

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PJR

Support person present: No

1. My name is PJR. My date of birth is [REDACTED], 1963. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Stobhill Hospital in Glasgow. My surname as a child was PJR. My family lived in [REDACTED] in Springburn then moved to [REDACTED], which is only five minutes away. My mum and dad were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I had three brothers and three sisters. The oldest is [REDACTED], he will be about sixty-eight years old. Then it's [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED]. All three of them have passed away now. My sister [REDACTED] is next, who is two years older than me, then lastly my younger sister [REDACTED], who is two years younger than me. I have always called her [REDACTED].
3. Life seemed alright to me, like most other people's lives at the time in the seventies when there wasn't much money. By the time I was nine and went to residential school my oldest brother and sister were married, so it left two boys and three girls in the house. It was crowded.
4. My mum and dad worked, but sometimes they were out of work, so it was obviously a bit harder then. But if both were in work it was good. I would say we didn't go without much. My mum must have been good at managing things. I was happy.
5. I went to Gourlay Street primary school before and after Fornethy and Colston secondary school when I was old enough. Before I went to the residential school my

mum never had a complaint about me from school. When I came back from there she was bombarded. I just wouldn't do a thing I was told. It made me a horrible person. I was a bad little kid. Nothing really bothered me before that. We just went out and played. The only thing I hated was other kids were allowed out later than us and we would be in our bed and could hear them still playing.

Fornethy Residential School, Alyth, Perthshire

6. I was nine when I went to residential school. I was at Gourlay Street primary school at the time. I was just about average at primary, not secondary though. I don't think I sat an exam at secondary school. We had these new people that moved in downstairs from us and their kids had been to Fornethy and said it was great, they loved it. Because of this we wanted a holiday, we wanted to go. My mum told us not to go, but none of the three of us, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I listened. We wanted to go and have a great time like our neighbours. [REDACTED] went to a different school, she went to one in Rossie, but [REDACTED] and I went to Fornethy. [REDACTED] was seven at the time.
7. We hadn't really been on a summer holiday. My mum used to take us berry picking on school holidays until we were too old and didn't want to go. She used to take us away for the day and I remember she hired a caravan for the week, but this was after Fornethy. It was my older sister [REDACTED] who started asking to go to residential school. She went to this place in Rossie, I don't know the name of the school. She left the same day as us, she went on the train and [REDACTED] and I went on a bus. I don't know how it was organised. I just remember my mum taking us to the bus and we were all excited. We thought we were going on this adventure. [REDACTED] was with my mum because she was taking her straight to Central Station. I remember [REDACTED] and I having a little case.
8. I didn't know anyone else on the bus. It was the one bus ride, we didn't have to transfer. I can't remember anyone looking after us on the way up, I think it was all kids on the bus. Fornethy House is up near Perth. I think it was run by the council, but I'm not sure. I don't think my mum had to pay for it. I think the bus belonged to the Education Department. There was no-one else from my school going.

Routine at Fornethy Residential School, Alyth, Perthshire

First day

9. I remember when the bus stopped I thought the place was a castle and it looked lovely, we were all excited. I think it had big brown arched doors. I don't know why but as soon as I went through the doors I thought it would be bad. We were told to wait in the hallway with our cases. There was quite a lot of us and I remember saying, "Oh God".

10. The dormitory we were put in had eight beds and all those in the room were on our bus. We all left the place together too. I remember these two tiny sisters who were five and seven years old, I would say they were the youngest there, and one girl who was a year or two older than me. I think they were all from Glasgow.

11. All I remember about outside was hundreds and hundreds of trees. I don't remember being out playing when I was there at all. We went for walks, that was it. It was out in the wilderness, I didn't see a single thing round about the place when we went for walks, apart from a reservoir.

12. They checked our hair and weighed us in this medical room then showed us up to our dormitory. We went upstairs and the dorm was on the left. It was called Forfar. We were told to unpack our cases and put our stuff in these little lockers between the beds. I think the woman that showed us the dorm was Miss LBD [REDACTED], but I'm not sure. I remember her because she was the worst there. I was in the dorm with [REDACTED] the young girls, who were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and another girl called [REDACTED], who was about a year older than me. There was a big girl called [REDACTED], and another who was a lot taller than me with ginger hair. She helped me to eat [REDACTED]'s food. [REDACTED] was always a picky eater, she was always undernourished, where as I was quite fat at that age. It was just to save her from getting battered all the time. So this big girl and me would try to eat the food. They weighed us when we left and I had put on four pounds and [REDACTED] had lost four pounds and she was really

thin. So it was quite a lot of weight for her to lose. I think it was Miss LBD that weighed us.

