

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PKP

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is PKP or PKP. My date of birth is 1957. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. Prior to going into care I was brought up in Glasgow. I stayed with my mother and father. I had four siblings, my older sister, younger brother and two younger sisters and.
3. My father was employed for many years as a prison warden and spent a lot of this time at Barlinnie. He lost that job when he was caught selling some things to the prisoners. He was a heavy drinker and there were numerous incidents of domestic abuse where he would beat my mother. My father was also a bully to all of us children and in particular myself and.
4. With dad and his drinking there were lots of times there was no money left in the house for food. We were often sent to the bakers with a letter asking for credit so we could get some food.
5. When we stayed at in the Douglas West area there was an incident I can remember. We were standing outside in the street with some neighbours. As we stood there he was inside smashing the house up.
6. There were times when my dad was due home from the pub and mum would take me into her room. She was hoping that when he came in and saw I was with her nothing

would happen. There was one occasion this did not stop him. I was lying on the bed and mum tried to wrap her leg around me to stop him moving me aside. It was obvious he had been drinking. This time it did not stop him and he forced himself on mum while I lay next to her on the bed.

7. There was a time when I was about three years old I remember lying in my bed. As I lay there I felt someone pulling me bed covers down. I pulled them back up and almost immediately they were pulled down again. I pulled them back up but was too scared to look up to see who was there. I screamed because I was so scared and that was when I saw both mum and dad standing in the room. I did not see anyone else in the room and did not hear anyone leave. I do not know why, whichever one of them was doing this, was trying to do.
8. Although my father was the one carrying out the abuse my mother would instigate a lot of it. She would pick on us for any small thing going wrong and then threaten us that she would have dad hit us for the wrong doing when he returned from work. There were many times he would come home, be told by mum we did something wrong and told to hit us, which he always followed through.
9. It would have been around 1964 when we moved to the Riddrie area. Dad started working on the mushroom farm. Later on, after we left care, we moved to the Millerstone area.
10. With all the incidents that happened with dad smashing up the house, beating mum and us kids, there must have been police involvement, but I can't remember it.
11. A short time before [REDACTED] and I were placed in care we were both sent for a medical examination. A few days later we were in the social work offices in Glasgow along with my mum and aunt [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] told me [REDACTED] was underweight and she was going into care to build her up again. She said that I was to go with her to keep her company. I don't know why I was to keep her company and even when I have been going through treatment with my psychologist they agree and see no reason for me having to be with her. We were taken home after the examination and stayed at the

house for a little while before going into care. I cannot remember how long we were back before being taken away. I must have been about six or seven at the time.

12. My other siblings, brother and two younger sisters, did not go into care, they were allowed to stay with my parents.

### **Fornethy House, Perthshire**

13. The only thing I remember about leaving the house was we were taken in a black cab with no one to accompany us other than the driver. I have never been certain of the name of the place but I think we went over a bridge which I have always thought was the Forth Road Bridge and then on towards Perthshire. From speaking to people since they have confirmed to me it was Fornethy, but I would still like to see this in writing in some sort of record for me to accept this.

### **Routine at Fornethy, Perthshire**

#### *First day*

14. When we arrived at Fornethy Home we got out the taxi and walked through the arched front door. I remember there was a tower as part of the main building. When we went in the door we were told to queue with other girls who just arrived. It was only girls, no boys there.
15. As we moved up the queue towards a counter, we were told to strip off all our clothes and put our old clothes into a box. I don't remember the names of the girls behind the counter. We had to do this just standing in the hallway in front of each other. We were handed clothes which included overalls, aprons with a blue floral pattern, black gym shoes. The girls all had to wear the same overalls. It was two older girls, I don't know their names, who were handing out the clothes.

16. We were then sent to the showers. The staff were checking our hair for any nits and after showering we got dressed into the overalls. None of the staff introduced themselves and I don't know any of the names.
17. With regards to where we slept I can't remember anything about it. I can't tell where I actually slept. I don't know whether there were a few girls in the room or lots of girls in a large dormitory. I can't even remember [REDACTED] being with me in the room.

*Mornings and bedtime*

18. I am not sure what the routine of waking us in the morning. I don't remember if we were woken with a bell or whether staff woke us.

