

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is my middle name, [REDACTED] is my maiden name and [REDACTED] is my married name. As a child I was known as [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1966. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Glasgow in the Rottenrow hospital. I lived for a short time in Cowcaddens until I was three months old. Then my mother and father moved from just a room and kitchen to a three bedroom house in [REDACTED] in Ibrox where I lived for most of my life until I got married.
3. I have got six other siblings and one half-sibling. We all lived together in one house, three brothers and three sister. My mum and dad were loving parents. They were naïve I would say now looking back. Their crime was poverty but they were loving parents, they were fun. We lived from day to day then, because we had no money. My dad worked in the building trade.
4. My mother's name was [REDACTED]. She came from a small village in West Kilbride, near Seamill. My dad came from Paisley. His name was [REDACTED].

5. My oldest sister [REDACTED] is nine years older than me, [REDACTED] is five years older, [REDACTED] is two years older, and [REDACTED] is one year older than me. My sister [REDACTED] is three years younger, and [REDACTED] is five years younger than me.

6. My oldest brother and sister, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], were from my mum's first marriage but we didn't know that when we were growing up, we only got to know that in our twenties. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] never got to meet their real dad which was pretty sad but at the end of the day there were issues. I think he was quite violent towards my mother.

7. In 1972 my mum's sister died of Leukaemia at the age of 28. In 1974 her older sister died. She had a major heart operation and she died after the operation due to an infection. She lived just along the road from my mum. She was the only other one of the family that lived in Glasgow, apart from my uncle [REDACTED] who stayed with us at times.

8. Through discussion with my sister [REDACTED] I think that my mum was depressed when we were young. She wasn't in a good place, she seemed emotionally switched off. She just went through the motions of things. We think that's why we were sent to Fornethy, to give my mum a break. We think it was also for nutritional reasons because we weren't always getting proper meals. We also attended the Lambhill Street clinic due to lice. I remember attending there and the staff saying to my mum that she could send us to a residential school, to give herself a break. My friend who lived next door to me wanted to go, her and her sister.

9. My sister remembers getting the forms for Fornethy from Ibrox primary school, which was our school [REDACTED] where we lived. As far as I was aware we were going on a holiday. My mum didn't want us to go but we wanted to go because my friend next door was going, although they never ended up going.

Fornethy House, Kilry - [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] 1975

10. My sister has got a better memory of events than I do. I thought we went to Fornethy in 1974 because when we got home my parents were discussing the bin strike at dinner but my sister tells me that we were at Fornethy in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] 1975. I thought we were there for six weeks but my sister has told me it was only five. On the bus on the way home there was a new song by the pop group called [REDACTED] out, that's how she remembers it. I would have been eight years old at that time, in primary three.
11. It was just me and [REDACTED] that went to Fornethy. My sister can remember more about it than me. I tried to block my memories out.
12. Fornethy was sold to us as being a holiday. We were so excited because we had never been away anywhere on holiday. We were told we were very lucky to be going on holiday, not just by our mum and dad but by teachers and everybody. It was built up to be such a great thing but we weren't really aware of what it was really going to be like.

Routine at Fornethy House

First day

13. I vaguely remember my dad taking us into town to go to Fornethy but I can't remember any preparation for going. I remember going on the bus, it took us ages to get there, it was further out than I realised. I didn't think at that point that I was so far away from home but further into the stay I felt that.
14. What I remember is going through a dark wooded area and coming out at a white house that was all enclosed by woodland. I thought it was scary. It was intimidating, I thought it looked like a prison. Maybe that's just in my mind now because of knowing what the system was like inside it. There was a big spiral staircase but I don't know if

I remember that from being at Fornethy or from seeing photographs of it as an adult. I remember the recreation room but I can't remember how you got into it.

15. The next thing I remember was being in this recreation room, what they called the Reccy room. I remember being shouted at to stand in line. All our cases were being brought in there. I don't remember anything after that, I just remember being told to behave. Me and my sister were really well behaved kids. It was quite a shock to the system. I was frightened and anxious. It was very military style whereas I was used to being able to have a laugh and a joke at home.
16. I remember we all lined up naked to get bathed. We went into a room to get examined. There was a nurse and a doctor there but I can't remember what they did. Then they took us into this bathroom with an old fashioned bath and bathed us two at a time.
17. There was a lady sitting on a stool with a scrubbing brush and carbolic soap and she scrubbed us. The brush was wooden with hard bristles. It was the kind of brush I would use to clean my path. It was very sore. It sounds ridiculous but it was horrendous. The only person who had ever bathed me was my mum. I used to have a recurring dream that I was walking down the street naked and I felt great distress in the dream. I don't know if it was related to that.
18. There were some girls who were older and were approaching adolescence. It must have been worse for them, I was a bit younger. I was a bit more unaware of things but we were all trying to cover ourselves up. I was shivering, it was cold. When I came out of the bath I was shivering . A staff member slapped on the legs to stand still so she could dry me.
19. After the bath I remember being given a pack and taken to our dormitory. The pack had a pinafore, pink powder toothpaste, soap, and a facecloth.

