and is known as 'Brian'.

25 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

1                                    'Brian' (read in)

2   MS FORBES:  The reference for 'Brian's' statement is

3                    WIT-1-000001238.

4   LADY SMITH:  Thank you.

5   MS FORBES:  My Lady, 'Brian's' statement has been read in

6                    previously on three separate occasions and that was

7                    during Phase 8, Secure Care, and he was read in on

8                    13 December 2023, Day 398.  And the reference for the

9                    transcript is TRN-12-000000030, and that was for

10                   Longriggend and Polmont.  And then he was read in on

11                   12 April 2024, Day 436, and the reference is

12                   TRN-12-000000068, and that was for Kerelaw.  And then he

13                   was also read in on 12 July 2024, Day 462, the reference

14                   is TRN-12-000000095, and that was for Cardross Park.

15   LADY SMITH:  Thank you.

16   MS FORBES:  So because of that, my Lady, I'm not going to

17                   read in --

18   LADY SMITH:  We don't need the personal background to the

19                   same extent.  The basics.

20   MS FORBES:  Yes, I think before and after, because that has

21                   been read in on three separate occasions, my Lady.

22   LADY SMITH:  Yes.

23   MS FORBES:  But 'Brian' does tell us he was born in 1978 and

24                   then talks about his life before going into care.

25                   Essentially, it seems that he was getting into trouble,

1 running away, committing offences with older boys.  
2 Ultimately it led to him being admitted to Carluke  
3 Children's Home and he tells us about that from  
4 paragraph 10.

5 We know from his records, my Lady, he was admitted  
6 there on [REDACTED] 1993, aged 14, and he was only there  
7 for a few weeks. I think 'Brian' thinks he was a little  
8 bit younger and was there for a bit longer, but anyway,  
9 he tells us about that in his statement.

10 If we then go back to -- down to paragraph 15, after  
11 Carluke, he went back home for about a year but he was  
12 still committing crimes. He was then getting lifted by  
13 the police all the time and he was running away, and  
14 there was an emergency panel at Hamilton Sheriff Court,  
15 and he ended up in Bellshill Home. And he says they  
16 didn't say how long he was going for. And he tells us  
17 about that from paragraph 19.

18 We know, my Lady, from his records that he was  
19 admitted there on [REDACTED] 1994, aged 15, and he was  
20 there until [REDACTED] 1994. So he's only there for  
21 a month according to his records, but he thinks he was  
22 a bit younger, he thinks he was 14, and that he was  
23 there for longer, he thinks he was there for four or  
24 five months.

25 But he tells us he'd heard about Bellshill because

1 one of his pals had stayed there and he says that  
2 Bellshill was the same size as Carluke, but worse.

3 At paragraph 21, 'Brian' says:

4 'Heather Hall was in charge and was in the main  
5 office all the time. She was Irish. You had to ask to  
6 go in and see her. You could get a bus fare from her to  
7 go and see your family. That was called "movement".  
8 She'd give you money for fags. I'd kid on I was going  
9 to my mum and dad's and use it as an excuse to go and  
10 break into things with people from the home.'

11 And he then mentions another woman who he names as  
12 a staff member.

13 At paragraph 2 (sic), he tells us that the daily  
14 routine at Bellshill with food and showers was okay. He  
15 names some individuals there who became his friends. He  
16 tells us that he didn't have possessions as such, just  
17 his clothes, and he was allowed to smoke, and that the  
18 staff, he says, would buy you fags.

19 He says that some people went to St John's  
20 List D School as day boys and the contract taxis picked  
21 up the people who were going to school, but he went to  
22 the IT Centre.

23 From paragraph 23, he says:

24 'I had a key worker who was an English woman. We  
25 didn't have the best of relationships because of my

1       cheek. You had to see her to get money, but Heather  
2       Hall was the top one and could overrule my key worker.  
3       Heather Hall did overrule her a couple of times.

4                'If you didn't behave, then you were taken off  
5       movement and not allowed to go home at the weekend. You  
6       were grounded and confined to the home. Your trainers  
7       were taken off you so you couldn't run away. You could  
8       sneak out if you wanted to. You'd not get your pocket  
9       money if you were carrying on, but the staff still gave  
10      you fags.

