

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

[REDACTED]
BHE

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is [REDACTED] BHE. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1970. I am 47 years old. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Background

2. I understand that my mother spent some time in a mental health institution in [REDACTED] Edinburgh. She met another inpatient while she was in there and became pregnant with me. I believe that I was born into a family in Edinburgh, but my father walked out on us. I have this information from having obtained records as an adult, and also from talking to people.
3. I had two brothers and a sister who were around when I was born. The eldest was my brother [REDACTED], and then it was my sister, [REDACTED], then [REDACTED]. I was the youngest. I believe they were with my mum when I was born, but they were sporadically taken in and out of care.
4. I also have two half-brothers called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. They are older than all of us. I also have a younger sister called [REDACTED] who I only traced a couple of years ago. [REDACTED] had a different father from me, and she was adopted at birth.

Life before going into care

5. I was in and out of care in the first eighteen months of my life, before I was taken into care properly. I was taken to a place called St Helen's in Corstorphine, Edinburgh. I think it was a place for infants.
6. I don't know if any of my other siblings were there with me. I don't remember anything about the home because I was very young, but the name of it has always been in my head. Reading my files has also confirmed that I was in there.
7. I think I was four or five years old when I left there and went to Clerwood Children's home in Corstorphine, Edinburgh.

Clerwood House Children's Home, Edinburgh

8. It was a big house with very large grounds and a wooded area. There was a paddock with a donkey, who slept in an old, red railway carriage. There was also a tree with a rope swing.
9. When you came up the main drive, you saw the home, which was a big house. There was an old air raid shelter and bathroom in the main house. There was a courtyard area to the left of the house, further up the driveway. There were a couple of cottages for staff in the courtyard, as well as the sewing room and washroom. On the other side of the courtyard, there was a big coal bunker and a boiler room.
10. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in there with me. I clearly remember [REDACTED] being in there with me. I have read that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in there, but I don't have much recollection of them in there. I don't know if we went in together, but we ended up together. I think there were about ten or fifteen children in the home. Maybe there were more. There were girls and boys there. There was a girl called [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and her brother, [REDACTED].

11. I remember being taken down to Balgreen Nursery School in Corstorphine, Edinburgh.

Staff

12. A man called Gordon Knott was in charge of the home. There was also a man called Brian MacLennan, and a man called BFW [REDACTED] who was quite sadistic. I don't know who was in overall charge.
13. There was a woman who was quite sadistic and abusive, but I don't have any first hand memories of that.
14. I think Brian and Gordon were normal care workers or residential care workers. I can't remember what their positions were within the home, or if they were in charge. I know now from reading articles and other sources of information, that Brian had returned from Australia with absolutely no social work experience whatsoever, and fell into this job. Looking back, this is totally wrong.

Daily routine

15. When we woke up in the morning, our clothes would be sorted for that day. We would get dressed and go downstairs for breakfast. After breakfast, we went to school.
16. When I was old enough to go to school, we walked to school in the morning. Everybody in the home went to the primary school at the end of the drive. We would be walked there by a member of staff and also walked back. I was later moved to a special education school in [REDACTED].
17. After school, we would have some time before we had supper. I don't remember if we had much time after supper, before we went to bed. I remember there being a television but I don't know where. Sometimes you'd be watching that and you wouldn't want to go to bed.

18. I don't know if there was any one person in charge of bed times. There used to be four or five of us in a bedroom and sometimes less. We got moved around a lot though.

Leisure time and activities

19. We used to play in the woods because it was woody around the home. Edinburgh Zoo either backed on to the home, or it was very close. I remember being five or six years old and trying to sneak in to the zoo.
20. At weekends, when we weren't at school, there used to be a lot of horsing around with Brian and Gordon. They would wrestle us. That would happen up in the coal bunker and boiling room area. They would also make us wrestle with each other.
21. Christmas was celebrated because we used to get someone come in dressed as Father Christmas. I think he was from the local rotary club. I can't remember if birthdays were celebrated.

