

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PGN

Support person present: No

1. My name is PGN. I was married but I didn't take his name so my name has been PGN all my life. My date of birth is 1965. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Rottenrow hospital in Glasgow. At that time my family lived in the Cowcaddens area. After that, we moved to a bigger house in Ibrox. My mum was from West Kilbride and my dad was from Paisley. My mum's name is and my dad is. They had both been married before but we didn't know that when we were kids.
3. There were seven of us. I have three brothers and three sisters. My oldest sister is. Her date of birth is 1958. My brother is born on 1961. My brother is born on 1963. Then there is me. Then there is my sister who was born on 1966. Then is on 1969 and is 1971. and were from my mum's previous marriage but we weren't told that until much later. We were all treated as brothers and sisters. There was no distinction made.
4. At that time, Ibrox was a very poor, deprived area. We stayed in tenements and there were a lot of big families. There were good points and bad points. There was a lot of conflict with neighbours falling out and poverty but also a lot of happiness and love. I

had a lot of friends. The period of the 'three day week' had just ended so it was a real struggle for every family. We weren't unique in that sense.

5. My parents were very loving but they had a hard time trying to feed us. Sometimes it was really tough. My dad was an unskilled labourer. He was in and out of work. He worked in a lot of places and went away to work a few times. I can remember debt collectors coming to the house.
6. My memories are mixed with some struggles. Despite the hard times, there was some happiness and fun.
7. There was a very strong community, everyone knew each other and looked out for one another. There was a 'strength in numbers' kind of mentality. At that time, a lot of kids were getting into trouble in the area. My oldest brother got into trouble with other boys so he was assigned a social worker. He went into Kerelaw. It was devastating for my mum and dad. The social worker was called Angus. He was a big, tall chap who wore a deer stocker hat and glasses. He was very friendly and on good terms with my mum and dad. The rest of us were fine.
8. I went to Bellahouston Annex from age five to seven and then after that I went to Ibrox Primary. However, at the time it was called Bellahouston Primary. I was quite a shy kid. I was the quiet one in the family. I was more of an observer than a participant. I used to sit and watch everybody. Despite being shy, I liked school and I had friends. I was in the school choir and the teachers liked me. I didn't get into any trouble or anything like that.
9. From what I can remember, my teacher, Miss Wilson told the class that we could go on a holiday to a residential school. I can remember thinking it sounded interesting because a real holiday wasn't a thing for us. We were just used to going to stay at my granny's.
10. Miss Wilson said you could put your hand up if you wanted a letter to take home to your mum and dad. So I put my hand up and took the letter. My sister, [REDACTED], and

I would meet at the gates and walk the short journey home. I said to her that we should go because it looked fun.

11. When we went home that day, my sister, [REDACTED], and me were harping on at my mum, saying "please can we go?" She really didn't want us to go and was totally against it. My mum had just lost two sisters due to illness shortly before that so I don't know if my dad maybe suggested that it might be a break for her. She eventually gave in and filled in the forms.
12. My sister, [REDACTED], was a happy, bubbly wee lassie. She was the joker who always made everybody laugh. My mum had to get provident cheques to get us some clothes.
13. On the morning we were going to the school, my dad took us into town and dropped us off. I can remember arriving at a really old, shabby looking office. I don't know where the office was, if it was Glasgow Corporation. There was a girl sitting inside. She was from Govan. She was the same age as me but I can't remember her name. Her dad was there too and he was talking to my dad. They came from the 'Wine Alley' in Govan. It was an area in Govan which was even worse than Ibrox. She looked really sad and said something like, "my dad's making me go". I was just so excited. I thought it was a big adventure.
14. My next memory is of getting on the bus. I can remember sitting at the window and my dad waving at us. The same girl sat behind my sister and me. She just looked so forlorn and depressed with her head against the window. I turned around and asked her if she was excited. She said "I've been there before and I don't want to go back." There was an empty space beside her.
15. We were going for five weeks but other people went for six. I don't know if they hadn't been able to fill all the spaces and we were a second intake. The bus was a single decker with empty seats. It was all girls on the bus. I'm sure there was a woman taking us on the bus. It was [REDACTED] because there was still snow lying in the countryside on the way there. I think it was in 1975 but my sister thinks it was 1974. I have a memory of being on the bus and hearing Mr Postman by the Carpenters.

