

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PSM

Support person present: No

1. My name is PSM and my name as a child was PSM. My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I am one of seven siblings. My parents were called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. When I was four, my parents lost their five year old child, [REDACTED]. She died with an epileptic fit at home. At the time of my sister's death, we resided in a house in Possilpark, Glasgow. My two older brothers are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], [REDACTED] was born in 1958 and [REDACTED] in 1962. My older sister, [REDACTED], was born in 1961. [REDACTED] was born in 1963. The two younger siblings came later on. There's a seven year gap between myself and my wee brother, [REDACTED], and eight years between myself and my wee sister, [REDACTED].
3. We stayed [REDACTED] from Hawthorn Primary School, Possilpark. Dad was in and out of jobs but there was nothing concrete. With four or five kids running about, there's no doubt things were tough. I don't remember much beyond five years of age. We don't have a big box of photos to look at like my husband's family, so that they can ask if they remember things. It's not that we weren't for having treats, just my parents weren't for taking photos. There isn't a photo of [REDACTED] to look at.
4. At the time I'm speaking about, I was about five or six years old, seven at the most. I could only have been in primary one or two and [REDACTED] was at the primary school

as well. She was ten or eleven. I don't recall the reasons why [REDACTED] and me went to Fornethy and neither does [REDACTED]. From hearing wee bits, girls got sent there because parents needed a wee break or something. My sister thinks it was put to the girls in school, "Would anybody like to go a wee holiday?"

5. It might have been that they linked up that my sister had a sibling. It could maybe have been, that it was something to do with my parents losing [REDACTED]. It was a wee troubled time for my parents. It may have been a way of giving the family a break. I don't know the answer to that. We think we went to Fornethy just after [REDACTED] died. It couldn't have been before [REDACTED] died because I'm younger and [REDACTED] would have gone to Fornethy as the older sibling. Since me and my sister stumbled on what was going on with Fornethy, we've tried to put the pieces together. To the best of our ability, that's what we think. We think we were there for six weeks, but my sister is unclear if we had to stay longer. Everybody who went there says it was always six weeks. Until recently, Fornethy didn't come into my mind to talk to other people about because of the uncertainty. Me and my sister would talk about Fornethy and say we went there, and it was horrible.

Fornethy House, Kilry, Perthshire

6. From what I've heard, Fornethy belonged to Glasgow Corporation or Glasgow City Council. There are different things it is said to have been used for. I've heard for respite and for deprived girls. Fornethy was in the middle of a forest, and it was secluded. I have visions of outdoors and recently I saw something which jogged my memory back to being outside the building. I used to play with acorns, bird feathers, and wee stones outside at a bit where you could see a swing or a wooden frame.
7. When you came inside there were wee blocks where you put your wellies. There was a spiral staircase. There was a big dining-room with tables and chairs in it, where we ate, and a big sitting room. I have images of old furniture and big, leather couches. My sister thinks we got split up and, when you listen to other ladies,

siblings were separated. My sister thinks we saw each other on an occasion but we'd be sitting at different dining tables.

Routine at Fornethy House

First day

8. I don't remember how we got to Fornethy, but my sister has told me that my mum, dad, or an aunt took us to Buchanan Street Bus Station, and we got a bus.

General Routine

9. The routine was that you put the wellies on when you went out and, when you got back, you put your sandals on. I hated the wellies. The problem with the wellies was that they didn't fit me.
10. I slept in a big room with two rows of five beds. My sister wasn't in my dormitory. The lights went out and the room became dark with a blue nightlight. My sister says she sobbed every night wanting to go home to mum but I didn't. At night-time, you got half a digestive biscuit and a wee drop of milk in a plastic cup.
11. Mrs Fletcher was the head teacher. I don't remember any other teacher. There was a man who had dungarees on, maybe a gardener or maintenance man. There were older girls who were helpers in the dining room, they put the food down on the table.
12. The food came through a hatch in the dining room. One time my sister and me were at the same dining table. My sister was at the opposite side to me, and it was liver. I don't like liver. I might have tried it and if I ever had liver at home, I don't know. I was able to pass the liver under the table and my sister took it. There were reasons why I did that, it must have been that you had to eat it. There was another occasion when my sister wasn't sitting beside me, and it was liver. My sister says she looked at me and knew I was crying. I don't know how my sister managed but she thinks she

gestured, or was able to say, to cut it up and swallow it. I've had that horrible thing in my head. It's not something I was told.