13. All the staff wore everyday clothes. I can remember at least four members of staff. I know there was a Miss LBD, a Miss Fletcher, Miss RHB and I think the teacher might have been a Miss Roberts or Robertson. There were two older women who gave you a bath. I can't remember their names. I didn't see any male staff members.
14. I think LBD was SNR of the place. She looked well into her fifties. She wore a tartan skirt and brown men's shoes. Her hair was curly, short and tight. She was Scottish but she wasn't Glaswegian, she had a totally different accent.
15. I couldn't be sure of this, but I got the impression that every week some kids left and new ones arrived later the same day. I think it was on a Wednesday. I think all, or most, were from Glasgow. There were at least eight in my dorm. I think there must have been five or six other dorms. It was just girls, no boys were there.

Mornings and bedtime

16. I think we got up about seven thirty. It was different teachers that woke us up in the morning. They just walked in and shouted. They took your pyjamas off you and you lined up to go to the toilet to brush your teeth and things. So [REDACTED] would be in one line for her age and I'd be in a different line for my age group. We then had breakfast. You were given a little apron to wear, I think to save your clothes from getting dirty, then we went to the classroom. I think you only went to the classroom until lunch time then you had lunch. We went walking in the afternoon.
17. We all had a single bed. [REDACTED] thought there were more people in the room but I remember two beds on each of the four sides. [REDACTED] and me were on one side, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were on another. I think [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who was the one who helped with [REDACTED]'s food, were related and they were on one side and [REDACTED] and someone else on the other. I can't remember who that was. We had a little

cabinet at the side of our beds. There wasn't much in it, your toothbrush, toothpaste, towel and maybe a couple of items of clothing and another set of underwear or something. I think we had a comb each, we all had the same stuff.

18. There were two queues for two bathrooms. In each there were three sinks and three toilets, so three girls would go in at a time. We went to a different place for a bath. We would go back to the dorm, put on our skirt and jumper, have breakfast then go to the classes. We were there for the morning then had lunch. After lunch we walked, even if it was raining. I can't remember anything about the weekend apart from walking. I can't remember wearing different clothes, nothing apart from that jumper and skirt. I'm sure it was about four o'clock or the back of four we got back from the walk then it would be tea time. After tea we would queue for the toilet then went into the recreational room.
19. You went to the recreational room about seven o'clock for about an hour, then back up to your dormitory. You stripped to your vest and pants, stood in a queue and cleaned your teeth and washed your face and hands, took your underwear off and put your pyjamas on then into bed. I would wait until [REDACTED] fell asleep then I would go to sleep.
20. I remember the staff checked on us in the dorm. They put these blue lights on. When they did you knew to just lie down and go to sleep. I don't know where they stayed. They must have done checks during the night because there was a time they pulled [REDACTED] and me out of our beds. I wouldn't know where to go and get one of them if anything happened. At about eight or nine at night they put these big blue lights on, which were dimmer than normal lights and that was time to sleep. I don't know if they switched them off when we were sleeping.

Mealtimes / Food

21. We always got porridge for breakfast. I remember it was disgusting and lumpy, and I like porridge. The food wasn't very nice at all, but I could always eat it. I remember the meals being small and I was always hungry. We got a digestive biscuit and a

small amount of milk before bed and I always looked forward to it. It was given in the recreational room, where you had to dance and sing. They brought the milk in on trays and went round giving everyone one digestive biscuit.

22. I remember one time having fish and chips and [REDACTED] ate the chips but couldn't eat the fish, so I told her to give me and [REDACTED] half each under the table. On one occasion [REDACTED] put [REDACTED]'s face into the porridge and she then had to eat it. They stood over her making sure she ate it. She was crying and the tears were falling into the bowl. It was terrible. The dining room was horrendous. It made me so nervous. I ended up with eating problems and I didn't have at the time I went to Fornethy. I don't know if it was to do with that, but years later if I got nervous I couldn't eat. I used to feel like that in the dining room and I'd try to eat my food quickly.
23. I don't remember them ever letting us talk, possibly in the recreational room now and again, but not in the dining room. You were given a chair at a table and you had to sit at it for every meal for the whole six weeks.