Fornethy House Residential School, Kilry, Angus

16. I can remember arriving. It was unforgettable because it was really terrifying. It seemed to take forever to get there. Nobody had explained that the journey would take a wee while. Nothing was said.
17. The house itself was so imposing. It was massive and looked really scary. It was terrifying, really frightening for wee girls. When we got there, everything was suddenly manic. We were told to get off the bus and line up. This woman with a manly, hoarse voice was quite aggressive telling everyone to line up. She was called Miss Robertson.
18. Miss Robertson was in charge. She wore glasses and was quite slim with wavy hair. She had a voice like a foghorn. I would have said she was around my mum's age. She could've been young but it's so hard to determine age when you're a child. Looking back, she probably wasn't any older than early thirties but I'm not sure. I just know she was an adult and I knew she had to be respected. We were to do what we were told. My sister and I were good kids. We had been brought up to respect adults and not to be cheeky.

First day

19. It was really regimented. There was no welcome or being told to enjoy our stay. Our parents were quite gentle speaking folk and these people were shouting so it was quite scary for us. The house was old fashioned inside and there was wood on the bannisters. I can remember getting marched in and being told to move. When we got inside, we were put in a room and told to sit on the floor. Our names were shouted out to go wherever we were going.
20. One of the worst things about that day was being told to line up outside a room. They didn't tell us why we were lining up but they were checking for nits. We didn't know that's what we were going in for.

21. A girl came out the room with her hair cut off. We were terrified because we knew we came from a big family where nits were a common occurrence. One of the girls was saying she's had her hair all cut off because she's got nits. So my sister and I were looking at each other thinking "we're going to get our hair shaved off". We were absolutely petrified going into the room.
22. When we got into the room, there was a woman and a man standing. I can remember the woman pulled my hair to have a look, it was really quite brutal. Then she checked my sister. It was horrible.
23. After that we were taken along to another room and told to strip. We had to stand outside this other room and I can remember it was freezing. Everybody was standing outside shivering and looking really bewildered.
24. We had to get into the bath and get scrubbed with carbolic soap and a scrubbing brush. It was actually painful and unpleasant. Every bit of my skin was scrubbed with the soap and the brush. I think my sister had to share her bath with another wee lassie because she was smaller. There were two baths and two old women sitting at the end of the baths on wee stools.
25. The next thing I remember is being ready and taken downstairs to get our standard issue, soap and toothbrush. They gave us a gingham pinafore for over our clothes. Everybody had to have a balaclava, a pair of wellies and a pair of black plimsolls. If you didn't have them they gave you them. My sister and I had never had a balaclava before that. They were horrific as they were made from scratchy wool.
26. After that I think we were taken up to the dormitory to put our stuff away. The dorm I was in was called Reekie Linn after a waterfall. It was the first one you would come to, on the first floor. I think there were other dorms upstairs. All of the dormitories were named after waterways and places in Scotland. I didn't see anybody else's dorm. It was that strict. My sister was in my dorm. The dorm looked like a long hospital ward, if you came in the door and looked to the very end, our two beds were at the very bottom. They were in between the two fire escape doors.

27. The next memory I have is being in the dining hall. I think it must have been lunch time by then. My sister and I were allowed to sit next to each other but that was the only time we saw each other and at bed times. I wasn't allowed to be with her the rest of the time. We were sorted into age groups. She was with a younger group so I wasn't allowed to be with her. It was hard for us both.
28. The reality of the situation really hit home at this meal time. I can remember everyone sitting stunned. One wee girl put her hand up and said "Miss, I don't eat mince and potatoes." She was battered across the head and force fed the mince and potatoes. The wee girl was crying and choking on it as Miss Robertson, was shoving it in her mouth.
29. I have no memory of what else happened that day. I remember feeling unbelievably homesick that first night. The problem I had was that my dad had told me that I was the big sister and I had to look after my wee sister and keep her safe. I felt like a failure.

