

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PPP

Support person present: No

1. My name is PPP and my date of birth is , 1971. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. My dad left our home in Glasgow before I was born and my mother divorced him when I was seven or eight months old. I remember my mother struggled bringing us up on her own. I have a sister, , who is about two and a half years older than me and a brother, , who is a further one year older. I have never had any contact with my dad. I attended Bonnyhome Primary School, which is no longer there.

Life before being put into care

3. When I was eight years old my mother volunteered to go into the Leverndale Psychiatric Hospital, which at that time would be called a mental institution. Naturally we had to be placed somewhere. I believe at that time she thought it was going to be for a very short time. Pollock social work office decided to place all three of us children into children's homes.
4. My brother and I went to Park Lodge Children's Home, in Glasgow. This is the only home that I remember going to. I might have been in others for a short time, like a week or a weekend, but Park Lodge is the only one I remember. This would have

been in 1979. My sister went to Glenrosa Children's Home in the Pollockshields area of Glasgow.

Park Lodge Children's Home

5. I cannot remember my first day at Park Lodge, but I can visualise the place. I was taken there by a social worker. His surname was Girvan, I can't remember his first name. The place itself was like a big mansion with a central entrance and big bay windows. There was a big garden round the whole house and it had a driveway all the way down one side of the building and up the other side.
6. We were split into two houses for upstairs and downstairs and the staff were separated like this as well. So there were upstairs staff and downstairs staff. Kintyre House was upstairs. Kintail House was downstairs. The head and deputy head were there for everyone.
7. There was a living room and dining room both upstairs and down. I remember there was a living room and dining room left and right as you entered the home. There were bedrooms to the right, a main staircase in the middle and to the left of the staircase was the kitchen. At the back was the laundry area. As you walked up the staircase it split into two and curved round. There was a living room/dining room on the front left and a kitchen off this. The bay window on the right was my first bedroom. As you come out of there, there was a small shower room and a main toilet area. There was an office where the head and deputy head were based, and another bedroom at the back of the building to the left hand side. There was an emergency staircase to the back of the house too.
8. I was in Kintyre House upstairs. The bedroom I was in was a large room with four beds in it. I can't recall having a bedside cabinet but it was a single bed, not a bunk bed. I can't remember who I shared this with, except my brother. I didn't have any friends at the beginning. My brother didn't stay at the home the full time. He had more challenging behaviours. He moved and I don't know where he went.
Longriggend rings a bell.

9. The natural movement of people coming in and out of the home meant that after a while I moved to the back bedroom, which had three beds in it. The staff probably know the reason why I moved bedrooms but I wasn't told. When I was in this room I shared it with a boy called [REDACTED] and his younger brother [REDACTED].
10. There were about eight of us upstairs and the same downstairs, so there were less than twenty children in the home. It was mixed with boys and girls so I don't know why my sister didn't go there.

Routine

Mornings and bedtime

11. There was a bungalow in the grounds, which was lived in by the head. There was a bedroom in this house that was used by the deputy if they stayed over. No-one else stayed in the place.
12. None of the staff stayed within the home. There were staff who did dayshift and late shift and there were nightshift staff. The night staff were constant, they worked three on, four off, then the other way about. The night staff woke us up fairly early in the morning. We then got washed in the communal bathroom, during which time there would be a change of staff.
13. The staff would make sure you washed yourself in the morning. It was a large communal toilet and washroom, with a bath. There were cubicles for the toilets and everything else was open plan. We'd then sit at the dining table, eat breakfast and then wash up the pots and dishes. There was a rota for this. We then left for school between eight and quarter past.
14. Bed time was around seven thirty I think. You got a little longer the older you were, sometimes about fifteen minutes. I think nine o'clock was the latest I stayed up before I left the home. I'd be fourteen years old by then.

15. You would be told when it was your time to go to bed. You'd be told to read, but this wasn't my strong point. After a short time someone would come and check that you'd stopped reading. No-one read to you.

