

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PGU

Support person present: No

1. My name is PGU. My date of birth is 1968. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Haddington and lived with my mother and father, and . My mother's maiden name was . My father was married three times and my mother twice. I have two brothers who are and . I always referred to as . is a year younger than me and is two years younger than me. I also have three half-sisters , and . I have had very little contact with my half-sisters.
3. was born with a . His leg had to be broken and he wore callipers for a time after this. I think that this was very frustrating for .
4. I know that my first family home was at Cockenzie in East Lothian but I don't remember living there. My father worked in Cockenzie Power Station as a .
5. My first childhood memories are being in Tenterfield Children's Home, Haddington. I would have been around three or four years old when I was there. I believe that my mother and father got into a lot of debt. This led to them eventually splitting up.

6. Myself and [REDACTED] were put into care at Tenterfield Children's Home. [REDACTED] went to stay with foster parents at a farm in the borders. [REDACTED] was just a baby at this time.

Tenterfield Children's Home, Haddington

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Tenterfield

35. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
36. I don't know what the circumstances were around me leaving. All I remember is me and my brother going back to live with my mother in East Kilbride.
37. My mother was living in a council house. I think that at that time East Kilbride was a newly built town. [REDACTED] was now back from foster care and also living with my mother. By this time my mother was living with [REDACTED] who was her second husband.
38. I think that I stayed with my mother for about two years. I went to Castlebrae School. [REDACTED] was now of school age. He would go to school with me.
39. It was a bit daunting being back with my mother. All the houses looked the same in the town. It seemed that me and [REDACTED] were just left to do our own thing. I don't think that we were that well looked after. I don't remember ever getting a cuddle from my mother. She was very cold towards me and [REDACTED].
40. I was always hungry. At school I would always be looking for seconds at lunchtime. Myself and [REDACTED] would also pinch money from my mum's purse so that we could buy something to eat. We were never given any pocket money. If I was caught doing this I would be punished. It would be [REDACTED] who would punish me.
41. If I did do something wrong then [REDACTED] would take his trouser belt to me as a punishment. There seemed to be an extra element to [REDACTED]. I can't put my finger on what it was. It could have been that he just didn't want me and [REDACTED] there.
42. I remember an occasion at night when my mother and [REDACTED] were arguing. I don't know what this was about. It might have been about me and [REDACTED] but I can't be certain. [REDACTED] dressed us in our outdoor clothes. He then opened the door and put

us outside. He said that we should just go. I don't know how long we were outside for. It might have been a while or just a few minutes. I remember my mother came out and took us back inside. I think this shows what [REDACTED] thought about me and [REDACTED].

43. [REDACTED] seemed to be treated differently from me and [REDACTED]. It was like he was the real son to my mum. I don't know why this was. I just got that impression.
44. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were still in care somewhere. They didn't come back to the house until later.

Unknown foster home, East Kilbride

45. At some point myself and [REDACTED] went to stay with foster parents in East Kilbride. I think I might have gone there when I was around seven. I still went to the same school. I don't remember the names of the foster parents. Everything was fine with them. I think I was with them for about a year although I don't remember spending a Christmas with them.
46. I don't know why we went into foster care. It might have been that there was still some involvement with social work and they were keeping an eye on us.
47. The foster parents would buy us new clothes to wear. When we went to my mums for a visit she would take these clothes from us. We would be changed into other clothes. When we went back to our foster parents they would ask where our clothes were. I don't know why my mum did this. Maybe she was giving our new clothes to [REDACTED] but I can't be certain of this.
48. My father would travel from East Lothian and visit us at the foster parents. He would take us out for the day.

49. When I was with the foster parents I was relieved. It was almost like a normal family life. I was glad to be away from my mums as it wasn't a nice place to be staying.