Mornings/bedtime

30. In the mornings, Miss Robertson shouted "get up". All of the girls from the dorm went for a shower together. You went down with your soap and towel. You had to have a shower in the communal shower. It was quite unpleasant and embarrassing actually.
31. There were older girls there who were like prefects. It was their job to stand and supervise and to make sure everyone was moving. We were told to "hurry up" and "move it". We had breakfast after the shower.
32. At night, from between eight and nine, they turned on blue lights. It might have a calming thing. They came round and turned them off at nine. You had to have your covers over your head to go to sleep. I don't know why.

Mealtimes/food

33. Breakfast was always porridge and it was the same scenario. Some kids were saying they didn't want to eat porridge, they were told to eat and that they weren't allowed to move until they had finished it and got skelped across the head and forced to eat. The forced feeding was done by Miss Robertson. I think she was a deputy.
34. The dining hall was downstairs near the laundry. The reason I remember is because they used to make fish cakes on a Friday and the smell would come out. It tasted like chemicals. I was forced fed a fishcake and it made me feel sick. I couldn't eat it despite trying because I knew I was going to get into trouble. We took our laundry down on a Friday morning and I can remember going past the dining room and smelling the fishcakes. I would be retching going past and dreading having to eat them every Friday.
35. Miss Fletcher was the head teacher. She wasn't around as much as Miss Robertson or the other teacher, Miss PWH.

Schooling

36. We didn't get taught anything at Fornethy. We had classes from ten o'clock to twelve. We had to copy a letter from the blackboard for our parents. Everybody wrote the exact same letter. It was along the lines of "we're having a brilliant time", a standard issue letter. It was sent out every week. The teacher was really nice. She was only there for teaching.
37. I can remember one girl managed to sneak a letter out to her parents to tell them to come and get her. They came and got her. I can remember Miss Robertson coming round all the classes to tell us that that wasn't allowed. She told us that we weren't to worry our parents. I can remember the class teacher was standing in front of Miss Robertson and reading her expression that she didn't approve of what she was saying.

38. There were usually a small number of sums and a couple of sentences on the board. The letter was the main thing. It wasn't school at all. That was it. I liked that I knew I wouldn't get shouted at but it was boring because there was no stimulation. It was the only time I didn't feel scared.
39. After lunch we went to a room and all gathered in there. They would put songs on and get us to do games. I don't have a lot of memories of that. It wasn't enjoyable because they were telling us what to do. It was a regime. Nothing was creative or fun. There was a playground outside with swings. The whole time we were there we were outside twice. There was a window in the room and I would think why can we not just go out and play outside? When we were in the room we had milk and biscuits. We always used to hate the milk because there was grass in it from the farm. We were in that room quite a lot.

Weekends

40. We were allowed to have a sweet on a Saturday. I used to work as one of the sweet girls. I would do that on a Saturday. It was my dreaded day. If the kids didn't pick quickly enough they got skelped and sent to the back of the line. My anxiety was through the roof. Some kids didn't get money from their parents so they couldn't get any sweets. I used to steal sweets for them especially the wee ones. Miss Fletcher would sit with the book, going through it checking the names to see how much they could spend.
41. Every Saturday night there was a movie, it would be an old movie like an old Elvis movie. They played it on a projector in that room we were in all the time. They played music as well. There were men there too. I don't know whether they were partners or if they worked there. I remember the smell of cigar smoke. I can remember a man sitting at the side of the room and patting his knee for a wee girl to sit on it.

Leisure time

42. We mainly did walks at the weekend. We were out walking all the time. I can remember the farm had turnips piled up high. Some people were taken to church. I was taken to church on the last Sunday before I went home the next day. I was glad to get out of there for the day. The minister from the church used to visit the school. I don't know why.
43. I went swimming once or twice to help with the wee ones. We went on the minibus to Perth. I can remember seeing a family and thinking I wanted to tell them what was happening to get away from the place. I didn't because I remembered my sister was back there. My sister didn't get to go swimming.
44. We didn't have to do any chores. However, they were very strict about doing your bed a certain way. It was almost like the way they do it in hospital. They came round to check the beds were made properly.

Bedwetting

45. One morning I can remember looking over and seeing a wee girl with a black eye. I said to the girl next to me and she said Miss Robertson had done it. I don't know if the wee girl had wet the bed. That was quite a bad thing. If somebody wet the bed they were made to sleep in it and were battered for doing it.
46. I can't remember my sister wetting the bed but apparently she did. I don't know if I've blocked it out. I can remember girls in the dormitory getting a humiliating beating for wetting the bed. It was mainly from Miss Robertson but Miss PWH would be involved as well.