Food

16. For me the food was good to what I'd been used to, as my mum had struggled. So it was good enough, I was more than happy, and we had enough to eat. The kitchen staff were alright. I remember two that were good. One was a spinster, she was really nice and friendly. The other was on at the weekend. She was nice, but we always complained that she couldn't make custard because it was always lumpy. I hate anything lumpy, like gravy and custard. I think this is where it stems from.
17. There was no seating arrangement, you could sit where you wanted and you could speak at the table if you wanted to. There was no punishment for not finishing your food that I can remember. I stayed at school for lunch.
18. When we returned to the home after school we were asked if we had homework and if so this had to be done before dinner. We stayed in our school uniform until we finished our homework and then changed into our own clothes. We would then play outside if it was a nice day, or watch television or play in the play room, until dinner. The play room was ok. There were general toys, cars, trains, tracks, that sort of stuff. There was no segregation apart from the fact there were no girls upstairs. One of the bedrooms downstairs had girls.
19. The routine for dinner time was virtually the same as for breakfast. After this you had your chores that had to be done, cleaning dishes and cleaning tables for the morning.

Evenings

20. After dinner you could play or if you went to clubs you did that sort of thing. I was in the Scouts. I walked to the Scout hall myself. No-one else from the home went initially. When [REDACTED] and his brother came to the home they started going with me. I enjoyed the Scouts. If you didn't go to a club there was a park across the road you could play in or you just sat bored in the home.
21. You would be told if you were having a bath at night, this wasn't every day. You would take your pyjamas and towel through to the washroom and have a bath. I was in the bath myself, it wasn't shared, but others would come into the room while you were in it. You bathed yourself, except when you were young, then a member of staff would wash your hair, that kind of thing. There was a shower room upstairs. This was a small narrow room. If you were having a shower you'd be in there by yourself.
22. After this you would have your supper, which would be toast or hot chocolate, something like that, which was made by the staff. We had this in the living room area.

Clothing

23. My school uniform was purchased for me by the home. I took some of my own clothes to the home with me but some of the clothes I wore were purchased for me as the home had a clothing allowance. I remember going out with my key worker to different shops, they would pick things for you and you would try them on.

School

24. I went to Merrylea Primary School, which was about a mile away from the home. Because of the age and religious differences, other children went to different schools. Some would go to Roman Catholic school, some like myself went to Merrylea, some went to a special needs school and the main secondary school.

25. I was one of the youngest in the home. About seven or eight years old was the youngest, the oldest was about seventeen years old, so there was quite a wide spread. When I first went there, there was only a couple of us that were my age that went to Merrylea. Near the end of my time at primary there were a few more. My friend [REDACTED] went with me. He was a similar age to me and his younger brother was only a year or two younger.

Weekends

26. At the weekend you had to keep yourself occupied. I'd walk to places. Sometimes in the summer we'd get one of the minibuses from Strathclyde Regional Council for a few weeks. They seemed to share it around different homes, so they would all get two weeks each and we'd go on trips. I remember going to Culzean Castle. The social work had two caravans in a secluded area near the beach close to Culzean Castle, so there were trips to there.

Birthdays and Christmas

27. On my birthday I remember getting a few presents and there was a birthday tea with a cake. I can't remember much about Christmas. It was celebrated. The home always put up a tree. There were presents and we did have a stocking. I remember getting a satsuma and things like that. My mum may have contributed to that, I don't know.

Bedwetting

28. I didn't have a problem with bedwetting. There was one boy who wet the bed. He had a special mat that was connected to a device that triggered an alarm so the staff knew if he wet the bed. He had a plastic sheet over the mattress too. This was when we were in the front bedroom and it was a regular occurrence to be wakened up during the night by the machine. The staff had to take everything off and remake it. I can't recall him being punished for this, I never saw this anyway. I found the night staff to be perfectly okay. They were firm but nothing untoward.

Visits/Inspections

29. My mother did come to visit me sometimes but it was a very awkward time because it wasn't in a personal space. All the other kids were around. I can't remember how often she visited. My mother was initially still in the hospital at this point as she could go in and out as she wanted. My grandparents lived in Aviemore, so they didn't visit.
30. My social worker came to visit me every now and then, every few months. I think they had review meetings. I remember the guidance teacher from school being at a meeting. At first I wasn't included in these meetings, but later I was. I detested them. They talked as if you weren't there. I didn't feel included.