11              'If you ran away from the home, then the standby  
12      social workers picked you up from the police station.  
13      They'd drive you back. They had a reputation of being  
14      heavy-handed sometimes, but I never experienced any  
15      violence from them. People said standby social workers  
16      knocked fuck out of you. I knew not to push it with  
17      them because I'd heard the stories.

18              'About this time, I started getting heavily into  
19      drugs. We were like-minded people who were bad  
20      influences on each other. One time, we were taking LSD  
21      and we smashed the windows at the home.'

22              He then talks about abuse at Bellshill from  
23      paragraph 27 and says:

24              'I got done with assaulting a member of staff called  
25      John Blair. That was over one morning with my pal [who

1 he names]. The staff were chasing [the boy] all about  
2 the home to get him to go to school in the taxi. That  
3 was a daily occurrence with [him]. He ran in and hid  
4 under my bed. They all came in and were dragging [him]  
5 out. I jumped up and ended up getting restrained by  
6 staff. Three or four staff were restraining both of us.  
7 John Blair was sitting on the base of my spine and he  
8 grabbed my hair. I was on the floor and got a carpet  
9 burn on my head. John Blair was holding my head down by  
10 pulling my hair. He was punching me in the ribs and the  
11 stomach. I was wriggling and trying to get away. I was  
12 lashing out.'

13 And then he mentions the staff member he mentioned  
14 earlier:

15 'INH [REDACTED] was holding my feet.

16 'Two other staff members were trying to restrain  
17 [the boy] at the same time. The restraint came to an  
18 end when the police came. My hands were up my back by  
19 that time. I was charged with assault on John Blair and  
20 smashing the windows in the home. The staff always do  
21 that. They cover it up by saying you assaulted them.  
22 We were exchanging blows, but they were grownups. It  
23 was them who were sitting on top of us. I'd been  
24 running away from the home and they were fed up with me.  
25 It was all about that same time.

1           'I found out John Blair left his job a year later  
2           with a girl who was in the home. She was over 16 and he  
3           never got charged with it. He must have been going with  
4           her in the home. He has kids to her now.

5           'I saw other people being restrained by the staff if  
6           they came in drunk. The restraint usually ended up on  
7           the floor, and people were also restrained on their bed.  
8           I saw it happen five or six times.

9           'When I got done with assaulting John Blair, the  
10          police set about me in the back of the police transit  
11          van. One of the police officers was sitting in the van  
12          with me. I was tucking my shirt in and he told me to  
13          sit at peace. I swore and said I was just tucking in my  
14          t-shirt and he kicked me in the elbow. I fell and he  
15          was on top of me. He punched me in the back of the  
16          neck. It was a two-minute drive to Bellshill Police  
17          Station.

18          'At the police station, the police officer who had  
19          been in the back of the van had my arms twisted round,  
20          facing up and towards my back. The charge bar was chest  
21          height. The sergeant asked me my name and I said "Fred  
22          Flintstone". The police officer who had been in the van  
23          got my head and smashed it off the charge bar. He broke  
24          my tooth and I've had a gap between my teeth ever since.

25          'After I was restrained by staff, they had

1 an emergency panel for me. The social worker said to me  
2 that I had not run away from this place, because they  
3 were taking me to Cardross. I thought Cardross was the  
4 end of the world. I'd never heard of it and I was upset  
5 at getting moved there.'

6 And he says that he didn't have an end in mind and  
7 nobody said how long he was going for.

8 He then tells us about Cardross, which has been read  
9 in previously. That's between paragraphs 34 and 46.  
10 And he was admitted there on [REDACTED] 1994 and he was  
11 only there a matter of weeks, discharged on [REDACTED]  
12 1994.

13 After Cardross, he tells us that he was told he was  
14 going to Kerelaw and he says he was thinking: where's  
15 Kerelaw? He thought that was another unit in Cardross.