Trips and visits

22. The only time visits could have taken place was at the weekend because we were at school during the week. I have one recollection of my mum coming to see me with some man, who I later read in my notes, was my father. I was given a big yellow toy tractor. That is the only memory I have of my parents coming to see me.
23. We used to walk down to the nearby village sometimes. I can't remember being taken on holiday. I have one memory of staying at a female member of staff's house, with her parents, over the Christmas period. I don't know if that is a made up memory.
24. I remember one day there were people panting outside the house. One of the scaffoldings had fallen or collapsed and it had killed one of the painters. When we got back from school, we were ushered past and into a room and kept in there.

Discipline and punishment

25. I remember getting the cane when I was at school for running away with [REDACTED] and spending our dinner money.
26. I don't have much memory of discipline in the home. BFW [REDACTED] used to mix your food together in a big, white, enamel dish that had a blue rim. Then he would force you to eat it. This happened on a regular occasion to different people, including my brothers and myself. He would do this if you didn't finish your food. He would mix your food with your dessert and add other condiments, then tell you to eat it. This could be a mixture of your main meal, dessert, soup, ketchup, brown sauce, salt, sugar or whatever. He would stand over you and intimidate you. You would not be allowed to leave until you finished it. This happened to someone at least twice a week.
27. Most of us, at one stage or another, wet the bed. We would be told to strip the bed. Occasionally, Brian, Gordon or this other woman would put a nappy on you. You'd then be paraded around in the home. I don't know if we were paraded around to be humiliated, but I remember feeling humiliated. You don't want to wear a nappy when you're five, six or seven years old.
28. We were not allowed to go to the air raid shelter under any circumstances. I always heard that if you did, you got a healthy spank or smack. I do remember being taken in there once.

Healthcare

29. I remember breaking my arm. We were horsing about and I fell off a ledge and burst my arm. I was taken to hospital where I was operated on and my arm was put in plaster cast. I was kept in hospital for a wee bit.

Visits and Inspections

30. I can never remember anybody coming in to inspect the home. I don't know how the staff were vetted, or even if they were vetted. I don't know that there was any continuing checks or training for the staff.
31. Nobody ever took me aside to ask if everything was ok. You were just dumped there and left.

Abuse at Clerwood Children's Home

32. BFW was sadistic. He didn't physically abuse you, but if you didn't eat your dinner, you would be forced to eat it. He would say horrible things about your family and how you didn't have one.
33. I remember being sexually abused. The abuse took place in the boiler room area and it happened too many times to count. It also took place in the air raid shelter various times. A lot of abuse took place in the little bath room, which was either on the top level or near the top level. You had to go upstairs and double back to get to that bathroom.
34. I can't recollect the exact first time that I was sexually abused, but I remember quite a bit about the abuse. I can remember bits of separate incidents, some of which I can only remember because there was a court case and from what the police told me.
35. I remember being taken up to the boiler room area with Brian or Gordon, or both of them together, with some of the other kids, under the pretence of wrestling. Gordon or Brian would force you to strip down to your y-fronts, or until you were completely naked. You'd be told that you were taking part in wrestling. It would start of as general horseplay. I remember Gordon and Brian at various times touching us in

inappropriate places in the pretence of wrestling. They would touch you around your testicles and penis. It had nothing to do with wrestling.