*Mealtimes/Food*

19. In the dining room there were large round tables. I think there were possibly six of those tables with maybe as many as eight at each of them. There was a hatch where we were served our food. One incident I remember was being fed boiled egg, which I do not like. There was a teacher with purple hair who forced fed me the egg, by telling me in an aggressive manner to eat it. She turned her back and I spat the egg out under the table. She was the one teacher who did this and caused me all the bother I suffered there.
20. Most mornings the breakfast consisted of porridge and I ate that. The only time there was a problem was when they served the boiled eggs.
21. I don't remember anything about the lunches or teas, but they could not have involved eggs or I would have remembered that.

### *Washing/bathing*

22. For washing and bathing there were showers available. I am not sure how often we used them. We usually took turns for the showers as there was not enough for everyone. We used basins in the morning for washing.

### *Leisure time*

23. After we were finished breakfast we were taken out on really long walks. After the walks it was lunch time and then back out for another long walk in the afternoon. We had to wear our wellies for some of the places we went was very muddy. It was the teachers who took us on the walks.
24. There was a time when I was at the tuck shop and I bought a barley sugar sweet. The teacher with the purple hair saw me leaving the tuck shop. She took the sweetie off me and said "you don't deserve that, you are a bad girl". This was a regular thing for her to take sweets off me.

### *School*

25. The only teacher that I ever had any problems with was the one I have mentioned with the purple hair. I don't remember much about her.
26. There were classrooms there but I can't remember any of the things we were being taught. I can remember sitting at a desk but that is about it. I have no memories of maps, books or stories, nothing has stuck.

### *Healthcare*

27. I don't remember having to see a doctor for any reason. I can't remember being given any injections or the like. This was much the same as any visits to the dentist.

### *Family contact*

28. I did get a visit from my mum, grandpa and aunt. When they came to see us we had to sit in the dining room for the visit and we were not allowed out of the home. [REDACTED] and I were at the table and there were members of staff that would be behind the serving hatch supervising the visit. I remember when they were leaving I was screaming and hanging onto my mother's coat. I told her she needs to take me home, but she couldn't. She said to me that she couldn't come back for any other visits. She actually said to me that if I was to carry on like this she would be coming back to see me again.

### *Bed Wetting*

29. I did have a problem with bed wetting. I don't remember [REDACTED] being there, other than we were definitely in the home together. I can't remember what the home did about bed wetting.

### **Abuse at Fornethy Children's Home**

30. The teacher who cause all my problems at the home was the woman with the purple hair. She was elderly, quite tall, and reminded me of Dame Edna from the TV. I think the reasons she was picking on me was because I was so emotional during my time there. Whenever she saw me she would pick on me and verbally abuse me. She would also slap and punch me anywhere on my body she could reach, all because I was always upset. She is the only one I have memory of, who was nasty to me.

### **Leaving Fornethy Children's Home**

31. In 1966 after having been in the home for some months I remember playing on the swings and one of the young teachers there, not the one with the purple hair, came over to me. When she sat with she told me I was going home. I think she was perhaps a trainee, but I don't know her name.

### **Life after being in care**

32. My mother did not really care much for us and my dad would do as he was told. She would have us carry out chores in the house like cleaning. She would have dad check it when he was home and beat us if it was not done properly. Even at the weekends I can remember we had to clean the whole house. We would even have to make breakfast for them while they stayed in bed.
  
33. There was a time when I was skipping school and when I was walking down the street I was seen by the lollipop lady. She phoned my dad and told him I was not at school. When dad got hold of me he was beating me about my whole body with his fists. Even the knuckles in my hand were bleeding. I was so scared about what was happening I managed to get out the back window of the house and climb over lots of rear gardens as I headed to the water. When I reached the water I jumped in. It turned out the water was not deep enough for me to drown and when I climbed out I lay on the grass. I lay there for a couple of hours and then walked towards our house. I reached the telephone box and saw my dad making his way into the pub. He saw me as well, came over to see me and just sent me home.
  
34. There was another time when I was off school as I was having to look after some young kids of another family. The RSPCC came out to the house. A neighbour up the stairs reported the fact I was babysitting rather than being at the school. This must have been at Christmas time as they gave me a present. The RSPCC did write to us saying that my mother was being warned but no further action was being taken against her for neglect.
  
35. I got married when I was seventeen after having fallen pregnant the year before. I saw it as a way of getting out of the house. I went on to have three kids. The marriage was a big mistake, but I stayed with him for thirty eight years. I was glad when I eventually left him.