Staff

20. I heard it was only five staff to 75 girls and that to me is phenomenal because working as a specialist carer I would be the only member of staff for eleven to thirteen patients in a dementia unit. I have a wee bit of insight into what it must have been like for the staff at Fornethy. I don't know where I heard that there were only five staff. Someone must have told me but I can't remember who.
21. There was a Miss Fletcher who was the Headmistress. There was Mrs Robertson, or Robinson, and a Miss PWH. I would say that Mrs Robertson and Miss Fletcher were the worst two with regard to the hitting, the bullying, and the shouting but I don't remember any other teachers anyway. They were the three teachers that did most of the hitting. I think they were care staff as well as teachers because they were there at night as well as during the day.

Mornings and bedtime

22. My dormitory was upstairs. There were dormitories above and below mine. I was in Reekie Linn dormitory. I think it was named after a waterfall. I remember the bed I slept in. My sister and I were right at the end of the dormitory in a bay window. There were two beds with my sister on the right side and my bed on the left hand side.
23. I don't know how many girls were in the dormitory. It was strange, it was like we weren't allowed any interaction with other people. We weren't encouraged to play with the other children. I don't remember befriending anyone. I can picture all the other girls sleeping in the dormitory but I couldn't tell you any of their names. I have been on to the Fornethy and there are over 100 people on there but none are from the year I was there so I don't know any of them.
24. There was a big fire escape outside the window. We had been told by the teachers that the two women that owned the house had died and they haunted the place during the night. In hindsight it was probably to try and control us from getting up and going out on the fire escape but at the time it was terrifying.

25. In the morning, during the week, someone would come and wake us up. Our clothes were at the bottom of the bed. We wore a pinafore every day. We went down for breakfast and sometimes that was a nightmare, depending which staff were on. You could be shouted at, hit, or force fed your breakfast. They would shout out to us if we had any mail.
26. At night, a blue light would come on in the dormitory and after that there was to be no talking, we were to go straight to sleep. It must have been about 8.00 pm that the blue light came on.

Mealtimes/Food

27. I remember the dining room which was at the back of the building. It was always bright and it had a lot of circular tables. I was at the second table. I can't remember if we were seated according to our dormitories. It was the same table we sat at every morning but the only person I can remember being at my table was my sister.
28. If you didn't finish your meal you had to stand in the dining room facing the wall for what seemed like hours. If you were talking at the dining table, the teachers would elbow you in the head when they were passing by or they would slap you across the head.
29. I can only remember getting porridge for breakfast, I don't remember there being any cereals or any choice at all. I can't remember what type of food we got for lunch and dinner, I just ate what I was given. I was too scared not to because I remember my sister being force fed.

Washing/bathing

30. When we went for showers, all of us were naked. We were all just piled in together, all ages. I tried to cover myself up. I was fat, I've been fat my whole life so I was ashamed

of being naked. Even at that age I had inhibitions and it must have been worse for girls that were starting to develop.

31. I remember the woman who bathed me on the first day I got there. She was quite a heavy woman, like me. I never saw her again after the first day. There is nothing else I can remember about the bathing routine. Maybe I have shut it out of my mind.

Clothing/uniform

32. Fornethy provided us with clothes such the pinafore, wellies, and balaclava helmet. My mum had packed clothes for me but I didn't get to wear them. The pinafore we wore was kind of like an apron or a smock. It was flowery. I think we wore a kind of kimono underneath that. It felt like a uniform, it was very regimented. I can't remember wearing any other clothes.
33. I don't know if everyone else was wearing the same clothes, I just can't picture them. I know we all had to wear the wellies and balaclavas when we were out on walks. I can't remember wearing a jacket on the walks.
34. After breakfast during the week we would have school until lunchtime. The school was right at the bottom on the right hand side of the building. It was really old fashioned compared to school that I had been to in Glasgow. It had old antique desks. I was in a class with girls the same age as me. We did maths and we did English but there wasn't much education at all, we were only there until lunchtime.
35. We had the same teacher for all our classes but I can't remember who the teacher was. I remember the teacher had a bulldog. I was terrified of the bulldog, it was in the school during the day. We used to get threatened with the dog. If we didn't do what the teacher wanted us to do, the teacher threatened to set the dog on us. I never saw her actually doing it but the threat was that the dog would bite you. I can only assume that this was in an effort to keep us in line because there weren't enough staff. I have tried to get into their mind-set psychologically to try to work out why they did this.