Abuse

47. The whole experience was horrible but the worst incident was in the dorm with the blue lights on. I think it was only the first week because we hadn't realised quite how

strict the rules were. Some of the wee girls said "come on, we'll have a sing song". My sister and I started belting the song. It was Paper Roses.

48. My sister and I were singing our hearts out with our eyes closed. I can remember things going quiet and in that split second thinking "oh they must like our voices, they've all stopped to listen". The next thing I remember is a hand grabbing me and pulling me out the bed. We were dragged along the dormitory, taken into the corridor slapped and belted all the way along the corridor. It was Miss PWH.
49. She took us into a library and pushed me and my sister into separate corners. She told us to face the corner and not to move. I can remember the two of us crying. I heard Miss PWH saying she was going to get Miss Fletcher and the belt and that we were getting a severe punishment. I remember needing to use the bathroom. Everyone had been talking about Miss Fletcher and how she had a belt and that she dished out the corporal punishment. I was thinking my sister and I were going to get belted.
50. It was freezing in the room and we were standing in our bare feet. She turned the lights out and left us standing in the dark. We had been told the place was haunted. We were in sheer terror. Looking back I had a full blown anxiety attack. I was in a pure state of panic. I was desperate for the toilet and I can remember putting my head out the door into the corridor shouting "Miss, Miss, Miss" crying, feeling terrified. I think Miss PWH shoved me back in the room and didn't listen to me. Apart from that I seem to have blocked a fair bit of it out.
51. I can't remember anything else. I have a vague memory of Miss Fletcher sitting in a wing backed chair in the room looking at me and my sister smirking as if to say "what are you crying for?" I also remember standing washing something in the sink and someone shouting over me. My sister says that I wet myself.
52. Miss Fletcher was tall and slim. I think she was a bit older than Miss Robertson. Miss PWH was of stout build. It was harder to determine her age. She wore black glasses. She had a bull dog that everybody was terrified of. She was on our corridor. She was

there a lot at night. Miss Robertson was there more during the day. However, there were times when she was about at night too.

53. I can just remember being back in bed crying. It was the first time I thought about escaping. I looked at the two fire escapes at our beds. I thought me and my sister aren't staying here.
54. I thought about running away every night. It's all I thought about all day every day. It became an obsession for me. It would get to night time and I would think about it but I was just so scared. I think I would get as far as the door, I would become tired and sometimes I would fall asleep. I would wake up in the morning and think "oh no I didn't do it". We were told about a girl who had broken her leg on the fire escape. It was the running theme through the whole time I was there. Everybody spoke about running away. Everybody wanted to do it.
55. We did a nine mile walk one day. It was Miss Robertson and another teacher talking about the reservoir feeding the area. It was to a reservoir four and a half miles away from Fornethy. We had to do it without a drink or anything. It was just there and back again. My legs felt like jelly and we were wearing wellies so everybody ended up with red rings around their legs. Everyone was tired. There were girls fainting. They were just belted and told to get up and move. It was horrible. I have since looked into it and discovered it was called Backwater. It's 4.6 miles away from Fornethy. We were late back for dinner and the people who were in charge of dinner were stressing out.
56. I have a very vague memory of the song Seven Little Girls. I didn't know that song before I went there but they played it all the time there. I can't listen to that song because it makes me feel nauseous. I can remember that song playing and a wee girl dancing in and out of a man's knee. It was inappropriate but it could have been innocent. I can remember having a horrible feeling at the time.
57. I also remember being taken downstairs to an adult party on a Saturday night with another girl when I was there. I don't know if I was there to serve drinks. It was the room we played in. The people were dressed up. They were having a party of some

description. I just remember I didn't want to be there because they were all strangers. I can remember the girl I was going with turned and said to me "don't worry I've been down before I know what to do". I don't know what the memory is and I don't want to explore it.