Washing / bathing

24. We had to line up naked waiting on a bath. Even at home we had an outside toilet, but my mum had a big tin bath behind the couch and we went in that, one at a time, but in Fornethy I had to go in with a stranger and so did [REDACTED]. I remember not liking the two older women who gave us a bath, but I don't know why because I can't remember them talking to me, or bathing me. I think there were three baths and whoever was standing next to you went into the bath with you, you shared. We stood naked in the queue. I remember being mortified, but I don't remember anything about the bath. I think something must have traumatised me about bath time, but I can't remember. I remember the two women kneeling at the bath, but not bathing me. I can't recall ever being in the bath. I think it was a weekly thing. Everybody had one on the same day.
25. I can't actually remember a lot about the baths, showers and toilets. For some reason I seem to have blocked it out. I don't even know if there were showers. You

couldn't go to the toilet when you wanted, there were set times, in the morning, then before class, things like that. You always stood in queues for baths or the toilet. There was a toilet next to the dorm, but I don't think you could get up during the night to use it.

Clothing / uniform

26. Before we went to Fornethy mum took us to this place and we got a grey skirt and brown jumper and a pair of pyjamas. I think the place was a school called William Street, or it was near there. Mum got a slip to give the people at the place, I'm sure she didn't have to pay for the clothes. [REDACTED] got the same uniform as us. I always wondered why [REDACTED] went somewhere different. She was eleven and I'm sure there were eleven year olds at Fornethy. I think it was the Education Department that decided which place you went to. [REDACTED] just started secondary school after we all returned from the residential schools.
27. We wore the skirt and jumper from Monday to Friday. I can't recall what we wore at the weekend. The clothes were cleaned once a week, so you would keep them on for the whole week. We only had our underwear on under the uniform. I can't remember shoes. I remember having to wear welly boots and I hated them. We had wellies at home and I wouldn't wear them. I used to have fat legs and the wellies would cut into my skin and it was very painful. Any time we went out at Fornethy we had to wear the wellies. I think they took us a walk every day, it felt like every single day. We would go on big, long walks.
28. I think your underwear was washed every three days and the clothes once a week. They were left in a little net bag on your bed for you to put away. I think our names were written on the clothes too.

School

29. I remember being in a classroom, that's where we wrote our letters home. The letter was written on a blackboard and we had to copy it. We wrote one a week I think. I

remember one time the teacher left the classroom and I turned my letter over and began writing, 'I hate this place'. I wrote, 'I hate', then thought it would be read, so I rubbed it out. I was right to do it because the teacher turned it over and had a look. The letter was read by the teacher, Miss Roberts or Robertson. She was younger than the other staff. She was blonde and slightly heavy. She was ok, I didn't see her hitting anyone or picking on anyone. I don't remember her being bad to us.

30. My mum had told us before we left that if we didn't like the place to put it on the letter, but we didn't get the chance. The letter was six to ten lines long at most. We were given an envelope and we would write our address on it. The teacher would then read the letter and put it in the envelope.
31. I think we got lessons while we were there. I was in the class with other girls my age, about fifteen others were there. It felt like a lot. I remember doing the times tables, but can't remember much about anything else. I don't remember writing anything in a school book. I actually thought all the staff were teachers, LBD [REDACTED], RHB [REDACTED], all of them, but the only three I remember being there at night were LBD [REDACTED], RHB [REDACTED] and Fletcher. Miss Roberts or Robertson was my teacher for the entire six weeks.

Leisure time/Chores

32. Sometimes they would play records in the recreational room and you would have to dance. One of the records was Brotherhood of Man, 'Save all your kisses for me', or 'Tie a yellow ribbon', one of those two. They would play the same stuff every night. I remember 'Chirpy, chirpy, cheap, cheap'. One time I had to sing 'Four wheels on my wagon'. While I sang it they all laughed.
33. I can't remember games. There was a TV and I remember watching it one Saturday afternoon, so we might have got to do that at the weekend. I think it was 'Black Beauty' or something like that. All the kids were nice to each other, even [REDACTED], apart from one time when she wanted to hit [REDACTED]. We all tried to help each other and I remember trying to look out for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and put their hair up in a ponytail. I was obviously rubbish at it because the staff cut their hair. I'm

sure [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were older than me. They helped out [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] most of the time, as I looked after [REDACTED] first. [REDACTED] was about the same age as me, then the rest were younger.