16 But then he tells us about going from Cardross to  
17 Kerelaw, and we know that he was admitted straight to  
18 Kerelaw from Cardross in [REDACTED] 1994, and he was there  
19 until [REDACTED] 1994 and he was aged 15, nearly 16, at that  
20 point. And that was read in before, previously, and he  
21 tells us about that between paragraphs 48 and 75 of his  
22 statement.

23 He says then he went back home and he was -- this  
24 was just before his 16th birthday, and he was put into  
25 his mother's custody. And then he tells us about living

1 at home after secure care. He says he was still  
2 stealing and he got caught shoplifting and was remanded  
3 in Longriggend.

4 He then tells us about Longriggend and Polmont  
5 between paragraphs 80 and 87, and again they were read  
6 in previously, as were his 'Life after Care' and his  
7 'Impact'.

8 And if I can go to paragraph 99 now, my Lady, he  
9 says:

10 'I'd like to see the care system changed and I hope  
11 abuse of the children in care stops. I hope people are  
12 vetted more and not left in positions where they can  
13 abuse children.'

14 And then 'Briar' has made the usual declaration and  
15 he's signed his statement and it's dated 18 April 2023.

16 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

17 MS FORBES: My Lady, I think we have time now for the last  
18 read-in by Mr Sheldon.

19 LADY SMITH: Well let's do it, yes. That would fit in  
20 neatly, I think.

21 MR SHELDON: My Lady, this statement is the statement of  
22 'Ross' and his statement reference is WIT-1-000000987.

23 'Ross' (read in)

24 MR SHELDON: 'Ross' was born in 1984, [REDACTED] 1984, and was at  
25 Bellshill, it seems, between [REDACTED] 1996 and

1 [REDACTED] 1996. So one of the -- I think he's the  
2 latest, as it were, of the applicants that we have.

3 LADY SMITH: Yes, thank you. But just about three months or  
4 so.

5 MR SHELDON: Yes.

6 My Lady, 'Ross' is another applicant who clearly had  
7 an extremely difficult and traumatic family and home  
8 life, both before and after leaving care. And the  
9 details of that are complex and I propose to focus  
10 largely on the chapter when he was in Bellshill.

11 But broadly, 'Ross' was brought up initially in  
12 England. The family moved to Scotland, this is  
13 paragraph 4, when he was about 4 or 5. His mother's new  
14 husband, he says, was a nightmare. Taking that short,  
15 he was clearly both physically and sexually abusive.  
16 And things culminated in a serious assault on his  
17 mother, paragraph 9, which left her in a wheelchair for  
18 some time.

19 In [REDACTED] 1996, this is paragraph 11, he says his  
20 mother had a drink problem as she found out that her  
21 husband had been sexually abusing her daughter, and  
22 'Ross' says:

23 'I walked into the bedroom and she had slit her  
24 wrists and taken a massive overdose. I shouted for my  
25 sister to shut the bedroom door to hide it from [his

1 other sister] and called an ambulance. My mum was taken  
2 away in the ambulance and we were taken to Bellshill.'

3 He says, paragraph 12:

4 'We were taken by social services out of the house.  
5 I can't remember if we spent a night somewhere else  
6 first, I just remember being at Bellshill. My mum was  
7 sectioned and all three of us went to the home. I can't  
8 remember the names of social workers and I can't  
9 remember the time of day we went there. We stayed there  
10 for three or four months. I remember being told that  
11 we'd be staying there until my mum was better. I would  
12 have been 12 at this time.'

13 He talks about his first day and being taken into  
14 the office initially, and says at paragraph 13:

15 'I remember thinking, what the hell's happening and  
16 what's going to happen with my mum. They put us there  
17 to keep us all together. We were on the first floor and  
18 the girls were in a room at one side of the landing and  
19 I was at the other end. I saw them regularly. There  
20 were three groups in the children's homes; the boys, the  
21 girls and a mixed group. We were put on a mixed floor,  
22 so I was on the same floor as the girls. They shared  
23 a room and I had a room of my own at the other end of  
24 the landing.'

25 And he goes on to describe the layout, which I think

1 is familiar to us from previous statements.