36. The pretence of wrestling scenario happened too many times to count. I remember my brother, [REDACTED], going through it with me a couple of times. I know he went through it because we've spoken about it since. I recall being on my own a couple of times, but I don't know if that's my memory or from someone telling me it happened
37. I remember being taken to the air raid shelter by either Brian or Gordon. It was dark and damp in there. It was really dank. I know something happened in there but I don't know what. I don't know if I am supressing what happened but it wasn't nice. It is not a comfortable thought to remember.
38. I remember being taken to the bathroom. I can't remember if it was on the top floor or the floor second from the top. I am fairly sure it was the top floor. It was at the top of the stairs and you had to double back on the landing to get to it. I don't recall using the bathroom myself as a child apart from when I was taken in there. I recall being taken in there by both Brian and Gordon. I don't remember them taking me into the bathroom together. I don't remember what happened in there with Gordon, but I remember exactly what happened with Brian.
39. As soon as the bathroom door was shut, Brian wouldn't hide what he was going to do. He'd abuse me. There was no pretence of trying to take you in there for a bath or anything. It was open season to him. He'd ask you to take your clothes or pyjamas off. He would be naked or would drop his trousers. He'd ask me to masturbate myself or he'd masturbate me. He'd finger me. He'd masturbate over me or ask me to masturbate or suck him. All of these things did not happen on every occasion. On other occasions, he'd masturbate and ask me to masturbate. I remember going in once and he asked me to masturbate him and I didn't know what he meant. He showed me or indicated what he wanted me to do. After the abuse, he'd open the door and take you back to whatever you were doing, or back to bed.

40. It seemed like I was taken into the bathroom a lot of times, but I don't know if that was once a week, fortnight or month. It was happening over the same period of time that I was being taken into the boiler room for wrestling. I don't recall being taken to the bathroom with anyone else. I don't remember when it started. I just remember the abuse. I don't recall seeing other boys being taken into the bathroom.
41. I remember being fascinated by Gordon Knott's motorcycle, and touching the exhaust after the engine had been switched off, and burning my fingers. I remember him taking me up and down the drive on his motorcycle. I was sitting in front of him and he was pushed right up against me, which looking back doesn't seem right. I know it wasn't right.
42. I didn't tell anybody about the abuse while I was in care or when I was growing up. At that age I realised what was happening was wrong but it was all I knew.

Leaving Clerwood

43. I was six or seven years old when I left Clerwood. I think it was winter because I remember being in the field and trying to build an igloo. I saw a van coming up the drive. I went back into the house and I remember people saying good bye. I remember getting into the van to leave with a man called Sandy. I was taken to Barnardo's on South Oswald Road in Edinburgh.

Barnardo's - South Oswald Road, Edinburgh

44. Sandy was in charge of Barnardo's home. I felt very comfortable and safe at Barnardo's. It was strange being somewhere where the abuse didn't happen. I think I was there from the age of seven until I was thirteen or fourteen years old. My siblings didn't come with me to Barnardo's. I know from my file that moving [REDACTED] with me had been considered, but it was thought that both of us together would be too much of a handful.

45. I had my own single room in Barnardo's. I have read in my file that there was an occasion when a female member of staff was reading me a book at bed time and I acted inappropriately. She said that she was finishing the reading and not continuing. I asked her why and she told me because what I had done wasn't very nice. The social worker has also written in my file that the key worker later asked me about the incident and I had said: "that's just what the [REDACTED] do."
46. I remember the female member of staff reading the book, 'Flat Stanley,' to me as I was lying in bed. I had a black and white panda cuddly toy, which had been ripped. A sewing lady had sewn a felt green patch on it that looked like underwear, which was quite funny. I can't remember what I had done that was inappropriate. It must have been something sexual because of the abuse. Nobody investigated why I had said that it was what [REDACTED] do. There are a lot of things in my file that could have been picked up as clues.
47. I continued to go to [REDACTED] School while I was in Barnardo's. A boy called [REDACTED] shared a room with me for a couple of nights because he also went to [REDACTED] School.
48. I used to have contact with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], who were in other care homes, but that slowly fizzled out. [REDACTED] was in a family group home for a while, near to Howden Hall Assessment Centre in Edinburgh.
49. Barnardo's was the most stable place I had been while I was being brought up in care. It was the place where I felt most comfortable. Towards the end of my time in Barnardo's, I was put into a residential school in Peebles, called Craigerne.

Barnardo's - Craigerne, Peebles

50. Craigerne was basically a boarding school. I felt very comfortable in Craigerne. The housemaster, who was in charge, had an office on the ground floor. He had boxes

and boxes of toy cars in his office. His door was always open so you could go in a play whenever you wanted to, even if he wasn't there.