34. When you were finished in the dining room you took your plate and cutlery up to get washed. We had to make our beds, but that was it, we never had to clean the place or anything like that.

Religious Instruction

35. I'm sure we went to church once. We went there in a mini-bus. You were picked at random to go, [REDACTED] was never taken. There was only six to eight of us at any one time. I think the church was quite close to Fornethy. I'm sure LBD [REDACTED] came on the bus with us. She warned us to behave when we were there or she would kill us when we got back. One girl kept moving when we were in the church and LBD [REDACTED] went crazy at her. She was screaming at her in the mini-bus. I didn't see her hitting the girl when we got back, but I would be surprised if she didn't because I know others got hit from her. She wasn't a forgiving person. I'm sure we had to say prayers at meal times. My dad was Catholic and my mum was Protestant, we never bothered about religion at home.

Trips / Holidays

36. I think the six weeks we were there was around about the [REDACTED] holidays of school. Some of the time was during school time and some of it during the holidays I think. It may have been [REDACTED], I'm not sure. I don't remember anyone celebrating a birthday while I was there.

Visits

37. We were only there for the six weeks, so we didn't have any visitors while we were there. All we did was write the letters home once a week, which we had to copy from the blackboard.

Healthcare

38. I didn't see a nurse or doctor while I was at Fornethy. We went to the medical room when we first arrived, where they checked our hair and weighed us. They also weighed us when we were about to leave. I put four pounds on, but [REDACTED] lost four pounds.

Running away

39. I remember I was in the dormitory one night and it was pitch black. [REDACTED] was sleeping and I was looking out of the window. I was thinking of running away, but I knew I would be hit when I was brought back, and [REDACTED] would too. I wouldn't have left her there. As well as this, it was pitch black outside and I was scared. I don't even know why I was out of my bed because I always stuck by their rules.

Bed Wetting

40. [REDACTED] wet the bed and because of it we didn't get a sweetie the whole six weeks we were there. My mum sent us a fifty pence postal order every week but we brought them back because they didn't allow us to buy sweets because [REDACTED] wet the bed. I can't remember [REDACTED]'s surname. The other dormitories were allowed sweets. They would discover [REDACTED] had wet the bed in the morning and would scream and shout at her. She was a bag of nerves, but that wasn't unusual, because I think everyone was. She was humiliated in front of everyone in the dorm and if we stood in the queue for sweets and said we were in Forfar they said, "You aren't getting any because [REDACTED] wet the bed". It got to the stage where we stopped standing in the queue. There was no point. I think the sweets were given after tea time.

Abuse at Fornethy Residential School, Alyth, Perthshire

41. Miss ^{LBD}[REDACTED] was the main problem, but it wasn't just her. Miss Fletcher lifted her hands too. I didn't see Miss ^{RHB}[REDACTED] hitting or shouting at anyone but one night she

came into the dorm and watched us getting ready for bed. I just stopped and stood there. She told me to go over to her, so I walked over. She pulled me closer, put her arms right around my waist and down the back of my pyjamas and then round the front, still inside my pyjamas. I can't remember anything else about it. I can't remember if she took her hands out and didn't do anything. I really don't know. She didn't say a word. I was so embarrassed. I genuinely can't remember what she done. She put her hands down the back of my pyjamas and round to the front. We weren't allowed to wear underwear to bed. They used to come in to the dorm to check on you.

42. I didn't tell my mum about that. I told her about everything else. Miss **RHB** had blonde hair to her shoulders, I think she wore glasses. She was tall and a bit mannish. I think she was in her late forties, younger than Miss **LBD**. She was Scottish, but they all came from wherever that school was I think.
43. Miss **LBD** seemed to hit someone every day. I don't know if it was every day, but when you're nine years old it feels like every day. We would be waiting in the queue for the toilet and **█** would cry for my mum. The very first time we stood in these queues for the toilet **LBD** walked over and started slapping her face. I walked over and said, "That's my sister". She then started slapping me. I didn't mind that so much, I just wanted to protect **█**.
44. One night **█** and I were holding hands across our beds, I didn't even hear the teacher coming in the room, and we were thrown out of our beds and we were both battered by **LBD**. Another night we were the only two in the dormitory sleeping and the other kids must have been carrying on and **LBD** pulled the two of us out of our beds and said we must have been pretending. We were woken up and told we were kidding and I was taken to the toilet outside the dorm and told to stay there and not sit down. She then took **█** away to a library and she stayed there all night. I remember when she was doing this **█** was sitting up in her bed and looked shocked. I always thought it was **█** that **LBD** didn't like but I now think it was me. Every time she hit **█** she knew she would get a reaction from me.