2 LADY SMITH: Yes.

3 MR SHELDON: He says, paragraph 14:

4 'There were about 20 kids altogether. My little  
5 sister was the youngest there, she was 10. I was 12 and  
6 the oldest was 18. There were more boys than girls. In  
7 our corridor, there were three bedrooms, then an office,  
8 a living room, a dining room and four other bedrooms.  
9 I could go up and see my sisters, but I would need the  
10 permission from a staff member to go into their bedroom.  
11 The staff were on a kind of rota and would do different  
12 shifts, including overnight.

13 'We were wakened up about 6.30 am by someone banging  
14 on the room doors. Our breakfast was sent up from the  
15 canteen to our dining room. We would then get a taxi to  
16 Cumbernauld High School. On finishing school, we would  
17 go back and spend an hour or two in the games room.'

18 Taking that short, he says:

19 'We could go out and play football and things like  
20 that during the day too.'

21 At paragraph 17 he says:

22 'The food was like cheap sausages, cereal and toast.  
23 It was on a budget, but edible. You got things like  
24 Shepherd's pie and fish and chips. It was adequate.  
25 The staff didn't eat with us. I ate what I was given

1 because of how it had been at home. If it was put in  
2 front of me, I would eat it. That was drilled into me.'

3 He gives us a bit more information about the  
4 facilities, noting that you had privacy when you were in  
5 the shower. He says school was okay:

6 'I bunked off once in the afternoon. Staff from the  
7 home called in and found out, so my punishment was  
8 supervised pocket money, which meant they watched every  
9 penny I spent. I wasn't having any educational issues.  
10 I was doing okay. After I left the children's home, my  
11 education went downhill.

12 'We got pocket money on a Friday. The staff would  
13 take some from us for organised activities like ice  
14 skating and swimming, which left about £4.50. You got  
15 a different amount depending on how old you were. There  
16 was a shop round the corner that you could spend it in.  
17 We could go to the football pitch round the corner or  
18 things like that. There was a pool table, table tennis  
19 and a TV. I never read. You could listen to music, but  
20 only down in the games room.'

21 He talks about some other children in the home,  
22 a couple of boys that he got on with, who were a bit  
23 older.

24 He says, paragraph 23, that:

25 'We would go ice skating at the Time Capsule or

1 swimming at the Aquatec. I once got pushed face first  
2 into the barriers ...'

3 He says he knows it was two other boys from the  
4 home:

5 ' ... but I don't know which one.'

6 He talks about visiting their mother in Monklands  
7 Hospital every other week. He said it was horrible. It  
8 was a secure unit and a psychiatric hospital, so every  
9 door was locked:

10 'At that age we weren't really sure why mum was  
11 there and why they were keeping her there. No one  
12 explained it to us.

13 'We had no visitors at Bellshill. We had no family  
14 in Scotland. Social workers would come and see us.  
15 I have no idea of any of their names. We would have  
16 reviews and be told we were staying there a bit longer.  
17 I didn't tell them I was being beaten up or touched by  
18 the member of staff. I thought they would be told about  
19 the assaults by members of staff at the home. I was  
20 told that staff would write reports at the end of the  
21 shift. I would go into the office sometimes and whoever  
22 was there would ask me to give them a minute while they  
23 finished writing their report.

24 'On one occasion, my sister fell on the ice rink at  
25 the Time Capsule. I bent over to help her up and got

1 pushed from behind by [one of these two boys]. As  
2 a result, my sister's skate cut my back and I had to get  
3 butterfly stitches at the first aid room at the  
4 Time Capsule.

5 'I would have bruises and swelling sometimes from  
6 the assaults, black eyes and burst lips, but I didn't  
7 get any medical assistance. I broke my glasses numerous  
8 times. I would tell the staff how it happened. I would  
9 get new glasses, but nothing would be done about it.  
10 The staff would shout at me for breaking them. I can't  
11 remember being ill while I was there.

12 'I didn't run away from the home, but I had to run  
13 outside one night, as I saw [the two boys he's talked  
14 about] coming towards my room and I knew what they were  
15 going to do. I ran out of the fire exit, down the  
16 stairs and into the back garden. I shouted to staff,  
17 but no one came. I eventually went back in myself and  
18 back to my room and they had gone. I didn't tell anyone  
19 about it.

