

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PEY

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is PEY. My date of birth is 1961. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born at home on in Bridgeton in Glasgow. We moved around a lot after that. The first place I remember living in is in Bridgeton. I had ten brothers and sisters, I was the fourth eldest.
3. When I was about ten, we moved to the Springburn area in Glasgow. My mother stayed home to look after us. My father was there rarely. He worked as a scaffolder. I don't know if he was away working. I don't know the reason he wasn't at home.
4. I was close with my siblings but not so close to my mum. I suppose she spent most of her time looking after all the children on her own.

Fornethy House, Perthshire

5. I went to Fornethy House in Perthshire at least three times for about six weeks at a time. I was told it was a residential school. I think I was put into care as I was undernourished and not in good health. I remember always having colds and sore

ears. I also think it was to give my mum a break. A couple of my brothers and sisters would go into care at different times.

6. The first time I went to Fornethy House, I went with my eldest sister [REDACTED]. The second time I think I was by myself, and the third time I was with my youngest sister [REDACTED]. I don't know how it was organised or who organised it. I was just told I was being sent away to a residential school and that was it.

First day

7. I was about six years old the first time. I'm not sure of exact ages. This is the reason I am keen to see my records. I think I had been attending the Campbell Field Primary School or I was at Anfield School at the time. I don't know who organised for me to go into care.
8. I went on a bus to Fornethy House. I remember my mum taking me from our house to Charlotte Street in Glasgow. My sister [REDACTED] and I got on the bus. The bus had lots of other girls on it. I think there were about thirty girls. There were no boys.
9. I remember there being a woman on the bus. I felt sick and she gave me a bag to be sick in. I had been told I was going to a residential school but I wasn't sure what that meant.
10. When we arrived, we were lined up and our names were called. I didn't know what was going to happen to me. I was not excited about being there. I remember not being happy about leaving my brothers and sisters. I would have preferred to stay at home.
11. After your name was called out, you were allocated a dorm. The dorm was a long room with lots of beds. There was a locker next to each bed and your things were put in it. My mum had been given a list of things that we were to bring. We took our stuff in a bag from home and then we put it in the locker. I remember not having toothpaste at home and my mum got us some for going.

12. I was separated from my sister [REDACTED]. I don't know where she went. I would sometimes see her in the dining room. We were not allowed to roam freely about the house. There were other dorms and they had different names. I can't remember the name of the dorm I was in. The dorm had about ten or twelve beds. It looked like a hospital ward.
13. It was the same teachers every time I went. There was Miss Robertson, Miss [REDACTED] LBD [REDACTED], Miss Fletcher and Miss [REDACTED] LAT [REDACTED].

Routine at Fornethy House

Mornings and bedtime

14. We were woken up early in the morning. Someone would come into our room and shout at us to get up. We had to get up and make our beds. The bed had to be made properly. They would inspect your bed and if you didn't make it to their standard they would shout and bawl at you. They would also give you a slap. The bed would be stripped and you would be made to do it again.
15. We then had to brush our teeth. We stood in a line at the bathroom. The bathroom was on the same floor as the dorm. We were told to brush our teeth quickly.
16. At bedtime we would have to brush our teeth and get straight into bed. It was a regimented routine. It was very strict.

Bed-wetting

17. The staff used to come in the middle of the night and check if anyone had wet the bed. They would pull you of your bed in the middle of the night. They would check your bed and they would check your underwear. If they found that you had soiled your pants, you were made to take them off and put them in a pile in the middle of

the room. We were then marched into the bathroom and made to clean the pants. It was dark and the floors were freezing. It was Miss Robertson and Miss Fletcher who would demand that we got up out of our beds. They were both nasty women. They would be checking if you had wiped your bottom properly. If your pants were not clean then after you had to wash them, the pants would be put on a radiator to dry. This happened regularly.

18. The bed-wetters had to turn the chair at the end of their bed to the side before they went to bed at night. This was so the staff would know who wet their bed. I would turn my chair but I didn't wet the bed. I was too scared.
19. If you did wet the bed, you would get a doing from a staff member. If you wet the bed in the middle of the night, you had to lie in it until the morning.

Hygiene

20. We were given baths. I would describe bath time as like a sheep-dip. The water was not changed in between the girls. When you first arrived at the house, they would give you a bath and scrub you down. They would scrub you like they were scrubbing a motor. It was not a gentle scrub. They would then check your hair. I always seemed to have nits. They would put a smelly lotion on your head. They would then take a bone comb and roughly pull it through your hair.

Food

21. The dining room was downstairs. After we had brushed our teeth in the morning, we went down for breakfast. We had to line up for our food. A woman gave us our food and we had to shout "thank you." The teachers would all be lined up watching you. They would have breakfast with us. It was like they were waiting to pounce on you if you did something wrong.