58. I'm one of those people who can't hide how they feel. I'm sure what happened that night was the reason I was given the tuck shop gig. I was quite a sensitive kid so I can imagine that incident affected me badly. I am sure it was obvious that it had affected me and that's why I got the tuck shop job.
59. It was so hard to talk to each other. I can't even remember any of the other girls' names or friendships. It was so strict, everything was regimented. It was really difficult to remember anybody else. I remember feeling frightened all the time. After that night with Miss PWH, I learned to keep my mouth shut. I disappeared into the ground.

Leaving Fornethy

60. Before we left we were learning songs for the church service from Joseph's Amazing Technicolour Dream coat for [REDACTED]. We missed it because we were home before [REDACTED].
61. At the end of our stay there was an outbreak of chicken pox. A few girls got chicken pox. There must have been overlaps with people coming and going. I am sure three sisters who were on the same bus as us got it. They were supposed to be going home with us but they got chicken pox and were told they would have to stay another two weeks. They were devastated.
62. People were trying to hide them if they did have them. They were checking us every day to see if we had them. You had to take your top off and turn round to check for spots.

63. I can remember on the morning we were leaving jumping out of bed and feeling all over my body to check. My sister and I were looking at each other. I was terrified I had them because the thought of having to stay there for another two weeks was impossible to imagine. The three sisters ran out when we were on the bus crying. I was terrified sitting on the bus because I knew they could come and take me off the bus. I don't think I relaxed until I was half way home. I felt so tense.
64. My mum came to meet us in the town. I can remember both of us getting off the bus and just grabbing onto her. My sister was at one side and I was at the other. We were talking constantly and we were telling her about what happened. I remember we got on the bus and she took right up the top deck, right to the back end of the bus because I think she was absolutely mortified because everything was coming out. I can't remember exactly what we were telling her but we told her everything that had happened to us. I just remember my mum sitting looking straight ahead with a blank expression on her face saying nothing.
65. When we got home she said "don't tell your dad". It was never spoken about again. I'm not angry with my mum at all. At that time, she had had to deal with authority in terms of my brother being taken away. She probably thought "what do I do about this?" I mean what would have been done in those days? I think it was a generational thing, they thought "least said soonest mended". It was a case of let it go and they'll forget about it.

Life after care

66. I have a clear memory of the first night we got back home and being back in my own bed and feeling fantastic and safe. It didn't last. The weeks after I came home I was having terrible nightmares and problems sleeping. I would be lying during the night with my eyes open. I didn't understand why. I had a real fear of someone coming to get me at night.

67. My sister and I shared a double bed and I was so scared that I can remember holding onto her night gown. I remember thinking if I hold onto her then she can shout to tell someone. The nightmares were really bad.
68. Part of me questions the nights in Fornethy. I don't have any memories of waking up during the night at Fornethy at all. I can remember the blue lights and thinking we need to get out of here, we need to do it. I don't know if it's because we were busy all day but part of me wonders if we were drugged at night. I know there is absolutely no way of proving that. The other reason I wonder is because of the fish cakes having a chemical taste. It was as if something was on them that shouldn't have been. There was definitely something on them. The nightmares were so bad that it makes me question it. I had such problems with waking up and being able to stay asleep. It is a possibility given how they were in the place and the controlling environment they created.
69. I can remember my first day back at school, my teacher was asking me questions and I couldn't speak. It was as if someone had cut my tongue off. It was like an anxiety attack. My teacher obviously picked up that something wasn't right. She kept me back at the end of the day and told me that we would do one to one for a while. We did it at playtimes and after lunch for a couple of weeks and it got me back a bit.
70. My school work got better because my teacher helped. However, re-establishing friendships was very difficult. I had had friends that I'd had my whole life and when I came back I found it very difficult to re-establish those friendships with people. My sister was the same. We felt different, something had changed. It continued and I think that affected me growing up and establishing friendships and trusting people.
71. I was the sad, quiet one in my family. I started wondering if I had always been like that. I asked myself when I became sad and quiet, had I always been like that or was there a reason I became that way? I took it upon myself to call my older sister to ask her if there was an age she could remember. She didn't know what had happened in Fornethy. I hadn't said anything about it. She told me that there was a change in me

at around nine or ten, she said that I became really nervous and withdrawn. She said I became fidgety and on edge. I was devastated because it links up with the timeline.