20 'I wet the bed sometimes. I stripped it and put the  
21 bedding into the washing. I didn't tell anyone as  
22 I would get a hiding when I was at home if it happened.  
23 My sister would get me fresh bedding. The staff didn't  
24 know as far as I'm aware. I didn't know how they would  
25 have dealt with it.'

1           In relation to discipline, he says:

2           'You would be grounded on Friday night if you  
3 misbehaved and weren't allowed to go ice skating, even  
4 though it came out of your own pocket money. There were  
5 no physical punishments.'

6           In relation to abuse, he says:

7           'We would play football and I would fight constantly  
8 with the other children from the home. I remember one  
9 day, a staff member was sitting in the living room.  
10 I can't remember who it was. I walked in and he told  
11 these two boys, [one of whom] was 15 and [the other] who  
12 was 14, to get me. Basically these two boys took  
13 a dislike to me. I would fight them constantly. It was  
14 always the two of them. I can't remember their  
15 surnames. The staff would watch a lot as it happened.

16           'One time I was walking up the stairs and the older  
17 one kneed me in the balls really hard in front of  
18 a staff member. I can't remember who it was. I'm not  
19 sure if they called an ambulance for me that night, but  
20 after that, for just over a week, a member of staff told  
21 me to drop my trousers to inspect them. It was meant to  
22 be a sort of medical, but he would touch and feel them.  
23 I don't know his name.'

24           One of the boys, who he did get on with, who was 16,  
25 they -- he says they all had their own rooms at the end

1 of the corridor. He says he's pretty sure which of the  
2 two other boys it was that kneed him and says it was  
3 very sore. There was swelling and bruising:

4 'I think they sent for an ambulance. I hit the  
5 floor and was carried into my bedroom. I think someone  
6 came to see me. It's a bit hazy. I don't think I went  
7 to hospital.'

8 '[The two boys he's mentioned] fought me countless  
9 times. I remember we played football and the two boys  
10 jumped me in front of staff members, who were on the  
11 sidelines. They were punching me and kicking me.  
12 I would be bruised, get black eyes and my glasses were  
13 broken regularly. I wondered why this was happening.  
14 I was the youngest boy there. I felt defenceless. It  
15 was very rarely stopped by staff. I would get shouted  
16 at for breaking my glasses.'

17 And he talks again about the incidents when ice  
18 skating and when he was pushed and cut by his sister's  
19 skate and at the end of paragraph 35 says:

20 'Another time I was pushed into a barrier face  
21 first. The staff kept taking me back every week. There  
22 was no separation.

23 'The fighting happened a couple of times a week. It  
24 started a couple of weeks, maybe a month, after  
25 I arrived at Bellshill. I wasn't aware of it happening

1 to anyone else. You could lock your room door if you  
2 were 14 or above so I wasn't allowed to lock mine. That  
3 was a staff rule. I would wake up some nights with  
4 [these two boys] in my room and they would set about me.  
5 A lot of the staff were aware.'

6 And he didn't feel he could speak to any of his  
7 friends about it -- I beg your pardon, my Lady, I may  
8 have to backtrack.

9 I think, yes, these are members of staff, rather  
10 than other young people, and he names two of them and  
11 says:

12 'I can't remember why, but on one occasion [this  
13 member of staff] took me and my two sisters to his  
14 house. His wife was there. I don't know her name. She  
15 actually gave my little sister a 3D picture of Winnie  
16 the Pooh. She still has it to this day. I don't know  
17 if they had children of their own. It was mid-afternoon  
18 and we went in the minibus from the children's home.  
19 I don't know where he stayed. Sometimes during the  
20 visit, I was left to watch TV and he took my sisters  
21 away somewhere for an hour or two. I thought he was  
22 caring for us, taking us out of the children's home.  
23 Why did he take us there? My sisters have never told me  
24 that anything happened to them, but there's something in  
25 my head. Why would he do that?