Leaving foster care

50. I don't remember any contact with the social work until near the end of my time with the foster parents. The social worker who came to see us was Mr Vanderson. It was such an unusual name that I have always remembered it. Mr Vanderson took us in his car to my father's new house in the west of Edinburgh. My father had married again. His wife's name was [REDACTED]. They had a baby girl. When we moved in the baby was about nine months old.
51. I didn't know the reason for us going from foster care back to my father's and not my mother's. I didn't really know my father at that time. Before this, when I had any contact with him, he came across as a nice guy. I was happy to be going there away from what I looked on as a dark time with my mother and [REDACTED].
52. My dad was a chef working in a bar. He ended up having an affair with the bar maid. [REDACTED] and the baby left him. I liked [REDACTED] and really felt that things had been better with her there. After [REDACTED] was gone my dad was left trying to look after us. He tried his best but struggled. I never forgave him for messing up what he had with [REDACTED].
53. Me and [REDACTED] would go for weekends to North Berwick. We would stay with my gran and my grandfather.
54. I think that I was around ten when my father had the affair. There wasn't much money and me and [REDACTED] were looked on as the scruffy kids at school. Despite this we had a good group of friends from school that we went around with.
55. The social work became involved with us again. Mr Vanderson would take me and [REDACTED] out for the day. He would buy us shoes and have a chat with us. Not long after this Mr Vanderson told us that we would be going to Red House Home at

Musselburgh. I was both devastated and annoyed. I was more aware now about what was going on. There was no real preamble to leaving my father's. One day we came home from school and were told to pack. The next day we were at Red House. It was Mr Vanderson who took us there.

Red House Home, Musselburgh

56. Red House was a bit of a strange building. It was next to the River Esk in Musselburgh. I think it used to be a private house. It was like a town house on three levels. There was a newer extension to the main building. This part had a trampoline and snooker table. There was also a number of out buildings in the grounds. The gardens were all manicured. You weren't allowed in this area.
57. There was a main entrance for the home. This was never used by the boys. The main entrance was used by people who were visiting the home. The boys had to use the side entrance.
58. There were three dormitories. These were all upstairs. Each of these dormitories had six to eight beds. There were also staff rooms on another floor. These were for the night shift when they stayed over. There were communal toilets and bath areas. The showers were fitted later.
59. In the dining hall the tables were set up for groups of four. There was a room off to the side of the dining room. This had a kitchen area and a place for the dishes to be washed.
60. On the same floor past the dining hall was a room with pigeon holes where your spare clothes were kept.
61. When I first arrived at Red House it was all boys. There were about eighteen boys aged between seven and fourteen. Once I had been there a while the home started to take girls in as well.

Staff

62. Mr EWC [REDACTED] was SNR [REDACTED] of the home. He stayed there with his wife, Mrs EWD [REDACTED]. She also worked in the home. I always felt that Mr EWC [REDACTED] did his best. He always seemed to want the best for the boys. Mrs EWD [REDACTED] on the other hand was a disciplinarian.
63. There was a cook who coincidentally was called Mrs Cook. Mr EWC [REDACTED]'s daughter, EWW [REDACTED] worked in the home as well. She started off as a cleaner then ended up as a carer. The others I remember were Mrs Ritchie, the gardener and the handyman. I don't remember the names of the gardener or handyman.
64. Mrs Horn was a social worker. She would regularly visit the home. Mrs Horn seemed to be attached to the home but I don't think she was actually a staff member.

Routine at Red House

First day

65. Mr Vanderson dropped us off at Red House with a few belongings that we had. We were introduced to Mr and Mrs EWC-EWD [REDACTED]. Mr Vanderson didn't stay long before leaving. More or less the first thing that happened to me and [REDACTED] was that we were put into separate baths. Mrs EWD [REDACTED] and EWW [REDACTED] stood and watched us to make sure we washed ourselves. I think that this was just procedure for them to do this when anyone new arrived at the home. I found this to be totally inappropriate. Even now I don't know why they would think that it was okay to do this.
66. After the bath we were given clothes to wear. Our own clothes were taken away. All our belongings we had with us were just left in the living room. The other kids in the home started raking through our things. Inevitably things went missing.

67. We were given a meal then myself and [REDACTED] were shown our room where we would be sleeping. There were four other boys in the room with us. In the room we each had a locker but you couldn't lock it. I had some toys with me that I kept in this locker.
68. Nobody had spoken with us about why we were there or how long we would be at the home. It was all a bit of a shock. Some of the other boys there were quite intimidating. There was clearly a hierarchy there among the boys. I found this quite intimidating when we first arrived.

Mornings and bedtime

69. One of the staff would normally get us up in the morning. I think that this was around six thirty.
70. There were different bed times at night depending on your age. As a ten year old I was in the middle group for going to bed. This was around seven or eight. You had a wash and brushed your teeth before going to bed. This would be supervised by one of the staff.