13. I don't recall what happened if you didn't eat it, but I've heard stories from other people. I don't know if something happened in-between this occasion when I know I'm crying and the occasion when I don't know what to do with the liver. There's something that makes me cry but I don't know what it was. I knew the liver was repulsive, but I knew I needed to eat it and finish the plate, or else. The story about the liver has been with me all my life.
14. You lined up for the showers. It wasn't cubicles with doors but a row of showers with no doors, just open.
15. I had a wee pinafore, and it was floral. You put your hands in it, and it tied at the back. Since meeting the ladies in the Fornethy [REDACTED] Group and being on the [REDACTED], an actual picture came through on the [REDACTED] of what we wore. Everyone had the pinafores on top of normal clothes.
16. I didn't need to do any chores, and my sister would say that was because I was the teacher's pet.

Leisure time

17. In a room, there was a raised platform where Mrs Fletcher sat on a chaise longue. There were rows of girls sitting with their legs in a basket, maybe about a dozen. I've since learned that the projector could be coming on with an old film.
18. We went on long, horrible walks through trees with wellies on that didn't fit you. We walked in twos, it was regimental. We had to keep walking and there was no stopping to look at anything. Looking back, I think we walked for eight hours a day. My sister says there was nothing else to do, the staff walked us all day, and we got back for dinner.

19. My sister says a letter was put on the board that the girls had to copy and it was to be written to the parents. There was no other contact with parents and they did not visit.

Abuse at Fornethy House

20. My sister told me I was treated differently from the other girls. Until [REDACTED] 2024, it was occasional banter between the two of us. My sister said it was alright for me because I was the teacher's pet, and the teacher took me everywhere. She meant Mrs Fletcher. For some reason it was as if I was with Mrs Fletcher, and I was beside her a lot. We were in the same room, I could see the girls sitting with their knees in their basket waiting to watch the projector, but I was up beside Mrs Fletcher. Now, that doesn't sit well with me but I didn't realise at the time. When my sister occasionally got the chance to see me, I was with Mrs Fletcher.
21. I remember going into the car with Mrs Fletcher and [REDACTED] remembers seeing me going into the car and waving to me. For many years, there was something there that made me say she was taking me to the doctor because there was something wrong with my eyes. I maybe had bad hay fever or something, but I didn't know for certain. I was sitting in the passenger seat and Mrs Fletcher gave me a pin-striped wee sweetie bag, there were sweets in it. I don't remember anything after that or going to see a doctor. I was probably loving it if I was the teacher's pet, and I was getting a bag of sweeties.
22. In my twenties, thoughts were coming into my head. I was sitting on a man's knee on a brown leather chair with a high back. The room was very dark. I can't see a face. Two things come through to me clearly and I'm trying to work out if it's one occasion or two or three different occasions, or three different men, I don't know. I see a blue or black pin-striped jacket and the other image coming through is a tweedy jacket. I clearly remember that I have a wee navy swimming costume on. It's got white piping around the legs. While I'm on this man's knee, his fingers go into the swimming

costume and he's touching me, on the lower part of my body. I don't know if he inserted his fingers.

23. Could the room have been Fornethy? I would say it could have been but from other stories, it couldn't have been. That is because I remember seeing a wee oval pool when I was on his knee and apparently there was no pool in Fornethy. The pool was a wee distance away or through double doors. That makes me think I've been taken somewhere else. I wasn't saying it was Fornethy at that time when I first thought of it in my twenties.
24. When I was nearly thirty, I was questioning what this was in my head and I thought about it all the time. I didn't know what to do or why it was reoccurring in my head. In my thirties, I asked my mum directly if anything happened to me when I was a wee girl. I told my mum and she said nothing had happened that she could recall. I made up my own story. If everything is safe and allowed, whose knee would I be sitting on comfortably? First and foremost, my dad and probably my brothers. We got split up after Fornethy and I went to my aunts, which brings the possibility of it being my uncle who I love dearly. My aunty and uncle adored me. From my thirties until [REDACTED] 2024, I came to the decision to say it must have been my uncle because it couldn't have been my dad or my brothers. There was no other man I could think that I would be sitting on their knee.
25. There's a guy who is a paedophile hunter who has a platform on [REDACTED], he is the host. In [REDACTED] 2024, there was a live conversation going on. It was all to do with Fornethy ladies and they could get in touch with him. I listened to it live in my work at break time. Another lady who went to Fornethy, when she was between seven and nine, was telling the guy her story. She was saying similar things to what I've said to the Inquiry about what the place was like, dinners, and walks. Then she said she was taken away in the car by Mrs Fletcher to another big building. There were big double doors that Mrs Fletcher opened up. The place was all smoky and dark, and it was all men. The lady said she could see over in the corner, a wee girl sitting on a man's knee, on a chair. Then the lady had to go to the basement because that was

where they got her ready. They put her into a wee blue swimming costume. That's my story, that is me. Maybe it happened to lots of girls.