1            '[This member of staff] always spoke to us politely.  
2            He never abused me. He was okay, but he did know of the  
3            abuse by [the two other boys]. Most of the staff would  
4            have known about it. I heard a few years after I left  
5            Bellshill that some of the other boys heard about it and  
6            [one of the boys] was beaten up because of it. I don't  
7            know why either of them were at Bellshill. I believe  
8            that [one of these boys] ended up in a secure unit  
9            either just before or just after I left.'

10           He describes the two members of staff that he's  
11           talked about previously and says they were both in their  
12           late 30s or early 40s. She had reddish/blonde hair and  
13           the male member of staff had dark hair and was big  
14           built:

15           'I've no idea if either of them are alive. The  
16           member of staff that sexually abused me had dark hair.  
17           I don't know anything else about him.

18           'My big sister saw me being assaulted by [the two  
19           boys]. I don't believe any of my sisters were abused by  
20           anyone while we were in Bellshill. They weren't aware  
21           of me being abused by the staff member. I never told  
22           them.'

23           On reporting, he says:

24           'I didn't report the physical abuse I suffered at  
25           the children's home because a lot of the staff witnessed

1 it. I thought they would do something about. I was too  
2 scared to speak about the sexual abuse.'

3 And my Lady, he then goes on to talk about life back  
4 at home after his discharge from Bellshill and taking  
5 that short, it's clear that things were extremely  
6 difficult and chaotic. And he ultimately goes to stay  
7 with, I think, cousins of his mother's in Cwmbran in  
8 Wales and that seems to have been a relatively stable  
9 period, my Lady. He talks about that from paragraph 49  
10 to paragraph 51.

11 At paragraph 52, he talks about life after care. He  
12 notes that he was diagnosed with cancer just after his  
13 16th birthday and talks about treatment for that, which  
14 ultimately seems to have been successful.

15 And at paragraph 53, it's perhaps striking that he  
16 says, and apparently during his treatment for cancer,  
17 became qualified in a number of different skills.  
18 Paragraph 53, he learned butchery, he became  
19 a multi-skilled builder, then went back to butchery and  
20 says that he for a time worked in a pub.

21 He talked about his own family life and had  
22 a relationship which broke down, but he says,  
23 paragraph 58:

24 'I have been with my present partner for five  
25 years.'

1           He says, paragraph 59:

2           'I found out about the Inquiry by Googling the  
3           children's home after [his] partner asked me about my  
4           time there. It was the first thing that came up. I  
5           broke down and I'm not really that emotional.

6           I've only ever been back to Scotland twice since  
7           I've been down here. When I was staying with [his, I  
8           think, as it were, his de facto foster carers] they paid  
9           for me to spend a week with my sister when she was still  
10          living up there and I went to Edinburgh with some boys I  
11          used to work with. I've always said to [my partner]  
12          that I need to go to Scotland and bury a few ghosts.  
13          I've got my motorbike test next week. I'm going to do  
14          a tour of Scotland with a couple of mates from a club  
15          I go to and they've said wherever I need to go they will  
16          take me.'

17          He says in relation to impact that he takes  
18          anti-psychotics and has been on anti-depressants on and  
19          off for years. He was diagnosed with PTSD and chronic  
20          depression, which he was told was linked to his mother's  
21          partner and the violence that he experienced in relation  
22          to that -- partners, I should say, and the children's  
23          home. And the social work, he says, 'got me on anger  
24          management courses' after fighting with his mother's  
25          partner, but he says they didn't last.

1 He says, paragraph 62:

2 'I've spoken to doctors. I've had counsellors for  
3 my drinking and drug taking since I was 17 up until  
4 about three years ago. I'm on a waiting list. I was  
5 seeing a clinical psychologist until three years ago,  
6 but it was making me worse. I don't think I was ready.'

7 Paragraph 63, he says:

8 'I've suffered from nightmares for years. I would  
9 fall asleep with the television on after people being in  
10 my room when I was asleep at Bellshill. Even now I fall  
11 asleep with the television on. It does my partner's  
12 head in. She says I'm never far from something that  
13 I could use to hit someone with in my flat. My door is  
14 always locked now.