Mealtimes/Food

71. There wasn't much choice with the food. In the morning you could have toast or cereals for breakfast.
72. If I was at school I would have my lunch there.
73. At night the meal was normally meat. It was horrible and tough. It would go grey when you ate it but you couldn't swallow it. The staff would try and get you to eat it. If you didn't eat it then you might get some of your pocket money taken away.
74. You would be given toast and milk before going to bed. You would have this in the kitchen not the dining room.

Leisure time

75. Football was a massive thing at Red House. There would always be a game going on between the boys. Even Mr EWC would get involved. He would come out and join in the game. There were a couple of floodlights outside. This meant that even when it was dark we could play football. This was one of the positive things about Red House.
76. You could play pool, table tennis or go on the trampoline in the games room. There was also a record player to play your music on. We would normally be in the games room if it was bad weather.
77. During lunchtimes I would go running. I realised that if I did this it would stop me having the opportunity of getting into trouble. I also started to play chess.
78. I would go fishing in my spare time. If I caught any fish I would sell it to the local Chinese take away. I might get £2 per fish.
79. When I was older I was allowed to go out to the town. The curfew for being back in the home at night was 10pm.

School

80. I went to Musselburgh Primary School. I think I was in primary five or six. I was always called a 'home boy' at school. I felt that I was on the outside a bit because I was from the home.
81. When I was old enough I moved to Musselburgh Grammar School. It was a typical secondary school. Again I was still known as a 'home boy'. By this time I was beginning to be a bit rebellious. I would get into trouble for smoking and fighting. I was also drinking most weekends. If I did something wrong at school I would receive the belt from the teachers.

82. At school I passed six O levels. I would say that this was despite of Red House rather than because of them. I was never given any encouragement by the staff to do well at school. I did everything off my own back.

Healthcare

83. If there was something minor wrong with you then the staff would be able to carry out basic first aid. This side of things was okay. I do feel that overall though the care provided for your well-being if you were ill was lacking.
84. I had lots of chest infections. The place wasn't particular warm. I think there was a bit of damp. Nobody seemed to bother about my chest infections until they were really bad. I would then be taken to the local doctor in Musselburgh. I was normally prescribed penicillin for these infections.
85. When I was in care my teeth were very bad. I think that the first time I saw a dentist was when I stayed at Sighthill with my father. It was ■■■ who took me. At Red House I was taken into town for regular check-ups at the dentist.

Work

86. You were expected to wash your own clothes. I think that someone showed me how to work the machine. There was also a rota to clear the dishes from the tables and wash them.
87. I had to keep my own area around my bed tidy.
88. The general cleaning around the home was done by the cleaners who worked there.

Birthdays and Christmas

89. Christmas was always celebrated at the home. I was given toys as presents and it was obvious the staff had spent a bit of money on these.
90. I would go to my gran's for most of the Christmas's when I was at Red House.

Visits/Inspections

91. There was occasional meetings between me, a social worker and a member of staff. Mrs Horn would always be there. Sometimes there might be a teacher from the school there as well. At these meetings I might be asked what I wanted to happen with me. When I said I wanted to go back with my father they would just tell me that this was a non-starter. These meetings I would say were like a review of my time at Red House.
92. I don't remember any inspections at Red House. If there had been I would have remembered this.

Family contact

93. My father visited me a couple of times over a period of around four years. Eventually he stopped coming. It seemed that he had just dropped me and [REDACTED] out of his lives.
94. My gran would visit us occasionally. We would also be allowed to get the bus to go and see our gran and grandad at their house.

Running away

95. Mrs [REDACTED] EWD would threaten me with going to a List D school if I misbehaved. When she did this I would run away. I did this a few times. I would try to go to my fathers or stay at a friends for the night.

96. I would either go back myself or the police would find me. If the police found me they would accuse me of crimes in their area. They would try to get me to confess to these. I never admitted to anything as I hadn't been involved.
97. I ran away a lot as a result of arguments with staff or having been involved in fights with other boys. It was an intimidating environment at Red House. I didn't want to be there but I had no choice. No one ever asked why I ran away or sat me down to discuss things.

Discipline

98. When I started to misbehave at the home and school I would have my pocket money taken away from me. We were only given 5p a week. If you spoke out of turn or did something else wrong you might get 2p taken away from this.
99. There was no arbitrary person that you could speak to try and resolve things. I think that the staff were keen to show that they were disciplinarians. I basically fought back against this.