51. They used to let off fireworks on fireworks night and we'd be told to go and find them the next day. We would then be given a smartie sweet for every one we found. That was a ritual every year, which was very good.
52. There was a massive woodworking shop in the converted garage attached to the house. The housemaster would take us in there to make things. It was always with other people so there was nothing fishy about it.
53. They used to have something that was called the 'Ride Out' where they would ride the boundary of Peebles on horseback. I felt more comfortable and relaxed around animals than I did around people. There was a member of staff called Bob Soboneiska, or something like that, who lived in a flat within the main grounds of the Barnardo's Craigerne School. He had a couple of horses in the field. He would let us ride them every so often. There was also a teacher called Claire Trunda who had a cottage and small holdings just outside Peebles with a lot of horses. She would pick me up at weekends and take me riding.
54. One time there was a weeklong activities week and each member of staff was in charge of one or two children for the whole week. You would stay with them for the week at their house, and they would take you to do activities, such as canoeing. On one occasion we covered a fair length of the River Tweed and ended up camping out. We'd taken camping stuff in the canoe with us.
55. I did a lot of outdoorsy stuff with the school like cycling and horse riding. I felt really comfortable at Barnardo's.

Befriending

56. I was also part of a thing they called 'befriending' while I was at Barnardo's, which they arranged. I specifically remember a husband and wife couple who lived in

Musselburgh. They worked at the really snobby school out there, which I think was called Loretto School. The woman ran the tuck shop at the school and I don't know what the man did. They lived near the racecourse in Musselburgh. I would spend the whole day with them, at their house, every other weekend. I don't remember if they had their own children and I don't remember if I ever spent the night. I went by myself and it was absolutely brilliant. That lasted a couple of years, if that. It was a good experience.

57. I then had another set of befriending foster parents. I think they were a man called [REDACTED] and his wife, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had worked at the Barnardo's Home, and was maybe still working there. They had a German shepherd dog called Shane who I immediately took to. We used to go out to places like Peebles for a day out with the dog. We'd walk around and see things, and we went to a place called Gino's for ice cream.
58. There was a Barnardo's fostering or adoption type thing in Glasgow, just off Byres Road, where the market was. There was a social worker there called Eilidh Grain, I think, who arranged for me to go on radio. It was a publicity thing about adoption for Barnardo's on Radio Clyde. I think Steve O'Donnell was the presenter, and he interviewed me on the radio about how I was looking for a foster family. A large part of me wanted a foster family, but a small, niggly part of me thought that I didn't want one because I had a family somewhere. I went along with it though, because being on the radio was a big thing back then.
59. Towards the end of my time at Barnardo's, I had behavioural problems. Looking back, they probably stemmed from the abuse. I would act out. It was just silly things with other kids. I was getting quite strong and the staff reckoned I was getting too physical for them. I was sent to stay at an assessment centre in Edinburgh at Howden Hall. It was like a borstal, which was locked down. They kept telling me I was only there to attend the school.

Howden Hall Assessment Centre, Secure Unit, Edinburgh

60. I was in the assessment centre when I was roughly between the ages of twelve and fourteen. Everything was locked down. In the morning, your room door would be unlocked. The room had a bed, chair and a set of drawers. The windows were all break proof glass.
61. My brother, [REDACTED], had been in there, but he had been moved to the actual house which was in the same grounds. There was also an open section, but I can't remember the name of the house he was moved to.
62. Barnardo's still kept a connection with the assessment centre, and there was still a room and bed for me at Barnardo's. I would still sometimes go back there at weekends, but not too often.