72. The sadness got worse as I got older. I struggled with anxiety and depression my whole life. I learned from Fornethy not to complain or say anything because there wasn't any point. There was too much going on in my house, everybody was going into their teens. I went quiet. I didn't talk to anybody. I basically disappeared into myself.
73. I tried to come out of myself but when I was fourteen I was sexually assaulted by a friend's father. So that was me done. My school work suffered. I didn't tell anybody. Again, I didn't think was any point because nobody was listening. The man was a social worker called [REDACTED]. I went on holiday with him and his two daughters. My mum didn't want me to go but I had befriended them. They were Afro-Caribbean. They were nice and from a nice area and I felt safe with them. I liked them.
74. We went to Fort William and stayed in a static caravan. I got up one morning and he pinned me against a wall by my breasts. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't do anything and then he let me go. He was six foot four and I was only a wee lassie. His two daughters were still in their bed. I went into the toilet and sat in there until one of them came to get me. I felt so trapped. It happened on the second day and we were there for a week. There was no way for me to get home, I had no money and we were in the middle of nowhere. I decided to sleep in between the two girls at night to keep me safe. I thought if he is going to come and get me he'll have to get past his two daughters. He was cruel to me so for example, if the daughters didn't want to do something, he would look over at me smirking and say "what does PGN [REDACTED] want to do" but he was playing with me. It's all linked to Fornethy for me. I was completely unaware of how to set safe boundaries around myself. I remember Mr [REDACTED] was always staring at me, something I found uncomfortable, but didn't know why.
75. It was Mr [REDACTED] who suggested I go on the trip to Fort William. I told him I didn't think my dad would let me go. At that moment I remember feeling undecided about whether I wanted to go myself but he was insistent I must come and said he would phone my

dad to convince him to let me go. I am now utterly flabbergasted at this memory as it has made me realise that his despicable actions were probably premeditated. Ultimately, Mr [REDACTED] called my dad and being a social worker and clearly much more assertive than my dad, managed to convince him to let me go. This makes me sick to my stomach now. The trip was in the summer holidays and I confided in a friend who lived in the flat above mine.

76. When we returned to school, first day of the new term, we were in the same class as Mr [REDACTED]'s daughter. My so-called friend approached her and said "[REDACTED] PGN [REDACTED] has something to tell you about your dad!" As we walked into the classroom she was repeating this, meanwhile, I was pleading with my friend to stop. I didn't want to tell her and particularly not in front of the whole class as by that time everyone had stopped talking and were all looking at us. The friend, who was my best friend until Fornethy, blurted out "Your dad touched her up!" I wanted to die at that moment I really wanted to die. It was the last time anyone in my class looked at me or talked to me. Some muttered "Weirdo" under their breath. They took Mr [REDACTED]'s daughter's side as far as I was concerned as she was far more confident and far more popular than me. My so-called friend joined in.
77. There was no teacher to catch me, no one to one to help me focus or even function. My schoolwork crumbled, I went from being a fairly good student to being unable to function. I became a complete loner. I was constantly late for classes and played up to my mum to stay home as much as I could. I remember walking the long avenue leading up to my school praying the school would just blow up so I would never have to go again. It was the most agonising and torturous walk.
78. A new girl arrived, a bit of a misfit like me, we had that in common and became friendly. I didn't finish fourth year. I left in October and I was sixteen the following [REDACTED]. I now think my mum was aware there was something seriously wrong with me, I just think she had no idea what to do about it and our house at that time was fairly chaotic and full of teenagers. I stayed in my room most of the time not really speaking to anyone much. I was a naturally quiet person and probably easy to ignore.