Perhaps they were overworked, frustrated, or burnt out but it doesn't make sense to me as an adult how they could behave like that towards a child. It was so cruel.

36. The classroom I was in was actually a corridor. It had the tuck shop at the end of the corridor in a big cupboard. I remember being sat in the class and the teacher writing on the blackboard what we were supposed to write home. We weren't allowed to write our own letters home. I wasn't very literate at that age, my writing wasn't very good. We were only in class half a day each day as far as I'm aware. I never got to see my sister, she was in a different class from me. I remember I would be crying for my sister in class, I got into trouble for that.
37. I remember lining up to go to the tuck shop. If your parents sent you money, they took it and you went in the line for the tuck shop on Saturday. The tuck shop was only open on Saturday. Some of the girls' parents didn't send money so they weren't allowed to get anything from the tuck shop. Miss Fletcher ran the tuck shop. She sat at a wee desk and had cards with how much money you had and she would write down what you had taken. If a girl's parents hadn't sent any money Miss Fletcher would shame them. She would say, "You've not got any money. You can't get anything." it was so cruel.
38. My sister was a tuck shop girl because Miss Fletcher favoured her a bit. Although Miss Fletcher was cruel to my sister, she beat her, she made her a tuck shop girl as well. We couldn't understand why that was. My sister's job was to help a girl pick something quickly. She used to slip me sweets for the girls who didn't have money. We didn't have much money, I think my mum sent us 50p.

Leisure time

39. I have no memories of what we did in the evenings after dinner until bed time. The only nights I remember was when my sister wanted to run away and the time when I was taken out of my bed for singing.

40. There were no toys or a television or anything like that at Fornethy. They just had the film screen in the recreation room. At some point at weekends we went to the recreation room. We got taught to sing songs in the Rec room and on Saturdays they had a movie on a big screen but I don't remember seeing any films, I remember them bringing in a projector. I just don't remember Fornethy House as being fun.
41. It must have been at weekends we went on walks that were really long and I had asthma. We had to march and sing songs and there was the terrible smell of farms. Somebody said it was turnips but I don't know. We didn't go to into any of the farms. We had to wear wellingtons and wool balaclava helmets. I had a cold sore and I remember it itching. There was nothing around Fornethy House for miles around, apart from a wee building at the end of the road that looked like a church. There was a farm nearby too.

Personal possessions

42. I don't remember having any possessions with me like toys. We didn't have much in our household. My mum had got a list of stuff to pack for us but we weren't even allowed to wear our own clothes. I don't know where my things were kept while I was at Fornethy.

Chores

43. We had to make our beds in the morning and fold our nightdresses. At night we had to fold our clothes and put them at the bottom of the bed.

Religious instruction

44. The church was pretty near Fornethy House. Some people were picked to go to church on a Sunday. I was never picked. My sister got picked to go to the church. I think it was only certain ones who got picked out to go to church or into the village. I think it was just the favourites. They were also taken out of their beds at night and taken

downstairs but I don't know what for. The teachers would come in to the dormitory and wake some girls and tell them to go downstairs. I think it was Mrs Fletcher who took my sister out of the dormitory, but I can't be sure.

Visits/Inspections/Review of Detention

45. We didn't have any visitors when we were at Fornethy. Our family wouldn't have been able to get there. There was a train station in the village but there were no buses to Fornethy House. The bus that took us there was a private bus laid on by the council.
46. We didn't have any visits from a social worker. We didn't have a social worker but I remember a social worker being in the house for my older brother but not for me. I can't remember anyone coming round like they were doing an official inspection.
47. We got letters from home. They just shouted out the oldest so it was my sister who got the letters. I thought my mum had forgotten about me. At first I didn't realise the letters were for the both of us but my sister told me that mum was writing to both of us. My sister would read the letters to me. My mum would tell us what was happening back home. Sometimes mum would send us a postal order but at the beginning I thought my mum had forgotten about me. I felt a lot of despair, I was crying a lot but I didn't cry in front of anyone. You could get a wallop for crying.