26. I thought Mrs Fletcher took me to the doctors for my eyes but now I believe it was chlorine. There's something, even now, with chlorine. Maybe I was in the pool and chlorine got in my eyes. I thought Fornethy was nice until I learned different. It wasn't nice that I had to eat liver but that might have been another teacher and not Mrs Fletcher. Fifty years ago, there were a lot of dos and don'ts. You were respectful to adults. You didn't go back home and tell mum and dad that Fornethy was terrible. Children were seen and not heard.
27. The wellies didn't fit me and that was a big thing to me. They were too small, and I had to squeeze my feet in. My legs hurt with the wellies. The wellies rubbed my calves, and they were marked and bleeding. We walked for a long time every day.

Abuse of others at Fornethy House

28. My sister saw and heard other things that I didn't, and she was involved in other stuff that I wasn't. My sister says she was slapped across the face because she left a damp towel on her bed, not by Mrs Fletcher but another teacher. That is my sister's story.

Leaving Fornethy House

29. I don't know if I left Fornethy and went straight home to Possilpark or straight to my aunt's house.

Life after Fornethy House

Kinship Care

30. After the time at Fornethy, there was some help needed for my parents due to the loss of [REDACTED] and there was a period where we got split up and went to aunties. I went to my Auntie [REDACTED]s. My aunty and uncle had one daughter, and I was like the daughter's wee sister. We don't know if it's directly after Fornethy or if it was for a full year but I was in primary four and I'd be eight or nine.

Returning to the family home

31. I went to primary six at Pollokshields and in primary seven, to the final family home in [REDACTED], Pollokshields. We all went as a family, and the other two siblings had been born. After primary seven, I can pretty much remember what happened in my life every day. I went to Galloway House, a residential school, but it was a school thing. Could it have been a day trip away? I don't know. It was good times. I don't know what age I was.
32. I got married when I was twenty and have been married for forty years this year. It's obviously been up and down but we've got there and we're fine. I have three wonderful sons who I adore.

Involvement with Fornethy [REDACTED] Group

33. In [REDACTED] 2024, my sister phoned me. She was browsing through [REDACTED] and saw Fornethy on [REDACTED]. That brought to our attention that there were ladies in a group, campaigning. I have met a couple of the ladies face to face because they had a couple of meetings in Glasgow. The rest are in a group chat. We went because we were horrified when we went onto [REDACTED] that day. There's a [REDACTED] that tells you other ladies' stories about their time there. We thought, 'Wow', and we got up to date with where they were at, what's happening, and what they're trying to

achieve. The main thing with Fornethy is, who was responsible, who should have made sure we were safe? I was curious to meet other ladies of a similar age. None of them know my story and nobody has asked.

34. When we went to the first meeting, there weren't many ladies there, maybe a dozen at the most. The banter came out about the liver, ██████ saying I was the teacher's pet, and Mrs Fletcher taking me away for the day in a car. A woman, who I'd never met, touched my arm and said, "You didnae go to nae doctors." As the days passed, I thought about what she meant by that.
35. We spent a bit of time listening and a contact group was created. You could say what you wanted and trust who was on the group. We were all in same boat and wanted our questions answered. This was the ladies' aim, and I was still trying to deal with what my head had come up with in the last six months. One of the ladies remarked that I'd get more of my 'jigsaw' as time goes on. There are elements of that that's true. For example, what was in my head and then listening to that lady on ██████. That is a big bit of my jigsaw because that's what I want to believe now, rather than what I did for all those years about my poor uncle. I'm not putting stories out there. It's got to be real. My images could be the same as the lady from ██████. Listening to the other ladies, it was always the younger girls who were taken away. Was I getting the sweets for all the wrong reasons?
36. Since I started with the group, I've been doing a bit of campaigning. I got a school picture of ██████ printed on a t-shirt, it says "████████", and I had my photo taken beside some ██████ in Glasgow about Fornethy. The ladies have been trying to get support and they're doing well. They've been campaigning for over four years. The campaign is at a standstill just now so that it doesn't have any impact on a court case which is ongoing.