79. My new friend popped up now and again and our friendship developed although I was painfully shy and full of anxiety. I did manage to get into college. I loved it and was starting to feel a bit of hope and happiness.
80. My friend and I liked 60s music, she already went to the sixties clubs and invited me along. We were both mods. I was constantly tied up in knots of anxiety. I had no idea that this wasn't normal and meeting up with people created massive anxiety attacks.
81. The group of mods would gather at the Clyde waterfront to drink cheap booze before going to the 60s club which had no alcohol license. I discovered after a few gulps of cider, I stopped shaking, my anxiety would ease and I could have a laugh. This became a regular weekend event on and off until December 1981.
82. One time, we were invited to a party I knew the boy, he was nice so I was happy to go. However, my anxiety levels were through the roof at the thought of speaking to anyone. I got drunk at the party very quickly and felt sleepy and remember needing to lie down so I found a room and was in and out of consciousness and remember a guy speaking to me. I know he raped me that night. My memories are hazy but I do remember trying to push him off me in moments of consciousness and I remember telling him no.
83. Everything about that night is very dark for me and my friends reaction to what happened was to blame me for showing her up and I agreed with her that it was my fault. I had no emotional maturity or any idea of how to deal with any of it. I was full of shame and self-loathing. After that day I suffered suicidal thoughts and thoughts of self-harm on more or less a daily basis.
84. I had my two sons when I was really young. I had my first son when I was eighteen and my second when I was twenty. When I had my second son, I had a terrible experience and I was quite ill. I then had severe post-natal depression. I didn't realise had it until I came out of it. I went to the doctor to try to get help but there was nothing. It was a case of just being told it would get better. I was really depressed.

85. I got myself out of it. I got myself a nice job in a flower shop. The boys were getting older and easier to look after. I felt like I was getting on top of things. Life was good. When the boys got to eight or nine, I started feeling depressed and suicidal. I didn't know why I was like that but I thought about it every single day. I felt like I didn't want to be here. I thought like that every single until I eventually went to get help.
86. I developed an eating disorder when I was 28. I think it was a way to feel some sort of control. I eventually got help. I did some group therapy but never really spoke about anything. The boys obviously needed me so I thought I need to pull myself together. I did attempt suicide once and ended up in hospital. Again I got on top of it and I got better.
87. We decided to move to Arran with the boys to give them a better education. However, my husband had an alcohol problem. Ironically, he ended up being the engineer for [REDACTED]. I had another bout of really bad depression around that time again. So we had our problems too. I never get on top of what was wrong with me. I just didn't know what it was all about.
88. I'm sure my mum and dad went to their grave thinking it was them and I'm sure my husband died thinking the same. I've got to live with knowing that they thought that they had a part to play in the way I was feeling and it wasn't them.
89. My husband, [REDACTED], and I had a bit of a rocky start because I fell pregnant at seventeen. We were only seeing each other. He was a good man but he had his problems too.
90. At the beginning, looking back on it, I think he was angry and felt trapped. I didn't realise it then because I was too busy dealing with kids. He was a clever man. We both tried really hard and the boys got a good education. That was the most important thing for us. They got a good education and good jobs. It was really important to us.
91. We stayed in Arran for three years. We stayed in a remote place. It was beautiful but it was remote. I couldn't settle. I realise now Fornethy was remote, Fort William was

remote and it was remote. I think that caused a problem for me. We separated in Arran because of my husband's drinking. I had to leave because he could be aggressive.

92. We got back together. He had a construction accident and I nursed him for four years. He wasn't able to work so I was the bread winner. They were tough times but they were also good times because we were communicating better. We got two shops, he had a pet shop and a flower next door. It was good. They boys were grown up and away doing their own thing. So we decided to sell up and have an adventure. We moved to Spain. We bought a wee house and did our Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) course. The town next to us was looking for teachers. We shared the job to start with. We did that for ten years. I became second in command in the school eventually. There were seven hundred pupils. I was doing oral exams for Cambridge and I was going all over Andalucia doing the exams.
93. [REDACTED] got bored and fell into drinking again. However he was older and his body was struggling with it. They tried to get him rehab out there but he was confused and bad with it. So we decided to come home. By then, everything had changed and it was much harder to get help. It was hopeless. I tried and tried but I had to take a step back from it because I ran out of energy. He was found dead in his flat three and a half years ago.

Impact

94. I have some health issues now. I would like to get back to studying or a bit of teaching. My boss in Spain would love me to go back. I would love to go back but I think I've lost my way a wee bit. I loved teaching kids, the joy you get from kids is amazing.
95. I'm terrified of the dark. I still can't sleep in the dark. I still have issues with food today. I've had issues since I left Fornethy. It's always going to be a problem for me. It's my wee enemy. It's as a result of the force feeding.
96. I can confidently state that I was robbed of any dignity, self-esteem and sense of self-worth during my time at Fornethy House. I am aware I have blocked out memories

from my time in Fornethy but I do have clear memories of the sense of complete failure to keep my young sister safe that completely overwhelmed me. This sense of failure, guilt and self-blame I now realise was the start of a pattern I failed to recognise until now as I have never fully processed or spoken about any of these events.