45. I had never been hit before, neither had [REDACTED]. It was a major shock to our system. One night [REDACTED] was crying and I saw LBD [REDACTED] coming in. I knew she would get hit, so I was saying, "Don't cry, don't cry". It was LBD [REDACTED] that pulled us out of our beds. She slapped you anywhere her hands could reach. [REDACTED] got it worse than me, she got it every day. LBD [REDACTED] was just horrible. I couldn't hide the look of hatred and LBD [REDACTED] would scream at me, "Don't look at me like that", but I couldn't hide it. She also used newspapers to hit us. She would have one rolled up under her arm and march around. We would be in the corridor and there were two queues for the bathrooms and LBD [REDACTED] would march up and down like a Sergeant Major with the newspaper under her arm. She didn't use anything else, but I remember her using the newspaper a lot.
46. In the recreational room they played music and you were expected to dance. I was never a confident person, so I didn't want to dance. LBD [REDACTED] told me to and when I didn't she started slapping me across the face telling me to dance. So I stood up, never moved my feet but moved my arms a bit and she accepted that. That happened a lot with people in that room. The majority of times you saw people being hit was in that room or in the dining room.
47. I remember the two young girls, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], they were like two little angels, they had long blonde hair. They got off the bus when we got home and their hair had been cut because they couldn't tie it up properly and I remember their mum going off her head. She grabbed the girls and marched into the Education Department in Barr Street. When my mum saw that [REDACTED] had lost weight she went mad and asked why we wouldn't tell her, but we told her we weren't allowed to. We couldn't tell her.
48. If we spoke, we were always trying to do it quietly. The only person I discussed the teachers with was [REDACTED], and that was only the once. [REDACTED] stopped us getting something one day because of her crying and [REDACTED] told her she was going to batter her. I told [REDACTED] she wasn't touching [REDACTED] and she would have to batter me first. She said, "Ok then". We had a fight in the dormitory and she was beating me, then I saw her leg, so I bit it. I said to her, [REDACTED] gets enough from the

teachers without her getting it from her too. This happened the week before we left. I remember being absolutely terrified and I kept saying to [REDACTED], "Please don't tell on me". I remember we were standing getting a medical and her socks were rolled down and you could see the bite mark and I was terrified she would tell them who done it. She was street wise, I wasn't, I was petrified. I didn't see any others being bad to each other.

49. In the dining room we weren't allowed to talk or even turn around. The tables were round and one time I heard a commotion and turned around and saw LBD [REDACTED] punching a girl, full force, in the back. If you got caught speaking you were in big trouble.
50. [REDACTED] sometimes got caught giving me and the big girl food. I was allergic to tomatoes, so that girl ate them, but anything [REDACTED] didn't like, I would eat it, even if I hated it, so that she wouldn't get into trouble. I remember one morning we had porridge and [REDACTED] couldn't eat it and LBD [REDACTED] pushed her face right into it. I was crying. There were bits of porridge in her hair. One time I remember they pulled her right off her chair and she went flying right over my head. They obviously caught her giving us food. It was two teachers, LBD [REDACTED] and I don't know who else, it might have been Miss RHB [REDACTED]. I don't even know where they took her. They were always doing things like that. They would walk between the tables, making sure you weren't talking or passing food. There were women serving the food, but I don't know who they were. I think there were two teachers in the dining room at any one time. I saw LBD [REDACTED] hitting kids in front of other teachers. I never saw any of the others hitting kids.
51. There were lots of times I remember cracking up when I was there about the way I was treated. I remember one occasion, and I don't know how it started, but two teachers were hitting me and I was holding my head to stop them pulling my hair. I remember lying on the linoleum floor, which was a deep red colour. Miss RHB [REDACTED] was there, as I remember seeing her hair, and another teacher, but I can't remember who that was. I can't see her face.