Bed Wetting

100. Myself and [REDACTED] would wet the bed. This had started when we stayed with our dad. Around six thirty each morning one of the staff would come into our bedroom and ask if you had wet the bed. They would take you on your word if you told them you hadn't. It was clear that the staff frowned upon bed wetting.
101. I had a rubber sheet put on my bed. There was also a machine which beeped if you wet the bed. I was never taken to the doctor to try and find out why I wet the bed.
102. There would be some female members of staff who would just come in ask you if you had wet the bed. They would put their hands under your bed sheets and pyjamas. They would then touch you either on the genitals or bottom. This totally freaked me out. I think that this was a punishment to humiliate you. It certainly

humiliated me. The females who did this to me were [EWW], a staff member Mrs [RGA] and Mrs [RCU], who was also a staff member. [EWW] is dead. She actually died whilst I was still at Red House. [EWW] was involved in a car accident. Her husband died in the accident. [EWW] had a serious head injury and was never the same. she eventually died.

103. I don't know if any other staff members knew about the female staff members who would touch you.
104. If I had wet the bed I was made to strip it in front of the other boys. I then had to take my sheets downstairs to the laundry and wash them by hand. The washing powder was very caustic. This led to me having badly cracked hands. The other boys who wet the bed also had to do this. This went on for about a year. I think that eventually one of the staff noticed how the washing powder affected our hands. After this we were told to wash our sheets in cold water then put them in the washing machine. I never received any medical treatment for the rash on my hands.
105. I continued to wet the bed until I was about fourteen. I just stopped doing it. I don't know if I just grew out of it.

Other information

106. I was about fourteen when the home started to take girls in. The dynamics of the place changed a lot when this happened. This was just because of the whole girl and boy thing.
107. I don't think the amount of boys changed when the girls came. I would say that the numbers were almost the same. The staff numbers also stayed the same.
108. To me the girls seemed to be treated differently by the staff. They always seemed to have better clothes than the boys.

109. When I was about fifteen I was moved to a room of my own. This had its own lock. This gave you a little bit of privacy as you got older. Mrs EWD had already told me that when I was sixteen she could kick me out at any time. This gave me food for thought. I now knew that I had to plan for my life ahead.
110. After a while I was moved to a separate building next to the home. There were two separate bedrooms in this building. One bedroom was for two girls and the other was for two boys.
111. I had my own front door and was given £25 per week to live on. I had to do my own cooking and cleaning. I was expected to budget the food I ate from the £25. I don't think that this was enough.
112. When I was living at the other building there was not much supervision from the staff. They might come and see you now and again to see how you were getting on. I think the point of moving into the other building was to teach you how to be self-sufficient. I wouldn't say that you really got any help from the staff to do this.
113. I would regularly see boys aged in their twenties visiting the girls who stayed in the same building as me. I didn't think that this was right. I could also smell marijuana being smoked.

Abuse at Red House

114. One of the staff, Mrs RGA, would punch me in the face for misbehaving.
115. Mrs RGA, Mrs RCU and EWV all started as cleaners in the home. All of the sudden they had the power to punish you for doing things wrong. I could have told Mrs EWD but she was friends with them all. She would have immediately backed them up. The only person that I felt I might be able to speak with was Mr EWC.

116. If EWW was dealing with something like being cheeky or answering back to staff then she would sometimes bring her dog in. I'm not sure why this was. I might just have been that she felt intimidated. In any case when she did this I was bitten by the dog on more than one occasion.
117. When I was being hit or the dog had bitten me I started to suffer from black moods. I would also feel depressed. The age I was at that time made it difficult for me to talk about these things. I would just go away and start drinking. I would either have my own pocket money that I had saved or maybe money that my gran had gave me. I would use this money to buy alcohol. My gran didn't know that I was using the money she had given me to buy alcohol.
118. If I went home drunk the staff wouldn't really say anything. They would just laugh and comment that I was drunk again. Nobody tried to sit me down and ask why I was drinking.
119. It was the same with smoking. I would say that 90% of the children in the home smoked. The staff knew this but didn't bother.

Reporting of abuse at Red House

120. I told Mr EWC about Mrs RGA punching me. Not long after this Mrs RGA was sacked and was gone from the home. I don't know if this was as a direct result of me having spoken with Mr EWC.

Leaving Red House

121. I stayed in the accommodation next to the home until I was eighteen. This would have been 1985. I was told that Red House was going to be closing. At this time I was preparing to sit my prelims for my highers. I decided that I was going to sign up for the armed forces. I joined up a few days after my eighteenth birthday.