36. I found out later in my marriage that my husband, [REDACTED], had abused my youngest daughter, [REDACTED]. She is still dealing with that to this day. This was the main reason for me finally leaving him.
37. I later married but again and am still with him to this day.
38. At no time during my mother's life, even up until she died in 2001, did she ever make any attempts to make up with us for what she did. I ended up hating my mother, I never wanted to but she wasn't interested in making amends.
39. My father on the other hand did try to make amends and I did try to forgive him for a lot of what happened to me. I remember being with him in a pub with [REDACTED] and we were talking about our time in care. He was saying he did not know anything about us being in care. This partly confirmed some information we heard that it must have been at the same time as he left my mum and moved in with another woman. He said if he had known he would have taken us out of the home. Before he passed away from cancer I was looking after him to nurse him. According to my aunt [REDACTED], my dad did find out we were in care and he was the one that made efforts to have us returned to our family home.
40. I did try to try and find Fornethy Home and was searching [REDACTED]. There was a [REDACTED] referring to the clothing as Laura Ashley. The person was also talking about having to go on the long walks and the last part mentioned a teacher with purple hair, which was the same as the memories I had of Fornethy Home.
41. When I was married I tried to visit the home I was in. I visited an information office and the lady gave me details of Fornethy House, but on that first time I searched for the building I could not find it and had to return home.
42. My husband and I did return and on the second occasion we managed to find the building. It was just the same as I could remember.

43. Later I was introduced to a girl [REDACTED], through Birthlink. I was told that [REDACTED] had also been a resident at Fornethy. Whenever we speak together I am quite adamant for her not to tell me anything new about my time there, until I have actually remembered things myself. I want to know the memories are mine and not gaps being filled by someone trying to be helpful. During my times with [REDACTED] she had carried out research and found out the teacher with the purple hair was called Miss <sup>LBD</sup> [REDACTED].
44. Another girl I met from my time there was a girl called [REDACTED]. I went [REDACTED] Glasgow [REDACTED] and she [REDACTED] a picture which stirred a memory of my time in care. We [REDACTED] met up. She was under similar impression to myself that the place we were in care was called Abernethy. It was only after this that we found it was Fornethy and Abernethy was from a poem we used to say in the home. It was about the Abernethy biscuits and that is where a lot of my confusion over the name stems from. She also confirmed that she knew the teacher with the purple hair was called Miss <sup>LBD</sup> [REDACTED].
45. Later in life as an adult I received counselling for mental health issues. I have been on different medications to help me cope with those issues. Many of those treating me have confirmed that the reasons for going into care, to accompany my sister because she was under weight, is completely wrong. During some of those sessions they tell me my lack of memory of my time there is my brain acting like a coping mechanism to block out the things that upset me.
46. There were times when I got help to look after the kids, especially my oldest son. He would probably tell you that he preferred the time with his gran rather than the time with me. My oldest daughter loved her father so much she refused to believe what happened to her sister. The family are all now split up in different directions. I tried my best for the kids but still blame myself for what has happened to them.

### **Impact**

47. When I left the home and returned to stay with my parents I was scared of the dark. I would have bad nightmares and night tremors. I would have to have the lights in the

house left on during the night. If they turned all the lights off I would waken and be screaming with fear.

48. Because of the lack of answers to the gaps in my memory of my time in the home I live with the bad experiences each and every day.
49. I think my experiences in care and the gaps in my memory have affected how I treated my own children. They have different opinions of how they were brought up and different memories of that. They don't see each other, although my girls tried to make up and all was okay until Christmas this year and they are now back to not talking to each other.

### **Records**

50. When I went to the Mitchell Library to carry out some research into some of our records I found that there were records for [REDACTED] but nothing for me. I later learned that on some occasions when siblings are taken into care the records are maintained under the eldest sibling and the others may form part of that record, but even she has gaps in her medical records.
51. I have tried to access my records for my school but I have been told they were destroyed in a fire. I was quite surprised when I contacted Future Pathways and they told me that organisations often come out with this excuse or flooding.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

52. I have been to the Inquiry during the hearings and found it to be such a large undertaking. It made me feel that I was not alone in this situation, that there were many others. There are far too many people that have been abused in care. I don't understand how this was so common a practice during the 1960's.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

53. I hope the Inquiry can help me find the place and confirm that I was there. I am not interested in compensation as I just want to have the many gaps filled in.

**Other information**

54. 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... PKP .....

Dated... 6-01-2020 .....