22. After breakfast, we put our wellies on and went on walks or outside to play. We would then have to go back in for lunch. The routine was the same as for breakfast. We had to line up for our food. The teachers would all be watching.
23. If you didn't eat your food, it would be kept back for you to eat at the next mealtime. So if you didn't eat your porridge in the morning then when you went back to the dining room at lunchtime it was there waiting for you. You were kept back and made to eat it. We were made to sit around a table and made to eat the food that made us gag and be sick. If you were sick then they made you eat your own vomit. I don't know how often this happened. It happened to me quite a few times. It happened to all the children. I didn't like bread and butter pudding and I was forced to eat it.

School

24. I remember being taken to a school room. I think we were only taken there once a week. We did some writing and some sums. Only certain people would be taken to the school room. Not everyone went but I got to go.

Leisure time

25. When we were outside in the grounds, we were left to organise ourselves. We played with the grass and stones. We pretended they were money for the shop. We were also taken on organised walks. This would happen every couple of days.
26. We would be told to put on wellies and we would walk for miles. We had no socks on and the rubber at the top of the wellies would rub against our legs causing it to bleed. We did not receive any medical attention for this. I didn't speak to anyone about it as we all suffered it.
27. We also had to write letters home. We had to write out what was written on the board. My mum would send me in a postal order. I was allowed to use this money to buy sweets.

Visits/Inspections

28. I didn't receive any visits from a social worker when I was in care. I never saw a social worker when I was at home either.

Healthcare

29. There was a medical room. If you were not feeling well, you were sent to the medical room. One of the staff would get a big spoon. It was like a tablespoon. They would put something on it. I don't know if it was cough mixture or if it was cod liver oil. They would put the spoon to the back of your mouth and you would gag. The liquid was rammed down your throat. I was quite a sickly child. I was always loaded with the cold so I was sent quite a few times. Once they rammed the medicine down your throat, you were then told to carry on with what you had been doing. You were not allowed to stay in bed.
30. To this day, I can't have anything in my mouth. I believe this was from the trauma of them ramming the spoon down my throat.

Abuse at Fornethy House

31. I have no clear recollection of specific abuse from the first time I was there. All I remember is that I wasn't happy to be going back. I know there was abuse the first time I was there but I think I have blocked lots of things out.
32. When I arrived the second time, I remember I had been sick on the bus. When I got off the bus, Miss Robertson, one of the members of staff, said she recognised me. She said "PEY [REDACTED], you have been here before." She punched me on the right hand side of my head. I then hit my head against the wall. My sister [REDACTED] just stood there horrified, she was only five years old at the time.

33. It was not a nice atmosphere. I was witnessing people getting shouted at and slapped. We were not allowed to talk to one another. They would shout at you for speaking. I remember going back for the second time and I felt absolutely terrified. I was in a right state as I knew what I was going for.
34. I remember another time I was outside. It must have been springtime. I was trying to pet a lamb. I was so cold that I had not realised that I had cut my face on the barbed wire. When I got back I was marched down to the medical room. A bit of gauze was put on the cut and I was shoved away. I had been so cold I couldn't feel the cut on my face. When we were outside we had to wear a floral smock over our clothes, it was like a Victorian smock. It was not warm enough. We were not allowed to go back inside until they gave us permission.
35. When we were outside, we were not allowed to ask to go to the toilet. We had to hold it in. We were only allowed to go to the toilet at certain times during the day. We would go to the toilet when we got up in the morning, then at lunchtime and again just before bed.
36. We were not allowed to communicate with the other girls. Talking was not allowed between the girls. I remember one time Miss Robertson leathered me for smiling at another girl. We were in the dining room and I smiled at this other girl. Miss Robertson came up and grabbed me by my clothes. She grabbed my pants and yanked them up into my privates. She leathered into my leg really hard. She then beat the other lassie up. She did this in front of all the staff and the kids. She used her hands. Miss Robertson was a big woman.
37. Sometimes we whispered to each other. We were allowed to sing when we were in the TV room. They would let us sing songs that were in the charts at the time. I remember singing "Ten Guitars" and "Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep".
38. I must have been close to leaving when Miss LBD punched me in the ear. She was allowing me to buy sweets with my postal order from my mum. She was asking what I wanted. I told her that I wanted to buy something for my brothers and sisters.

She punched me to the side of my head. It was so hard that I fell onto the concrete floor. I couldn't hear anything. I blacked out, I remember nothing about it.