Abuse

31. The first time I can remember was when we went on holiday to Lytham St Annes. We went by train. I remember we had to change trains, the whole lot of us from the home and staff as well. The home rented an upstairs/downstairs house. I was downstairs and had to share a big bed with one of the staff. I can't remember when in the holidays it was, but he began touching me.
32. As a kid I wouldn't say I was strange, but I loved trains and all those sort of things. Simple things would frighten me. The kids were messing about with the abuser's shaving foam and I was running away from it. He told me there's nothing to be afraid of. He was holding me and gently touched me with some foam and said it was ok. It was shortly after that point that one night he touched me and that was the start of it.
33. His name was Alistair Findlay. He worked day shift or late shift at the home. He was upstairs staff. He must be in his mid to late fifties now. He was in his early twenties when he worked in the home. He was a residential care worker.
34. It happened several times each night. Other members of staff knew he was sharing a bed with me. I don't know why it came about that we shared a bed. I was nine or ten

years old at the most when this happened. It was only a matter of a few days into the holiday when the incidents started.

35. When we returned he was still very friendly with me. I didn't feel that it was awkward. With not having a father figure, somewhere in my brain I may have thought this was okay. He was friendly.
36. I remember when he had a problem with his car. He damaged the door. It opened when he was driving and it hit a lamppost so he needed a new door. He took me to the scrapyard to get one on a Saturday. So that inclusive part felt perfectly normal. When you're in a children's home you feel isolated. You do a lot to keep things to yourself so no-one else gets in there. So when something like that happens it feels as if you're part of a family. It was enjoyable to feel included. He took us swimming. Not just me, others too. On one occasion we went to Queen's Park and when there we went to his parent's house. It felt a bit like normality.
37. But as time went on the abuse escalated. His behaviour escalated. He still did the touching. What he then started doing was he would take me into the front bedroom and close the door. He would sit down with his back against the door so that no-one could come in to the room. He would get me to take down my trousers and pants and he would take out his penis and force it between my legs, near my bottom. It just kept escalating. He then pushed his penis between my scrotum and anus, which was very painful. He then tried to penetrate me. I would have still been nine or ten years old.
38. He then began penetrating me. Both on the occasions when he didn't enter me and when he entered me, he ejaculated. It was a regular occurrence. Not several times a week but regular. He nearly got caught a few times by people trying to get into the room. Sometimes members of staff were trying to get in. He said he was talking to me as I was in trouble and that's why he was keeping the door closed. I don't know if the staff knew. You could see on their faces afterwards, the uneasy look, thinking why was he stopping the door from opening.

39. This lasted for about a year or so then he just disappeared. I would be ten or eleven years old. This was a feature of being in care. I didn't tell anyone. I can't remember him telling me not to tell anyone. He might have done at the time but I have no recollection. I think for me it was an unwritten thought not to say anything.
40. I am a very insular person. My wife would testify to this. I didn't say anything as others would use it as a reason to bully you, to tease you. I wasn't interested in being in a clique or gang, which was quite often happening.
41. I don't know if he did it to anyone else in the home. It made me worry while I was in the home that I was doing something wrong. That's another reason why I didn't say anything, thinking I was in the wrong. I was quite happy to be on my own and just go to bed. I don't think I feared him coming to the home. There was a misguided loyalty. Because it felt like he was being nice to me.
42. The only other thing that happened was when we went to the Queen's Park and we went to Alistair Findlay's parent's house. It was in [REDACTED], one of these roads down the side of it. He took me there and showed me a polaroid picture of a young girl, naked from the waist down. My recollection is that he said it was [REDACTED]. I assumed he'd taken the photograph. I would have thought the girl was about four or five years old. I was quite upset on seeing this.
43. There was no-one else in the house when this happened. He took me to his room, or a room in the house. All I remember was him saying, 'let me show you this picture', and the picture appeared. That was the only time I visited his house. This happened not long before he left, about 1981.
44. There were no other occasions outwith the home. When we went to the scrapyard he was too engrossed on getting the door off the car to speak of anything else. Lytham St Annes was the first time. The holiday was for a week or two weeks. The occasions continued and escalated for the next year to two years.