Dr Guthrie's List D School, Liberton, Edinburgh

63. After the assessment centre, I went to a school called Dr Guthrie's, which was at the top end of Liberton in Edinburgh. This was a List D school that I stayed in. It was an approved school. It was approved by everyone else but me. I was there for about a couple of years from the age of fourteen.
64. My experience there was hellish. I was brought up knowing there were consequences if you did something wrong. I didn't like the consequences so I didn't really go down that route, but I was put in a school with people who did wrong things. I stuck out like a sore thumb and felt really uncomfortable.
65. In the mornings, we were woken up, got showered, dressed and went downstairs for breakfast. Breakfast was normally cereal, toast and a drink of some sort. The food wasn't good, but that's just institutional food.

66. We had lessons during the day, including maths and English. I remember really enjoying art although I wasn't any good at it. I also loved woodwork, which I was good at. We also done motor mechanics on the side, but it wasn't part of the curriculum.
67. They had two trial motorcycles and I remember there being a track that we could take the motorcycles around on, which was on the edge of the football pitch. I enjoyed that.

Bedtimes

68. There were two dormitories with fifteen people in each dormitory. Bedtime was about 9 or 10 pm. The lights would be switched off fifteen or twenty minutes later. A staff member would come in, make sure everybody was in bed, put the lights out and leave.
69. There were fights between the boys every single night and I would be cowering in my bed. Sometimes I would get dragged into them and sometimes I wouldn't. At other times, I would face the brunt of it. I just really wasn't interested in fighting. I don't know if the staff just didn't care or whether they didn't know.
70. One day, a boy pushed me too far as I came out of the dining room. I punched him and knocked him out. I carried on to class. Nobody spoke to me about it or asked why I did it. I wasn't bullied again after that.

Staff

71. There was a member of staff there who we called "Mr BFX," because he had massive hands and when he hit you, you knew about it. He hit me a couple of times but I can't remember the reason.
72. There must have been some form of discipline but I can't remember what. The staff didn't generally hit the boys because they weren't allowed to. I was treated alright by

the staff. I had started smoking by then. Anybody who smoked had to get consent from their parents, but I was still in the care of Barnardo's who wouldn't give their consent. This meant that I wasn't allowed to smoke in the school, but every so often the staff would call me into the smoke room and give me a couple of cigarettes, which was nice.

Trips and visits

73. I was still under the overarching care of Barnardo's, but I don't recall spending a lot of time there. I still had a Barnardo's social worker called Mary Pacey, who had a little spaniel dog called Coo. I remember spending time with her and going out for chips and coke. We would drive around and talk. I remember driving out to Peebles with her too. It had been hard for me to leave Craigerne, so Mary would occasionally take me there so I could have a look around. I never went in.
74. I think I would have spoken to Mary about what was going on at Dr Guthrie's school. I don't recall telling her about specifics, but I must have told her at some point. I remember reading in my Barnardo's file that I was really unhappy there and couldn't understand why I was there, because I wasn't like them. They were boys who had come through the assessment centre and who would likely be in prison now.

Leaving Dr Guthrie's List D School

75. I think my time under Barnardo's care stopped when I left Dr Guthrie's List D School. I don't know the exact date, but I remember there was a ritual when you left. You would have a massive blanchmange fight outside when you were leaving the home. Even the staff would get involved. This happened outside Barnardo's after I left Dr Guthrie's. This clearly marks the day I left the care of Barnardo's.
76. I must have still been of school age when I left because I managed to persuade them to send me to Boroughmuir High School in Edinburgh. This was a normal, mainstream school. I went to stay with a foster family.