39. I must've been unconscious as I woke up in a single room and there was a man standing over me. I think he must have been a doctor as he had a stethoscope round his neck. Miss LBD and Miss Robertson were also in the room. I remember being terrified of them. I had my night clothes on. I don't remember how I got there. I don't know how long I was in the single room for. I don't think I received any treatment for my right ear.
40. I think I have blanked out much of the abuse. It's like I have shut myself down. My most vivid recollections are from my last time at Fornethy House. I know I was hit and I was scared of all the staff. The staff were all women. The staff would sit and watch you all the time. You were too scared to do anything. I think they would victim-pick. They all abused us.
41. I remember waking up one morning and my hair was sticking to my pillow. My ear had been running that night. I was terrified that I was going to get into trouble for making a mess of my pillow. The teacher said it was ok so she must have been one of the nicer ones. On this occasion I was not beaten up.
42. One night, my sister came into bed with me. She had wet herself and was freezing cold. She was soaking with urine. I told her that she had to go back to her own bed. I was terrified that we were going to get beaten up if we were found in bed together. I wouldn't have been able to have handle watching that. then went back to her own bed
43. I remember two sisters at Fornethy House. They both had short hair. We had been outside. I was sitting with an Asian lassie. We sometimes sat together but not talking. One of the sisters nudged the other sister and she ended up in the frog pond. A member of staff dragged them both inside. One was grabbed by her hair and the other was grabbed by her clothes. The girls were given a beating with a shoe or a slipper. They were screaming. I'll never forget the screams. They were

getting really leathered. I think the girls were about six or seven. I sat with tears streaming down my face. I don't remember seeing the sisters again. This incident really sticks in my head. It was a brutal attack. I'm not sure which teacher leathered them, it might have been Miss Robertson.

44. The only man about the place was the handyman ^{PWI} [REDACTED]. I remember he came into the shower room. I was having my shower with [REDACTED]. We had no clothes on. I think I was about ten. There was one teacher in the room. When ^{PWI} [REDACTED] walked in, there was eye contact between him and the teacher. I'm not sure why but I was shaking in my shoes. I grabbed a facecloth and tried to hide [REDACTED]'s and my private parts. I was terrified that we were going to be taken away by him. I don't know why I did that and why I felt that way. I don't know why he was in the room when we were showering. There were some girls who were more developed than me. They were shouting at ^{PWI} [REDACTED]. They were laughing and sneering.
45. Two girls escaped from the house. When they were found, they were dragged into a room in front of the rest of us girls. We had all been put into this big room. They had been beaten up and they were totally distraught. The staff were pointing at them and told us this is what we would get if we ran away. We were told not to speak to the two girls. I think this happened the time I was there with [REDACTED].

Dr Lumsden's Home, Maybole, Ayrshire

46. I was sent to a home in Maybole for four weeks on one occasion. I was there with my older sister [REDACTED]. I think it was after my first time at Fornethy House.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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48.

49.

50. I only stayed there for about four weeks which was less time that I spent at Fornethy House. I still didn't like being away from my brothers and sisters.

Reporting of abuse

51. I didn't tell anyone what was happening at Fornethy House. My mum was always too busy to talk to. She was always working out how she was going to feed us all. It must have been really hard for her. I used to beg her not to send me back to Fornethy House. She didn't want us to go into care full time. Sending us away for short periods of time was her attempt at keeping the family together.

Life after being in care

52. We had moved to a house in Springburn when I was about nine or ten. I think the flat we had been staying in was basically part of a derelict building. We had no inside toilet and no hot water. We were the last family to be moved out and rehoused. We moved to [REDACTED] Springburn, Glasgow. The house had a bath and a garden.
53. I didn't have to go back to Fornethy House. Neither did any of my siblings. I felt like I had become an adult as I no longer needed to be sent away. I think I was too old to be sent away to residential school.

54. I liked living at the house in Springburn. I would help my mum out with my younger siblings and I used to give them their baths. I left school when I was about fourteen or fifteen. I wasn't encouraged to stay on. I think this was because I came from one of the poorer areas.
55. I had a breakdown when I was about seventeen or eighteen. I wasn't eating and I ended up in hospital. We were not a well-off family and I thought that if I didn't eat then my brothers and sisters would have more food. I had just heard that Fornethy House had just closed down. This rattled me. I had wanted to go back as an adult and confront the staff there.
56. I think I went into a depression. I was prescribed [REDACTED] tablets. I decided to take [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I walked down the main road. I tried to get myself killed [REDACTED]. Someone took me back to my mum's house. She made me drink salt water to make me sick. It was a wake-up call for me. I realised what I had done. It made me stronger and I decided to get on with my life.
57. I trained as a machinist. I got married when I was about 22 or 23. My sister [REDACTED] used to come and stay with us at the weekends and then she just ended up staying. I kept her for years. I was thirteen years older than her. I was like a mum to her. I worked hard and I would buy her things. I took care of her. She had a different way of life from what we had. I made sure she had clothes. Anything she wanted she just had to say.
58. I was 27 years old when I had my first child, [REDACTED]. I was 30 when I had [REDACTED]. I had moved around a lot as a child so I made sure that my kids only had two addresses. I worked for a short time after I had [REDACTED]. My mum used to help look after the kids but when she died I had to give up work. As I got older, I became closer to my mum. When I was younger she was just too busy and we were not close.

