

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

RGH

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is RGH. My date of birth is 1964. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My mother was called and my father was called. I have twelve brothers and sisters. I was the youngest and the older ones are, who passed away before I was born, and. I was a 'blue' baby.
3. I was brought up in in Perth and went to Goodlyburn Primary School. I don't remember much about family life before my mum passed away. My dad was in the army and a cook.
4. My mum passed away when I was six years old and I got put in this children's home at 22 Nimmo Place in Perth. I was there for eleven or twelve years. My brother went there too, but he was three or four years older than me and left when he was thirteen. All the other children in my family were older and not taken to this home. I think it was organised through the social work. I don't think there was any social work involvement before that.

## Tulloch Children's Home, 22 Nimmo Place, Perth

5. GKK and RHR were husband and wife and SNR of the home. There were between twelve and fourteen children and I was there the longest. I continued going to Goodlyburn Primary School, which was not far from the home.

6. It was boys and girls at the home. The boys were at one end and the girls were at another end.

### Routine at

#### *First day*

7. I felt like the social worker just grabbed us and took us away to this home. It looked ok when I first went in, but then I saw a lot of children walking back and forward with their heads down and it did not look right.

8. It was a big white building with a garden at the front and a garden at the back. It was on two levels. The ground floor had a kitchen, a big corridor, a bathroom, a utility room, a livingroom and an office. There was a playroom too. Upstairs were all the bedrooms and another bathroom. I think there were seven or eight bedrooms in total. The girls were separated from the boys. I shared a room with a couple of other boys. The staff slept upstairs too in the middle of all the bedrooms.

9. There was a cook called Christine and GKK and RHR's son RGG helped at the home as well. There was a gardener and a cleaner but I have forgotten their names. There would have been two or three staff members on at the same time. They swapped around every day.

10. I was one of the youngest at the home and you stayed there until you were sixteen.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

11. The staff would shake you in the morning and pull the covers back. You had to hurry up and get ready and if you were too late you wouldn't get your breakfast. You just had to go to school. After school we had to do homework and then we could play in the playroom.
12. We had to be in our beds for six thirty every night. I was in a room with six or seven boys. My brother [REDACTED] was in a room with me. It was lights out and we weren't allowed to talk. The staff would come around and check to make sure you were in your bed. You'd get punished if you weren't. Staff would check on you during the night too. You could go to the toilet, you had to ask permission.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

13. We had a dinner ticket for lunch at school.
14. At the home we always got small portions of food. The food was ok but we were always hungry. I would sometimes try and go into the ladder where the food was, but if they caught you, you would be punished.
15. One time I would not eat my cabbage because I didn't like it and they both forced me to eat it. They battered me under the table when I was trying to hide and wouldn't eat the cabbage. They kicked me under the table and try to get hold of me. There was one at either side. They managed to get me and forced me to eat the cabbage by holding my nose and opening my mouth. One held my head and the other forced it in. I was then put in the corner for four or five hours in the dining room. I had to stand and face the wall. It was just the cabbage I wouldn't eat and they tried to force it down my throat. I can remember this happening once or twice. I did not see this happening to anyone else.

*Washing/bathing*

16. You could have a normal bath if you wanted to and it would be warm water. We lined up for the bath and we got fresh water. There were no issues with that. It was one person at a time.

*Clothing/uniform*

17. We had a wee cupboard at our beds for our clothes. I had a lot of clothes provided by the home. I used to change them all the time. The staff would wash them for us.

*Leisure time*

18. We had toys in the playroom. I had some action men and things like that. My brother [REDACTED] did too. You could not play with other children's toys. You got punished for that. We weren't allowed toys in our room. There was a television but if you were bad you were not allowed to watch it. You could sometimes watch it after tea time.
19. At weekends you were allowed to play out the front or the back. Sometimes they would let you go a bit away from the home but you had to be in at a certain time. Before it was dark. It was maybe only five, ten minutes away you were allowed to go. If you weren't in before it was dark you would get punished.
20. They used to take us swimming to the local swimming pool at Dunkeld Road, but I can't swim so I just used to stay at the shallow end. That was maybe once a week and we would all be taken in a mini bus.
21. Other children went to the cinema, but I just didn't want to go. I would always just stay in the playroom. You had a choice if you wanted to go as a treat.