Impact

37. I think back to what's happened to me at Fornethy, the flashbacks, and thinking of my uncle. I plucked up the courage to ask my mum if anything had happened to me. It's a bit much to imply to your mum that your uncle did something. When mum said no, she tried to reassure me. I said to my mum there was something there and she said it was nothing to do with my uncle, they loved me and cared for me. My mum said there was never anything bad said about my uncle. My uncle loved me, but I had to live with the thought he was the man whose knee I sat on.
38. My aunt and uncle are both gone now but his daughter is still alive. What I'm struggling with is, all those years until [REDACTED] 2024, I was blaming my uncle. I say to him occasionally that I'm sorry. It's not good enough. I didn't know and I was trying to make sense of it. I'm sorry that the only sense I could make of it was blaming my uncle. It's horrible to be in a situation where you think, hearing what the lady said on [REDACTED], "That could be it." I'll never know. I'm hoping that what I've found out will give me a bit of closure. It was an awful long time thinking the other. I wish my uncle was here because I'd look him straight in the eye and tell him what I accused him of, and he didn't do it. I might need a bit of guidance. What women do is make sure everyone else is alright and in the last eight months I've had a lot going on. I hope the Lord above will guide me and say it's alright and that he has forgiven me.
39. I don't have any bad feelings towards my parents. I want to reach out, but both my parents are dead. I wish they didn't need to send me there, but it was hard for them. It's raw for me now because it's come to my doorstep. I'm older now and trying to make sense of it all. I had my time trying to figure out what the image was and who the man was. I went down the wrong path with it, but I believe now that the incident happened at Fornethy. I want to find a way of knowing my uncle will forgive me and I can forgive myself.
40. I've suffered with my thoughts, silently. I've not opened up to anybody. The nature of it has made me not confide in anybody, even my husband. It has impacted my relationship with my husband, the intimacy has been gone for a while. That's from

my side, which is sad. There are certain things, like being touched, that's not been the same in the past few years.

41. My sister cries when she looks at her granddaughters and says they're like us when we went to Fornethy, the ages they're at now. I don't have that; my grandson is twenty. In [REDACTED] 2024, we were in cahoots for days, looking at the [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. We were curious, talking about Fornethy on a daily basis and sending messages to each other. When I stumbled on the woman saying she saw a wee girl sitting on a man's knee, I phoned my sister and said she wasn't going to believe what I was going to tell her. There was an element of me wanting to say to my sister that she was only slapped and look what potentially happened to me. I was only going through the motions.
42. I told my husband, and I came to the decision to tell my boys. I wanted them to know because it's something that's been in me. I don't know whether it's come out in different ways. I believe that in some way, Fornethy has affected me all my life, from what I know now.
43. When I listen to the other ladies, I wonder why I don't remember things. How can I remember going into the car and getting a bag of sweeties, but I don't remember coming out of it? I try not to let my imagination run away with me but some of the other ladies' stories would explain it, thinking you were drugged and that would blank out everything. I wonder about those sweets. A bit of my memory is trying to dig deep, and I wonder if I was drugged all the time and that's why I don't remember. I'm very against drugs. I can take paracetamol, but I don't like anything strong, like Anadin Extra. I don't like the way it makes me feel. I've always been like that and, when I heard that drugs might have been used at Fornethy, I wonder if that's an element of why I don't want to touch an Anadin Extra because it makes me feel not in control. There's something there. I don't know where it's come from.

Treatment/support

44. I've been to my GP and told her in case I need help. I'm not going to be a martyr and if I need help, I'll get help. I'm trying to deal with it but am I dealing with it? I don't know. My GP offered me help, support, and counselling should I need it. At the time I saw my GP, I wanted to scream and tell someone, but I didn't want to tell my husband or my boys. Where I'm at just now, I'll be alright.

Reporting of Abuse

45. I made a report to Barrhead Police Station in September 2024. I gave two officers a statement and they said they would pass it on to officers dealing with a live case to see if it was of any relevance. I've not heard anything since.

Records

46. I don't have my records from Fornethy. I've not asked for any records other than asking for my medical records. I thought the records might show I was taken to the doctors at Fornethy. However, when I got my medical records, they were only from my current medical practice where I've been registered since I was twelve years old. There were no records from before I was eleven years old.

Lessons to be learned

47. Where were inspections and what about vetting the staff? If things are true that went on at Fornethy that shouldn't have, you are talking about a reign of thirty years, from 1961 to 1990. Nobody was following anything up that was happening with the kids. It doesn't help matters when nobody is admitting they were responsible for sending you there. It belonged to Glasgow Corporation, and they should have been checking the staff were vetted. We established what a normal day at Fornethy was like but

what should it have been like? In this day and age, people are more aware of bad things going on. If you put your child into a football club and you're not sure, you stay and watch his football session. If your wee girl is in a dance class, ask for the papers to say the teacher has a right to work with children. That is now but it wasn't the case then.

Other information

48. I hope at the end of this, I get a bit of closure. A big piece of the jigsaw has been found and put in place for me. I'll try to deal with the trauma in the best way I can about my uncle's side of things. If I can live and know I didn't know what else to do, I didn't mean anything by it. That was the worst of it, he was so good to me in an 'uncle way'. I'll come to terms with that and hopefully there's lessons learned.
49. 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 ^{PSM} 

Dated 28/03/2025