52. I think Miss RHB cut the two young girls hair, but I can't be sure. They were little angels. I'm sure the young one told me their mum was in the hospital and that's why they were there. It seemed the younger they were, the harder they got it.
53. Miss Fletcher was really cruel. She had a big fat face, she was roughly the same age as LBD. I'm sure she wore glasses too. I remember one of them had a small dog, either LBD or Fletcher. RHB towered above me, but not LBD, she wasn't much taller than me. Fletcher would come out on the walks with us and if you weren't walking quickly enough she would push you and slap the back of your head. We had to walk to a reservoir, which was two and a half miles away, so they made us walk five miles a day, which was a lot for young girls. We walked in two's but you couldn't pick who you walked with.
54. I'm sure you were called by your surname. LBD didn't even call anyone by their name, she just called everyone 'Scunner' and screamed at them, right in their face. If she had just hit me and not it wouldn't be as bad. Even to this day I hate anyone doing anything to her, and she's fifty-six. She was a very thin and timid child. I was the total opposite, a little fatty.
55. Sometimes some of the girls were told to stand and face the wall, this was usually in the recreational room. I wasn't, but was. She was put in the library the night we were pulled out of our beds and she had to stand and face the wall. We didn't get to read books in the library, I don't think I was ever in it. I didn't know where they had taken You were only allowed in your dormitory, the dining room and the recreational room. That's the only three rooms that I remember. You weren't allowed in the other dormitories. I don't know where the staff would sleep during the night but they must have been there.
56. I counted the days down to every day, and she cried every single day. LBD would call me a 'Scunner' every day, for no reason or for trying to protect and screaming at them. A week before we were leaving LBD told me we weren't getting to leave but the day before we left she took me aside and said to me, "I'm putting a white sheet out of that window, do you want to know why?" I asked why

and she said, "Because no-one's ever beaten me". I don't know why she thought I had beaten her.

Leaving Fornethy Residential School, Alyth, Perthshire

57. I counted down the days to when we were leaving. We packed our little case and waited on the bus at the door. It was the same bus and the same girls that had come with us. My mum came to Bath Street to meet us and [REDACTED] saw her and flew out the bus and was sobbing. I remember going home and I never stopped crying. It was such a relief getting home. I remember asking the neighbours downstairs how they could say they liked it. Even to this day, I couldn't imagine someone's home life being that bad that they would like going there. They were called [REDACTED] and there were four sisters. They all couldn't have went, but there were two about mine and [REDACTED]'s age. I'm taking it that Fornethy was for five to eleven year olds. I remember telling them they were liars, because even if they weren't hit, they would have seen others being hit.
58. I didn't like any part of it. I asked [REDACTED] a while ago if she ever smiled when she was there and she said she hadn't, and neither had I. I think we were too worried all the time. We were given our money back when we were leaving and my mum said she had sent it for us to get sweets, but I told her we weren't allowed because a girl wet the bed.

Life after being in care

59. On my return I ended up horrible. I was crying at anything and my mum was shouting at me. I had this massive chip on my shoulder that no-one was going to tell me what to do. I was cheeky, I just changed completely and that lasted throughout my teens. I was badly behaved, even at primary school, and I'd loved that school and my teachers, but when I came home from Fornethy you wouldn't believe the change in me. I'm quite ashamed. I was a horrible little person. My mum didn't know what to do with me. If I wasn't crying, I was screaming at people.

60. I was badly behaved in school and it continued into secondary school. I didn't know it at the time, but my mum had to go to some board because I never went. I was asked why I didn't want to go to school. I just didn't want to be in amongst lots of people. It's the only thing I can put it down to. I was only at secondary school eighty-four times. My mum would get me up and send me to school but I would just go the opposite way. There was nothing wrong with the teachers, it was me. Some of them gave me the belt, but I can honestly say I deserved it. It was when I came home from Fornethy, I thought, "That's it, nobody's telling me anything".

Reporting of abuse at Fornethy Residential School, Alyth, Perthshire

61. My mum asked me what the matter was when we returned home. I tried to tell her and she went into the Education Department in Bath Street that day to complain. They told her to put it in writing. She wrote a letter and posted it to them. I don't know if anything was ever done. They might have been angry with my mum because my older sister [REDACTED] ran away from the place in Rossie after a week. My mum went to get her but they wouldn't give her to my mum. She had to go back to Bath Street, get a letter and go back to Rossie to get [REDACTED]. So my mum wrote a letter of complaint and sent it in to Bath Street. I don't know about any reply but my mum wasn't one to leave things.

62. I was difficult with my mum and dad from then on, and I'd never been a cheeky child. I don't know if my mum knew there was something wrong, because I would always cry. I questioned everything. I just wouldn't accept anyone's word for anything.