Foster care

77. During the time I was at Boroughmuir High School, I lived with what you would probably call community carers. I lived as part of their family but they were paid for it. For want of a better phrase, I suppose you could say they were like foster parents. They were Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] and they had two daughters. I lived in Dalkeith with them and joined the local cadet force in Dalkeith.
78. I had another foster family after that and I lived in the Oxcgangs area of Edinburgh with them. They were Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]. I think the dad's name was [REDACTED]. They had three sons of their own. I shared a bedroom with their oldest son, who also went to Boroughmuir High School. The younger two boys were still in primary school. I went to school every day and to all my classes, and did everything I could. When I went to sit my O'Level English exam, I threw up when I went into the room and had to leave. I then didn't bother going in for any of my other exams.
79. I transferred from the Cadets in Dalkeith to the TA Centre near Redford Barracks, in Oxcgangs. I also started going to the local church in Oxcgangs, and had made lots of friends. They used to run a disco at the local church hall on a Saturday night. We, as a group used to run these nights. We had music decks, lighting and a non-alcoholic bar. We would charge people to come in and we were making money from it. There were a few occasions when I went home with a few hundred pounds.
80. One night the foster parents said I wasn't allowed to go out, for no reason. I kicked off and went anyway. I got back about midnight and let myself in. The mother and father started mouthing off at me asking where I'd been and saying that they'd been worried about me. They said they were just about to phone the police and had to call social services to say I'd run off. I told them that they knew where I was because it was the same place I went every week. Things went downhill after that.
81. Things were okay in general terms from day to day, but when they kicked off it was really bad. This could be over anything. One time I swore at my foster parents and

walked out. I had a friend [REDACTED] at that time from school and church. I used to speak to her, but she didn't really understand.

Social work

82. I had a social worker during this period. It was a lady who I think was called Helen Henderson. I would meet up with her, but I wouldn't really tell her things. I remember nagging Helen for months for a new bicycle, because I had heard that you could get a leaving care grant. Eventually I was taken to the shops and I picked one out. About a week later she brought it round for me. I had a photograph of me with Helen and my new bike. This was while I was in Dalkeith.
83. I still saw Mary Pacey occasionally but I don't think it was legitimately within Barnardo's and social work care. I think she just felt a duty to provide after care for me.

Residential Home in Wester Hailes, Edinburgh

84. After Dalkeith, I went to a home in Wester Hailes in Edinburgh. I don't know how old I was. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Dean House Children's Home, Edinburgh

85. After Wester Hailes, I stayed in Dean Village, in Edinburgh. It was called Dean House and Brian MacLennan was in charge of it. I walked through the door and saw him. It was weird. I recognised him from Clerwood Home and hated him straight away.

86. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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88.

89.

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91. I was maybe at Dean House for two years, but I really don't remember. It was the last place I stayed in, but I don't remember leaving.

Life after care

92. After care, I stayed in different bedsits and housing. I was between sixteen and eighteen years old. I'd occasionally go back to see Mary at Barnardo's. They had set up an after care club, which they had plugged me into. I would go to that every week. We'd drink tea and talk about any problems that they could help with. I didn't talk about the abuse but they'd help with housing issues and things like that.
93. I joined the army when I was about eighteen. I joined the [REDACTED] Army Medical Core, so I started off in the Territorial Army in Tollcross, Edinburgh. I was in the army for about four years.
94. When I left the army, I messed about for a while. Then I got married, settled down in England and had kids. I became a father for the first time in 1995, when I was 25 years old, then again in 1998. I have two daughters.
95. I had lost contact with my siblings, but I bumped into [REDACTED] in a pub in Soho. We re-established contact for a while but then it fizzled out.
96. The police contacted me in 1996 or 1997 about the abuse. My contact with them lasted a few months. I gave them my statement and they also came to my house. The police investigation resulted in court action against Brian MacLennan, Gordon Knott and Michael Cull. I had a friend called [REDACTED] who I went to school and church with, during the time I lived in Oxfords. She went on to become a social worker and we spoke regularly over the period of the court case.
97. I had not had contact with my siblings for years, but after the police contacted me, I decided to get in touch with them. The police gave me [REDACTED]'s address so I went to his house. He was no longer there and I was told he moved to Ireland. I later found [REDACTED] via Facebook, and then also found my other siblings.
98. I am still in contact with [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I had contact with [REDACTED] for a while, but I am no longer in contact with her.