### *Schooling*

22. The primary school was just along the road so I would walk. I was not very good at school. I got D's and E's. I could not speak to the teachers at school as I knew I would get into trouble at the home.
23. I remember one day I got a report card from school and I didn't hand it in to the home as I knew I would get punished because it was bad. I destroyed it.
24. I got the belt in class at school. It was just for normal things and a belt over the hand only. It was maybe four or five belts and not the same as what happened to me at the home.

### *Healthcare*

25. I remember seeing a dentist when I was at the home. It was just for routine appointments. I don't remember ever visiting a doctor. If you hurt yourself they would get a doctor. If it was a minor cut you would just get a plaster.

### *Religious instruction*

26. We went to a big church every Sunday. Everyone had to go. You had clothes for church that they provided. It was dress trousers, you had to be well suited up for church. They were right into their religion. I just had to go along with it.
27. We had to say prayers at night time before we went to bed. They would watch you. GKK or RHR would also stand up and say prayers at mealtimes and we had to put our hands together.

### *Trips and holidays*

28. We went to a place called Carnoustie once a year at summer time. We stayed there three or four days. It was a big massive house. I don't know who ran it. The staff came with us and we all had to go.
29. There were never any day trips with the home.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

30. You got a birthday cake and maybe a wee toy for your birthday, but that was it. At Christmas time we would get some toys. You got a stocking and a Christmas meal. All the kids were there at Christmas time. No one went home.

### *Personal possessions*

31. We had a wee cupboard at the side of our bed for personal stuff. We got maybe fifty pence a week pocket money and there was a tuck shop to buy sweets.

### *Bed Wetting*

32. I wet the bed one night and I had to lie in the pee all night. I tried changing my sheets but they caught me. I got the belt too for trying to hide it from **GKK** and **RHR**. I had to go to school the next day without a bath and I was smelling of pee. I wasn't allowed to wash. Sometimes **GKK** and **RHR** made me have a cold bath when I wet the bed. They would put soap in my mouth too. I wet the bed quite a lot when I was younger until I was about eight or nine years old. They washed your sheets for you if you wet the bed. Other children would wet the bed too and we would be called 'pee the beds' by the other children.

### *Visitors*

33. I had no visitors and was never allowed home to see my family. I don't know why.

### *Review of care*

34. Our social worker was a man and came a few times to talk to RHR and GKK, but they just went into the wee office. They never spoke with me. I am not sure of his name, but David Scott comes to mind.

### *Family contact*

35. I did not know where any of my family stayed to visit them. I don't know why my dad never came to see me. [REDACTED] was not allowed to come back and visit me.

### *Discipline*

36. Normal discipline is hard to explain because of all the other stuff that went on. They might stop your pocket money or you weren't allowed to use the tuck shop. You would be sent to your bedroom and not allowed to watch television. They could also stop you playing with your toys.

### *Running away*

37. I ran away once and I never did it again as I was punished for it. It was just to the side of the home for one night and I hid in the bushes.

### **Abuse at Tulloch Children's Home, 22 Nimmo Place, Perth**

38. When I describe being punished at this home it was GKK and RHR who punished me. They used to belt me on my bare backside and on the back of my legs. It was with a belt or a cane. It was both of them that would do this and they were both there when it happened. One would watch and the other would hit you. It could be for anything. I don't know what I did wrong. It felt like it was just a punishment for the fun of it most of the time. I was just a child. I don't think I did anything wrong.