63. My secondary school was Colston. I actually went to more than one school board. There was a school called Albert school in Springburn and if your attendance was really bad you attended a board of three or four people there. My mum and I went there a few times and they asked why I wasn't going to school. I couldn't say why, I just didn't want to go.

64. I've said to [REDACTED] for years, why is no-one doing anything about this? I know my mum complained. [REDACTED] and I are still really close. It kills me to think of what she went

through. She said I was treated as badly as her, but I wasn't. She was being hit every day, I just stuck up for her. It's when I think of [REDACTED] she was seven and I was nine, I think, what people do that to children? My dad never hit us, my mum would never have allowed it. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were very clingy to mum after the residential schools. My mum went to a convalescence home a few months after we returned and [REDACTED] was devastated.

65. I have three boys, [REDACTED] who is thirty-eight, [REDACTED] thirty-six and [REDACTED], who is thirty-three. I never let them go on school trips when they were younger. I'm even a bag of nerves with my three granddaughters. I need to know I can see where they are. I've told my sons what happened to me.

66. Even with work I would speak out of turn. I used to work with SamH as a mental health officer and I remember my manager saying to me, "PJR [REDACTED], you can't talk to me like that", and I'd say, "Well I've done it". Not going to school didn't hold me back, I've always ended up with good jobs. I left school at sixteen. Initially I did cleaning jobs and worked in cafes and restaurants until I was about thirty. I would take breaks when I had the kids. I then started working in bars and hotels and became the manager. I then went to work in SamH for a few years. It's a mental health charity. I was an officer, taking care of people. I had to stay overnight once a week. They then began bringing forensic people in, murderers and child abusers, so I left. I thought I'd be no good to those people and I don't want to be good for those people. I was good at my job, but I couldn't do it. I have stage four emphysema, and as such I can't work anymore.

Impact

67. I hate seeing kids being abused. I wonder why these people want to work in these places if they don't like children. And that's what I can't understand about those teachers, they acted like they hated children.

68. I've never had any counselling. I wouldn't know how to go about it. I would probably do it, but I don't know if I want to remember the blanks. Some days I do and some

days I don't. I would like to go and visit Fornethy and see if my memory of the place is right. But I'd be scared it might bring up other memories. I'm not a member of any survivor group.

69. I brought my kids up in Springburn, but moved here to Calder thirty years ago. I had a neighbour, [REDACTED], she wasn't a friend, just an acquaintance. One day she was a bag of nerves when I saw her and I asked what was wrong. She said she had been at a residential school and I asked her if it was Fornethy. It was only a couple of days after it had been on the news. She told me it was and asked if I'd been there too and I told her [REDACTED] and me had been there. She told me she had been there with her family, but we wouldn't have known them as kids. Anyway, I wasn't wanting her in my space in case it brought back memories. It's stupid things that stick in your head like the blue pyjamas.
70. I didn't have any nightmares or flashbacks until I saw it in the news and one night I woke up and the sweat was dripping off me. It was because [REDACTED] LBD had pulled me out of bed. That's what I was dreaming about. But that's the only time it's happened to me. I get little flashbacks now and again.
71. Some of the kids were treated worse than me and I struggle with all this in my head, how many lives have been destroyed with that. The girl called [REDACTED] that was punched in the back was degraded for bedwetting. Apart from [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED], I don't know anyone else who went to Fornethy.

Reporting of Abuse

72. After I told my mum and she wrote the letter to the Education Department that was it. [REDACTED] and I have spoken about it over the years, but I haven't spoken to anyone else. When I saw Fornethy in the news about six months ago I called the Inquiry. After this the police contacted me and I gave a statement to them. It was done over the phone with a police woman from Dundee. The police went to [REDACTED]'s house to take a statement. I think they said there were three of the staff still alive, or maybe four. I

don't care if they're old, because they were bad, I wouldn't have a single bit of sympathy for them.

Records

- 73. I have no records from my time at Fornethy. I haven't applied and don't have any interest in doing so.

Lessons to be Learned

- 74. They could definitely vet people more. I would say nine out of ten people in Fornethy shouldn't have been in that job. Someone should have been asking us if we liked it, if it was ok. Once we were home, because we wouldn't have said anything when we were there.
- 75. I would be hoping that if any of the staff were alive that they were held to account, right down to the cleaners, because if they didn't do anything they just watched it happening. I'd love to face them now.

Other information

- 76. 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..... 

Dated..... 01 June 2021