99. I had no contact with my parents after leaving care. I remember turning up at my mother's door with [REDACTED] once, while we were still in care. She was not happy. She ended up marrying a man called [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] who had an adult son in the cadets. He and I didn't like the fact that our parents were getting married so we would give each other dirty looks. This was when I was still young. I am told my mother died in about 1994 of a heart attack. I have no idea about my dad or where he is.
100. After the army, I found it difficult to find regular work. I worked sporadically in bars, as a doorman. I even worked as a trouble shooter for [REDACTED] for a while. I worked as a door supervisor for a private members club for about six years, until I had a stroke in 2012. I have not been able to work since 2012.
101. I have committed two crimes in my life, which were theft and I have been to court for them. I didn't like the consequences of offending. I didn't like going to court and being on probation.

Police and court proceedings

102. I didn't tell anybody about my abuse in Clerwood House until Lothian and Borders Police phoned me out of the blue. My daughter was about eighteen months old at the time so it must have been in 1996 or 1997. They also called me at home and at work a couple of times. They asked me what I remembered about my time in Clerwood House, and I said Gordon Knott and Brian MacLennan. They asked exactly what I remembered and it all came out. I can't remember if I told them immediately about the abuse, but I mentioned being made to wrestle whilst naked at first. They obviously found that worth investigating.
103. I met the police a few times, then the Procurator Fiscal came down to see me at Victoria Police Station in London. He told me that the police investigation was resulting in court proceedings against Gordon Knott and Brian MacLennan, as well

as Michael Cull. I was going to be called as a witness. There was also a woman, but she didn't go on trial.

104. I gave evidence at Edinburgh High Court in 1996 or 1997. It was a very difficult process. Gordon, Brian and Michael were on trial. Brian and Gordon were found guilty, but I think the verdict against Michael Cull was a not proven one. Michael Cull had tried to commit suicide during the trial. I don't remember any police follow up after the trial.
105. [BFW] was reported to the police and they didn't take any action, as far as I'm aware. My brother told me that he is quite high up in social services now, in England somewhere. I think that is quite disgusting because he shouldn't be anywhere near kids. I feel let down by the police as far as investigating [BFW] goes. He may not have physically abused us, but he mentally and psychologically abused us. I want him to be investigated properly by the police.
106. After the court case, I asked my solicitor if we could sue the local authority for the abuse. I wanted to go for Brian but he had nothing. The original lawyer bumbled proceedings so I went with another lawyer, who I also think messed it up. I wanted a written apology or to sue them. I got six thousand pounds from the original criminal court case, which was like a slap in the face. The local authority decided to settle at between £34,000 and £36,000. I don't really know which action was which, but I got £40,000 in total. I don't think that was enough for them to learn a lesson. They let the abuse happen.

Impact

107. The abuse started when I was in Clerwood and that's when I was made to move school. I think, looking back, the abuse was the reason I started acting out in school and had to be moved. It was my way of coping. I believe the abuse affected my education because I left care with no qualifications. This made it difficult for me to find regular work after I left the army.

108. I started to self-harm a couple of months after I left care. It only really stopped a couple of years ago. I have not really had help about this.
109. I have always had trouble watching anything on television or even in films where there is any indication of abusive behaviour against children. I obviously remembered that something had happened, but I had pushed it so far back in my mind, and then every so often I would get a tug. It sometimes hits me hard when I see or read something about abuse.
110. When the police contacted me, the memories all came back. I had always thought that the abused becomes the abuser, and that scared me because I had a young child. I was a house husband and looked after my eighteen month old daughter at the time. I was so self-conscious when I was looking after her. I felt awkward changing her and taking her to playgroup. Most of the people there were mums and I was a novelty. I didn't know if my wife trusted me with my daughter.
111. I had always been a bit sulky and mopey, but I got depression after the police contacted me. I still have it and it sometimes hits me like a freight train. I think this is due to the abuse, and discussing it during police and court proceedings. It just popped its ugly head up. My self-harm became much worse after the police got in touch too. I would [REDACTED] and end up in hospital with infections. I had to get plastic surgery [REDACTED].
112. I have never been physical with my children, but I can shoot my mouth off. When the police got in touch, I didn't know who I was anymore. I already had some problems, but it got worse. It came close to wrecking my relationship with my wife.
113. I am difficult to live with, and my wife would tell you that too. She says that I have a short fuse; I am uncooperative and tend to retreat into myself. I would often just get on my motorbike and disappear for a few hours. It was my way of trying to cope. I think this all stems from the abuse. I have tried to see psychologists, but I have a tendency to walk away when it gets too hard.