39. My brother got the same treatment when he was there. All of the kids did. It was every day. I don't know if it happened to the girls. They never said much and were at the other end of the home.
40. Either GKK or RHR used to grab me in the privates as well when the other one was hitting me. They would take you into the wee office for the punishments. That's where you would get the belt and the cane. It was the two of them that did it. You would be red and sore afterwards.
41. I also used to have to stand in a corner facing the wall for four or five hours at a time. Other folk were just watching television.
42. One of the times that I was refusing to eat cabbage was when my brother [REDACTED] got thrown out of the home. I don't remember all of this, but he has told me RGG, GKK and RHR's son, was hitting me under a table and he threw a knife at him. It hit a rocking horse but he got thrown out for that behaviour. I am not sure if it was that day or a few days after he was taken away. He went to live with a foster family. Things got worse for me then. I was about eight or nine when [REDACTED] left.
43. I got battered outside the home one time as well. The neighbours across the road saw it and were shouting and bawling at GKK and RHR to stop. They were punching and kicking me and pulling my hair. It did not stop them that the neighbours were shouting at them. I don't know if the other staff knew what was happening. If they did they kept it to themselves.
44. If you used bad language or spoke back to GKK and RHR when you were getting a beating they used soap in your mouth and gave you a cold bath. You would get this if you were late coming home from being out as well. It was all different things they would do it for. It was usually RHR that would put you in a cold bath.

## **Leaving Tulloch Children's Home, 22 Nimmo Place, Perth**

45. When I turned sixteen I just said I was joining the army and I went straight into the army from the home.

### **Life after being in care**

46. I was in the Black Watch Regiment for a year and a half and then I got in contact with my dad and went to stay with him. [REDACTED] was there and they were still in [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I was with my dad for eight years and then he passed away.
47. I worked on building sites and harvesting potatoes. I met a girl and we had a son called [REDACTED]. She left me and I met another partner called [REDACTED]. We are now separated and have two children together, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. We were together for twelve years. I still have contact with [REDACTED] as well.
48. I have been fitting under floor heating for twenty years now, but I have been off for the last two years with depression. When I was with [REDACTED] she went into hospital with Coronavirus and I thought she was going to die and our children would be put into a home.
49. I had told [REDACTED] bits of what had happened to me in the home, but only after I had had alcohol. [REDACTED] being in hospital just triggered what happened to my mum for me.

### **Impact**

50. When [REDACTED] was in hospital I just had a funny feeling she wouldn't pull through and it reminded me of what happened to my mum. I did not want our babies to go in a home like I did.

51. A lot of the time I just sit in my bedroom. I make sure my children have plenty of food and if they leave it I just tell them to put it in the bin. I never give them into trouble. I wait until they have had enough food and then I eat the scraps.
52. People know that there is something the matter with me now. They can just see it. Before [REDACTED] went into hospital I was ok. That triggered everything that happened to me as a boy.
53. I don't discipline my children. I do shout at them but I have never hit them. They just get shouted at. I don't want to repeat what happened to me.
54. I am on high medication for depression and I find it hard to sleep. I get up at three in the morning and just sit and look at the walls.
55. I just have to live with this for the rest of my life.

#### **Treatment/support**

56. I want to go for help but I have not been offered any. I have just been given more medication and I am getting worse. I am hoping to get some counselling soon.

#### **Reporting of Abuse**

57. I never told anyone of the abuse I suffered at Tulloch Children's home. I was too scared I would get more beatings. The school never noticed what was going on.

#### **Records**

58. I have never seen any records of my time in care and I don't even know if they would have any. I have applied for the redress scheme and I know they have my records.

They told me they only managed to get seven years of records and five years are missing. There is nothing about any abuse in them.

**Lessons to be learned**

- 59. I don't believe what happened to me in the home when I was child should have been allowed to happen. There was no one there to help me. There should have been someone there to check up on me. Now GKK and RHR are dead and they have gotten away with it. I don't want any other children to have to go through what I went through. It should have been reported to the police, but it never was. They would have believed them before me if I told the police anyway.

**Other information**

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

Signed. RGH .....

Dated. 27/9/22 .....