122. My brother █████ ended up in a charity house in Musselburgh.

Life after being in care

123. The environment I had been used to within Red House helped me quickly adapt to life with the armed forces. I served for twelve years before leaving.

124. Since leaving the armed forces I have worked in a government post within the public sector.

125. Whilst I was in the armed forces I met my wife. I also have two daughters. I was married for seventeen years before separating.

126. It all came to a head when one of my daughters was going through a hard time in her life and tried to take her own life. I couldn't cope with this. It brought back memories of Red House when I had witnessed some of the girls there self-harming. At the same time as this was happening I had to deal with some very extreme circumstances at my work. This included finding someone who had attempted to take their own life. All of these things going on in my life led to me leaving my family. I later realised that at that time I was suffering from undiagnosed PTSD. This was as a result of what I had seen at my work.

127. Since I split up with my wife I have seen very little of my daughters. At the time I just couldn't cope with what my daughter was going through. I think that my wife has now poisoned them against me. I find this really disappointing. I had told my wife a good bit about my time in care and my life as a child. I didn't confide in my daughters as they were quite young at the time. All of this happening to me left me feeling very down. I felt that this was history repeating itself for me.

128. I could never understand at the time why I walked away from my wife and kids. It went against what I had believed in. I now know why I did this. At that time the need

was for me to get away on my own. I thought that if I didn't I would not be able to survive.

129. My father died from cancer a few years ago. I couldn't bring myself to go to his funeral. I still hated him for doing what he did that led to me ending up at Red House.
130. I haven't spoken with my mother since I was sixteen. I keep in touch with [REDACTED] through Facebook. I hear from him how my mother is doing.

Impact

131. I have always had difficulty with relationships involving females. I don't seem to be able to trust them. I found it difficult to be affectionate towards my wife and two daughters. This was when the pieces around my life started to unravel. It wasn't a good mix to have in my life. I feel that I looked at sex as being more important than affection.
132. I have suffered from flashbacks about the abuse that happened to me when I was in care. I have worked with people who have difficulties in life through things like trying to take their own lives and self-harming. I spoke to a counsellor at my work. They told me that I was suffering from PTSD. I needed to get some of the control back into my life that I had before.
133. The resilience that I needed was to do what I needed for myself rather than others. I had previously always tried to appease others. Everything that happened to me at [REDACTED] Secondary Institute Red House and with my dad to a certain extent has had an effect on my adult life.
134. I suffer a lot from anxiety and I am depressed a lot. These feelings of blackness started when I was at Red House. I had never felt like that before going in there. I was prescribed anti-depressants. Both times I have attempted suicide was when I was taking the anti-depressants and drinking alcohol.

Reporting of Abuse

135. I have never reported the abuse that I suffered to anyone other than when I told Mr **EWC** about Mrs **RGA** assaulting me.

Records

136. I have never tried to obtain my records from my time in care.

Lessons to be Learned

137. There should be more education into why children self-harm when they are in care. I believe that there should be more money spent on educating staff and children in care.
138. There should be a multi-team approach for children in care. Everybody needs to take responsibility. This includes schools and GP's to identify any issues.
139. When I was in care no one questioned my behaviour. Staff need to be able to identify issues. Nobody ever asked why I was drinking or smoking. They just let me get on with it. This should have been challenged and dealt with to find out the reasons why I was doing this.
140. When children go into care there should be something in place to prepare them. The child should know who to go to if they are feeling angry, down or just need to speak to someone. If there was a questionnaire for the child to complete when they arrive in care this might help to identify any potential issues.

Other information

Treatment/counselling

141. I have now been diagnosed with PTSD by my GP. I had some counselling sessions after this diagnosis. I managed to speak about the abuse I suffered. I then started to have EMDR treatment, which was arranged by my GP. EMDR is eye movement desensitisation reprocessing. This treatment has been very effective for me. There are touchstone memories that I have spoken about. This has included my experiences at Red House. I am still having this treatment.

Hopes for the Inquiry

142. I hope that the Inquiry will put in place systems that ensure no one who has harmed a child is able to work with children again. I feel that if someone working with children commits an offence the punishment should be more severe for them when dealt with by the courts.

143. There should be a recommendation that there should always be two staff to one child when in contact with them. This would be safer for the child and the staff.

144. 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... 6/1/2020