114. I find it difficult to trust people. It takes me a long time to make friends, which is why I don't have many friends. I can be in a room full of people and still feel lonely. It is hard for me to form relationships with anyone. I think it all stems from the abuse.
115. My faith as a Christian teaches me to accept what happens and try to forgive, but I can't. I can't forgive it and I can never forget it. It has been put in my mind and engraved into it. It can't be scrubbed clean. I think it is something that will be with me for the rest of my life.
116. [REDACTED] I wanted people to know my story and didn't want to sweep it under the carpet and be a victim any more. I am not a victim, I am a survivor and nobody can take that away.

Treatment and Support

117. My health problems started after I got diabetes in 1999. Since then, it has been one thing after another. I had a stroke in 2012. This has left me with weakness on my right side, short term memory loss and extreme fatigue. I had a stammer for a while as well.
118. I was diagnosed with depression at least ten years ago, after the police contacted me. I am on anti-depressants now. I tried to have contact with psychologists and psychiatrists. They have all said I am depressed and want to continue to see me, but I leave when it gets too hard. I feel that they try to make my abuse too clinical and put it in a pigeon hole.
119. I am not getting any support at the moment. When you walk away from one psychiatrist, it's hard to get plugged in to support again. The GP just says that they have tried to plug me in to help so many times. It makes it virtually impossible to get referred again. They don't seem to understand that it's so hard. I was comfortable

with someone at Kings Hospital, but the hospital is geographically difficult for me to get to.

120. I have not had any specific counselling for my self-harming.

Records

121. I asked for my records from Lothian Regional Council, as they were called back then. They said that I had to travel up to Scotland to get them. They refused to send them down. I have no records from social services at all.
122. I managed to retrieve my Barnardo's records a few years back. I went to their head office in Barkingside to get them. Someone read them with me, and then I was allowed to take them away. It covered my time at Barnardo's on South Oswald Road, Craigerne and bits and pieces about being in other places. There were a few things in it that I think should have rang alarm bells to social workers.
123. I have destroyed my files, which I think was a mistake. I will probably try to get them back again.

Final Thoughts

124. When children are in the care of a local authority, they are acting as your parents. The staff need to be vetted with criminal background checks done. I don't know if these were done when I was in the home, or if they were sufficient enough. Once they are in the job, there needs to be continuous and rigorous checks, as well as on-going training for staff.
125. The local authority have a vested interest in ensuring that things are running smoothly, otherwise their jobs may be at risk. I don't know if that then leads to them just ticking boxes to say that everything is fine.

- 126. There should be a child advocate, separate from the social work department, who children can trust and talk to about anything. This person should be independent. They shouldn't be responsible for multiple homes at a time because that leads to them having to rush and keep to timescales. It should be one person per residential unit, who can go and spend time at the home and speak to the staff and children. They should spend time there and see how the place is run, and if it is a happy place where children feel content.

- 127. There needs to be spot checks carried out in care homes without pre-warning.

- 128. There should also be a number that children can call if they have problems. They should have access to a phone somewhere without staff being around. There should be information about child abuse near to the phone that children can see, explaining what child abuse is and what forms it can take.

- 129. I don't know why it has taken so long for everything to come to light. All the signs were there with the children themselves, or within their file entries at the time the abuse was happening. I hope the Inquiry leads to changes being made.

- 130. I don't care about confidentiality and if people know my name. What has happened has made me who I am, [REDACTED] I want to get it out there because I am not a victim anymore. I am a survivor and nobody can take that away. It will hopefully never happen again to another child if people know about it.

- 131. 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.

BHE
[REDACTED]

Signed.....

Dated.....

22/8/2017