Impact

59. The impact from my experiences at Fornethy House have been huge. I don't like being in the dark. I don't like being closed in and I don't like people too near me. I can't hug anyone, I don't like people being too close to me. I don't like being in a lift. I don't trust people.
60. At Fornethy House, they used to turn the lights out and shout and bawl. It freaked me out. It was pitch black and they would march us down to the toilet. In my own house, I leave all my doors open in the house. I leave my hall lights on. I am terrified of having to get up and go to the toilet in the dark. I was also frightened my kids would wake up and not see where they were going in the middle of the night if they needed the toilet.
61. I became over-protective of my children. When I had to start letting them go a little bit by sending them to the shop, I would run down and peek out of the closed door to see they were alright.
62. I once went on holiday with my pal. I was a nightmare. I started to panic as I'd been away for a couple of days. I wanted to get back as soon as possible. I thought I wasn't getting home. I connect that to my experiences at Fornethy House. I always had a fear when I was there that I was not going to be allowed to go home. I was never told how long I was going to be staying for. I'm ok to go away for a daytrip or a week at the very longest. There is no way I could go away from home for a fortnight.
63. I don't like people hugging me, I'm not used to that. It puts me into a panic, I start sweating. I received no comfort at home or at Fornethy House. There was no affection shown even between my siblings. I would cuddle my children when they were young but I don't cuddle them now they are adults.
64. I don't trust people in authority. If I don't know them then I don't trust them. I analyse people. I also don't trust people who have eyes like Miss LBD or Miss Fletcher. They had tiny, evil eyes.

65. I put my lack of trust down to my experience at Fornethy House. I couldn't talk to anyone. I was scared to even look at anybody. I was happy with my brothers and sisters before I went to Fornethy House. That changed after I went to Fornethy House.
66. I had surgery on my right ear on 19 December 2007. I kept taking ear infections. My inner ear was all smashed inside. After the surgery, I had to go for check-ups. Three years after the surgery, the doctor asked if I had been in a car crash. He thought that was what had caused the damage in the first place. I told him that I hadn't been in a car crash. I told him that I had been punched in the ear as a child. It was after my meeting with the doctor, I started to look back at my childhood.
67. I went back to Fornethy house. I thought I heard things when I was about the house. I did not go inside. It gave me the heeby jeebies when I saw the side door. It reminded me of the when the two sisters were dragged through it after they had fallen in the frog pond.
68. I have relationship problems. I can cut people off easily if they annoy me in any way., I just take a step back. I just won't have them in my life. I am no longer in contact with my brothers and sisters. When I was nursing my dad, my older sister thought I was there to make money. It caused a rift in the family.
69. My sister [REDACTED] died seven years ago. We had not spoken since she started her relationship with my husband. I learned only a few months ago that she had committed suicide. [REDACTED] had been in Fornethy House with me the last time I was there. [REDACTED] went down the wrong road in life. She took to drink and drugs. I think she committed suicide because of what happened to her in Fornethy House. She used to be pulled out her bed in the middle of the night because she wet the bed. I feel bad now for not speaking to her. I didn't realise what her problem was. I used to think that she went off with my husband to get back at me because I didn't protect her.

70. I went to see a lawyer about my time in care. He told me to get in touch with the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. The Inquiry put me in touch with Future Pathways. I had a meeting with a woman called Yvonne Donald. She mentioned Helen Holland. I then got in touch with INCAS. Once I had spoken to Helen, I felt she could help me more. I was so glad to have met Helen. INCAS made a private referral for counselling and I see a counsellor once a week. My counsellor's name is Margaret and I see her at Park Circus in Glasgow. I have only started to talk about my abuse this year. I also do tai chi and I would also like to take up yoga.

Records

71. I have made an application to get my records. There is an ongoing problem between Possil Council and Springburn Council about providing me with my medical records. I am keen to see my records as I want to know exact dates of when I was in care. I am hopeful of getting them in the near future.

Hopes for the Inquiry

72. I would like the Inquiry to be able to help people like myself. I would hope that it would help kids in care so that what I suffered won't happen again. I would like the Inquiry to be able to help people that are not as strong as myself like my sister [REDACTED] who has not been able to give her evidence to the Inquiry.

73. 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... PEY [REDACTED]

Dated... ~~#~~ 19/9/2017