97. I had problems with intimacy with my late husband, something I'm only now realising was linked to these traumatic events. There has obviously been a part of me which has been closed off to my sons and the rest of my family and I failed to make the connection as I had buried these memories and have only now as a 56 year old grandmother started to process the gravity of what happened to me. This to me is the most devastating aspect of these revelations.
98. The irreparable damage to myself and my relationship with my late husband and my two sons. I now realise holding on to these experiences in my subconscious most of my life has undoubtedly had major consequences to my mental/emotional and physical wellbeing.
99. I completely internalised everything about the above traumas which became self-loathing and a massive sense of worthlessness. I have to accept the fact that I was clearly incapable of dealing emotionally with any of these traumas. They were never at the front of my mind. The overwhelming shame, self-loathing I believe created a mental block that manifested itself through poor mental and physical health.

Treatment/counselling

100. I'm getting counselling from Future Pathways. It's the first time I've had counselling since the eating disorder.
101. I saw an article in the Sunday papers last year, I saw Fornethy so I sent it to my sister, [REDACTED]. We talked about it. The article mentioned the Fornethy House Residential School [REDACTED] group. We said that we would have to contact the [REDACTED] group to say that we know they are telling the truth. The more we spoke about it we realised we are one of those girls and that we are part of it and that it happened to us. The realisation blew us away. The impact that it had had on us. I don't use the [REDACTED]

group much. I personally have to take a step back every now and then. It's a lot for me to think about all the time. I check in now and again but I can't do it all the time. It's too much.

Reporting of abuse

102. The [REDACTED] group asked people to come forward to speak to the police. I think they wanted all the stories to build up a picture. I think there have been serious allegations made about sexual abuse. I think they wanted some input to help. I don't know if any of the people are still alive. I don't hold much hope for getting any justice. I think it's too late for that, I think it's far too late to expect any kind of justice for what happened I think it's about paying forward for future generations. I think it's important for people to know that that these things went on and about the impact.
103. My sister and I discuss it and say we were there for five weeks but imagine living in care long term. I am not under any illusions that this will ever stop because there was always be bad devious people. But it's about finding ways to putting things in place to prevent these people from being able to perpetrate.

Records

104. I haven't got my records. I am supposed to go to the Mitchell Library as they have some files from my school. The solicitors Thompsons have said that they are finding it difficult to find records. I have spoken to Future Pathways about it. It would be nice to know there is something on record to confirm what I am saying.

Lessons to be learned

105. There should be regular independent checks from an independent body that are not linked to the place and have no connection with it. More assessment of people who are put in positions of trust. People need to be put under regular scrutiny with kids. It has to be regular. It might be bad for people who do a brilliant job but if there is one

bad person that is affecting kids for the rest of their lives. It horrifies me the thought it still goes on in this day and age. When I think about the effect that five weeks had on us. When you think there are kids in care who don't have anybody to turn to. It must be horrific. It means a lot for somebody to listen to my experience.

- 106. I came forward because I have had time to think about it and reflect on it. It's important to let people know that these things happened. It's about educating people in these positions about how to treat kids and how to speak to kids because their actions impact on kids. If you damage a kid you're damaging them for life. There is good in most people but it's about being vigilant the people who witness these things it's giving people a platform to talk about things that happen. Things need to be in place.
- 107. My sole purpose for sharing my experiences is in the hope that it will help to pay forward any improvements in educating young people around their personal boundaries and safety for themselves and their friends.
- 108. I also believe it is important to look at the safeguarding procedures and also any CPD for people who work with young people in particular; Teachers, coaches, social workers, care home staff etc and the difficult subject of reporting suspected abuse. In particular reporting a respected colleague or someone with higher authority and finding ways to make the process less daunting. Also encourage higher vigilance around children and signs to look out for in a child who is struggling which may not always be obvious.

Other information

- 109. 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..... 17 June 2021