15 'Until I could control them, I would have panic  
16 attacks if people were behind me or too close, as most  
17 of the attacks at the children's home were from behind  
18 me, or if I didn't like the look of someone, it would be  
19 like my head exploding and having a heart attack at the  
20 same time. I can't breathe. I can't get myself out of  
21 it now. Before that, I was on medication to pre-empt  
22 it.

23 'My education was impacted when we were in the  
24 children's home. You didn't know what was going to  
25 happen, where we were going to go, so when I went to

1 school, I wasn't concentrating.

2 'My family have always said to me not to speak about  
3 life in Scotland. I'd ask my mum why things happened.  
4 My mum wouldn't give me answers, then my sisters would  
5 have a go at me because I'd have upset my mum.

6 'I distanced myself quite a lot from relationships  
7 with people because of the sexual abuse. I've always  
8 had a severe distrust of people, especially men.'

9 And paragraph 68:

10 'I had a distrust of my male supervisors. They say  
11 one thing, but you know they mean something else. I was  
12 in one job that I had to quit because I was being  
13 bullied terribly. I went to the doctor and told him  
14 I feel like that 12-year-old boy again. He said,  
15 "Things can't be that bad. What do you do?" I told him  
16 I was a butcher. He gave me a line for a month. He  
17 could have referred me to a counsellor. Down here, the  
18 waiting list for counselling is over 12 months. I would  
19 take counselling now if I was offered it.'

20 69:

21 'I've never made any official report to the police  
22 in relation to the abuse I suffered at Bellshill. I was  
23 only there a few months and didn't have any contact  
24 after I left.

25 'I have requested my records from North Lanarkshire

1 social services.'

2 And he was told at that time that he would be sent  
3 them and he also says:

4 'I've been accepted by Future Pathways. They're  
5 calling me again next week to go over things that could  
6 improve my life, like counselling and so on.'

7 On lessons to be learned, he says:

8 'My guidance counsellor at school could have done  
9 something or said something. Staff at the children's  
10 home could have done something, raised concerns. I have  
11 made a promise to myself that I won't be anything like  
12 those who abused me. My stepson lives with me. He has  
13 ADHD and suspected autism. He can be hard work.'

14 And reading short, he says:

15 'I would never treat him like I was treated. He was  
16 beaten by his dad, but he realises I'm not going to  
17 treat him like that, so now he has no fear as  
18 a consequence.'

19 Paragraph 72:

20 'I would like to see places like Bellshill shut  
21 down. They need tighter controls in what the staff are  
22 actually doing. There should be regular checks. Staff  
23 need to report things, just like the school needed to  
24 report things.

25 'We shouldn't have been released into my mum and

1 [her later partner's] care when they came out of  
2 the psychiatric hospital. There's neglect from social  
3 services there.'

4 And 'Ross' has made the usual declaration and signed  
5 his statement in 2022, my Lady.

6 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

7 MR SHELDON: And that concludes, I think, the read-ins.

8 LADY SMITH: So that concludes the Bellshill section, does  
9 that?

10 MR SHELDON: I'm sorry, my Lady?

11 LADY SMITH: The Bellshill section of applicants is now  
12 concluded?

13 MR SHELDON: That concludes the Bellshill read-ins, my Lady,  
14 yes. But we have, three -- all being well, three  
15 witnesses in person, two by Webex, tomorrow.

16 LADY SMITH: Tomorrow, yes.

17 MR SHELDON: And then, of course, the organisational witness  
18 on Tuesday morning.

19 LADY SMITH: Tuesday, yes.

20 Good. There are no more names, I don't think, none  
21 that I've spotted. And so I'll rise now until  
22 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Thank you.

23 (3.50 pm)

24 (The Inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am  
25 on Friday, 27 February 2026)

I N D E X

	PAGE
1	
2	
3 'Sarah' (read in) .....	1
4 'Ryan' (read in) .....	35
5 'Jordan' (read in) .....	53
6 'Kal' (read in) .....	85
7 'Jane' (read in) .....	95
8 'Linda' (read in) .....	117
9 'Rob' (read in) .....	142
10 'Brian' (read in) .....	168
11 'Ross' (read in) .....	175
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