45. I was quite quiet, I kept myself to myself. I've never been a big friends person, not even to this day, apart from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. When they left the home for foster care one of the staff said they could see that part of my heart had been ripped out. I was the person that wanted to leave so it was a really sad day. They were the only people I really got on with because there were other kids there that had far bigger problems either with aggression or violence and that sort of thing.
46. When they left I became more insulated, I wanted to run from things. If I was having a difficult conversation with someone, if I couldn't find a route out, I'd need to run. This has been a struggle all my life. I don't want to control anyone but I have trouble when I don't have control over me and my feelings.
47. There was a lot of bullying. Not by staff. When you are in a home and staff leave it's like part of your family leave. Staff change and kids change and it was a completely different place to be in. It wasn't a nice place. Bullying became a regular occurrence so I was just glad when I had the chance to go. It wasn't a nice place to be. They would get you to do different pranks. If you didn't do them, or if they thought you'd been saying anything to a member of staff or something like that, they'd do something like a Spanish Inquisition on you. I would be in a dark room and have a lamp shone on me, like a spotlight. This was terrifying if you are a quiet, insular boy. I didn't feel comfortable telling the social work.
48. I was never given an explanation as to why Alistair Findlay left the home. I know now there was an allegation of inappropriate behaviour made against him. I don't know what it was or if the police were involved. I found out it was agreed he would leave.
49. When I was fourteen, just before [REDACTED] of 1985 I went in to foster care and I left the home for the last two years of my childhood. When I left foster care and moved back to Glasgow every now and then I would come and see some of the staff at the home. I found out about Alistair Findlay when I was about seventeen. I visited the home to see the staff and I was told this privately by a member of staff. I didn't tell them what happened to me.

50. The staff at the home weren't bullying or aggressive in any way to me. The head's name was Miss Elizabeth Stewart and the deputy's name was Mrs McEwan. They weren't the type of people to hit you and their door was always open unless they were having a meeting. Nothing in the home was bad apart from Findlay.

Reporting of abuse

51. I have never reported the abuse I suffered to anyone until now. I am seeing the police tomorrow and I'm happy for you to speak to them in relation to Alistair Findlay. I am happy with the Inquiry giving my name to the police.

Leaving Park Lodge

Foster Care

52. Mr and Mrs [REDACTED], who stayed in Alloa, fostered me when I was about fourteen years old. It was good and bad. It was good to be part of a family, but I found it difficult to fit in. I found the relationship with Mrs [REDACTED] quite difficult. She didn't have a loving way about her. I did get on well with Mr [REDACTED].
53. Mrs [REDACTED] said things like, when I buttered toast I did it like a girl, because a man should do it in one or two sweeps but I don't. When I had a cheese hamwich I eat everything on the plate first and keep that till last, then I'd eat around the edge because that's nice and crispy and I got into trouble for that, because that's not how you should eat your food.
54. Every fortnight I went to visit my mother, who by this time was in a group house inside the hospital set up by the social work department with a view to rehabilitation. I'd travel by myself. I would get the bus from Alloa to Stirling then the train from Stirling to Glasgow Queen Street and then a train from Glasgow Central. Naturally I was looking forward to it so I would get up early to go and see her. But I found it hard to get up for school. Mrs [REDACTED] said "It's funny how you get up okay when seeing

your mum". I found this hard to take. My mother is my mother and always will be and for me. She's put up with a lot of things in her life and I found that really hard.

55. The [REDACTED]'s two daughters stayed in the house. [REDACTED], who was two years older than me, was about sixteen or seventeen and [REDACTED] was at university. Their son was working at the time but he came back to stay some weekends. The family had always fostered, one child at a time. I felt loved but thought it was maybe the way people were, some of the comments that Mrs [REDACTED] made.

Life after Park Lodge

56. I hated school in Alloa. I was bullied a lot. I remember being called a 'poof' lots of times. It was another reason I just wanted to finish school and get back to Glasgow.. I never did very well with my education.
57. The social work got me supported accommodation in a flat. It was a special project, the Independent Living Project. It was flats given to the social work rent free. I had no bills to pay and they just asked for a token payment. This payment would be more if you worked, less if you were on benefits. I trained in everything on YTS programmes. I really struggled. Chef, gardening, warehousing, a whole plethora of jobs.
58. I was sixteen when I was in supported accommodation. I stayed there for about two years. I remember when I first went and being taken to a supermarket by a social worker and them buying fresh orange and things like that. I was getting about forty odd pounds a week. I still didn't have many friends. Then I got my own flat but I couldn't manage. I couldn't keep up with bills and household chores. I moved back to my mum's when I was about 21.
59. I am now a technical business analyst. I enjoy it. I found my niche job and I've done it for the last ten years. It's all to do with performance-related stuff in relation to power stations. I had worked with the company for several years then went for my present job. I've always been interested in data and a lot of it is to do with data.

Impact

60. I have had both physical and mental problems relating to the abuse I suffered. Not long after the abuse happened I began to find I had seepage from my backside. And it still happens. I've been to my GP but I didn't say anything about being abused so he thought it was an itch and they gave me this sort of calamine lotion. I find the seepage exacerbates, depending on how I am feeling. The more anxious I am the worse it seems to get. It is a constant thing.
61. This has been quite destructive mentally, When I think about it I want to escape from the situation. I have run away. I do things that take me away from reality. I've stolen money, thinking that will cure everything. This made things ten times worse. It might have fixed the thing at that time but the consequences have been terrible for weeks, months, and years afterwards. I took money from the model railway club that I was a member of. It has all been paid back, but it's been quite destructive on a lot of friendships that I had.
62. I also find when it's really bad I've spoken inappropriately to females online. This has happened before and since I've been married. Luckily I have a very supportive and understanding wife and I've told her why I did this. And that's why the last time it happened I explained the reasons why. Why I feel the way I do, that I'm trying to escape. I think I've been close to destroying a lot of things.
63. This is why I've come to the Inquiry, why I'm going to the police and seen my GP. I'm also receiving medication to try and take me off the high anxiety I get when thinking about it. My GP found a support group. He told me there's nothing the NHS do but he does have a list of support groups that are available. I've since told my GP that I've been abused, but I didn't go into detail.
64. My anxiety was getting higher the closer the day was coming to see the Inquiry so my doctor wanted to increase my dosage of anti-depressants. It's so hard to put it to the back of my mind. The problem is that when I walk down the street and I see

someone who looks like him, or a smell like his aftershave it just comes to the front of my mind. I hate it. I go through phases where everything is ok, when I've been able to put it slightly back, then all of a sudden that smell or look will trigger it and it comes all the way back to the front again.

65. Since the last time I spoke with someone inappropriately it's been difficult. That's why instead of saying everything will be okay I went to see my doctor. That's why I've come here. At some point I will need to have counselling because it will rip me apart. I know in my heart this might destroy my marriage. I have a disabled son. He is nine years old and autistic. I see so many other families split up that have disabled kids because it's too much and what effect that has on the kids. That's the last thing I want so I need to resolve this, by hook or by crook.
66. My mother blames herself for my abuse, if she hadn't gone into Leverndale Hospital. She's 78 years old now. The main thing is that it doesn't have a detrimental effect on her life. She's known for fifteen to twenty years. The only reason she does know is because I saw a story in the Sunday Mail. There was a picture of Alistair Findlay and it said he had been trying to get prostitutes to procure previously abused under-age girls. This had been a police sting. I told my wife a few years ago and I told my GP in August 2016. No-one knows the extent of the abuse. They know I've been abused, that's all. So this is the first time I've told anyone about it fully.
67. I have put getting support to one side as I fear they might delve into things that may make me feel worse. I don't think I'm at that stage.
68. Although it's quite endemic with some people, it's unfair to blame all the staff. But there are some individuals who have done some horrible things to children. It's difficult if you're in a children's home to feel that you can speak out because you feel they are more in control than you are and you won't be listened to. Hopefully there's more protection put in place for kids in care so that people like Alistair Findlay can't slip through the net and do what they do.

Records

69. I have never attempted to get my records from care.

Other information

70. 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..... PPP

Dated..... 25/5/2017