Healthcare

48. On the first day we went into a room to get examined. There was a nurse and a doctor there. I don't remember what they were doing. Apart from that, I didn't see a doctor or a nurse.
49. I didn't understand what it was at the time, but I had a terrible cold-sore as a child. It caused a big scab on my lip and when I wore my balaclava helmet it stung because the wool would stick to my lip.

Running away

50. My sister was bawling her eyes out one night and begged me to run away with her, go down the fire escape, and to try and get home. I was really tired but I must have been more sensible than I realised because I thought, "What if those two ghosts are out there?" It was probably Mrs Robertson who told us about the ghosts.
51. We had also been told that there was a girl that had broken her leg going down the fire escape so I was worried what would happen if we had fallen and broken our legs. It was awful dark, it was a forest. I was terrified to go, and I was terrified to stay and I was scared because my sister wanted to go but I was too scared to go. My sister was bawling but she wouldn't leave me, so she didn't go.
52. Some of the girls got taken into the village but I wasn't one of them. I can't remember the name of the village. One of the girls managed to get a letter sent out when she went on a visit to the village. Her parents came to get her. We were all crying and saying to her to please tell someone to come and get us. We all wanted to go with her. I can't remember her name.

Bed Wetting

53. If you wet the bed, or if you wet yourself, you got a beating because I think it was a lot of hassle for the staff changing bedclothes or changing your clothes.
54. Mrs Robertson had no issue with being really angry with children. She would hit you in front of the other children to try and scare them into obeying her but kids couldn't help it if they wet the bed. Also the girls were terrified to get out of bed at night because of being told the place was haunted as well as the discipline for being out of bed at night. You weren't even allowed to get out of your bed to go to the toilet. I don't remember what happened to anyone else who wet the bed.
55. There was one night I wet the bed and in the morning Miss Robertson put me over her knee. I was told to strip off my nightdress so I was naked. She battered me on the

bottom with her shoe. This was done in front of all the other girls in my dormitory. I remember the pain from the heel and the humiliation.

Discipline

56. You could be made to stand and face the wall by one of the teachers like Mrs Robertson, Mrs Fletcher, or Miss PWH. Again, they are the only teachers I can remember because they were the ones who were bad. They could come up to you and literally wallop you across the head for not standing in line. They might elbow you in the head or hit you with something that was lying about. You were constantly stressed when you were in their company. Sometimes it might be the girl standing next to me who got hit but it was still terrifying. Night-time was the only time they weren't there all the time. They must have done checks because I remember getting dragged out of my bed at night.

Abuse at Fornethy House

57. For the age we were at, we were treated very badly. We were treated like scum. There was no comfort. We were so far away from home and there was no comfort whatsoever. The teachers didn't speak to you, they shouted at you. If you spoke out of line you could have anything thrown at you, for example a book, or a blackboard duster. It was just missiles coming at you in the classroom. Miss Robertson liked using her shoes. She would take her shoes off and throw them at you.
58. Being in pain and distress is my main memory. Being made to feel ashamed. I felt despair because I thought I was never going to see my mum again. I didn't know how long we were going to be there. If you spoke out of line you could have anything coming to you.
59. I didn't see my sister during the day so the only time we had to talk to each other was at night. One night, my sister and I were under our covers so we didn't notice the blue light had come on. The blue light signalled time for lights out and no talking. We were

singing Paper Roses under the bedcovers. The next thing, the teacher grabbed us and started hitting us, I think it was Miss PWH. She was slapping and belting us with her hand on the head and body all the way through to another room. I think it was the library, there was a fire on. She told us to face the wall. She said she was going to tell Mrs Fletcher if we made a sound. Mrs Fletcher was even more formidable than the rest of them.

60. I thought we were going to get a doing but I told my sister not to cry. If they heard us greeting they would come in and hit her again. She told me she was needing the toilet so I told her to tell the teacher. My sister shouted on the teacher for ages and ages. Eventually Miss PWH came in and said, "I told you not to make a sound" and she whacked my sister across the head. She put the light out, walked out of the room, and wouldn't even listen to what my sister wanted to tell her. My sister wet herself. My sister didn't remember about that incident until I reminded her. I think my sister felt embarrassed that she was crying because she was that bit older and she was always trying to look after me.
61. When Mrs Fletcher came in, she found that my sister had wet herself. Mrs Fletcher took my sister away and was hitting her as they went. She told me to get back to my bed. I don't know what happened to my sister after that.
62. On one of the long walks we went on, I was needing the toilet. I told the teacher, Mrs Robertson, but she just told me to hold it in. She told me to get back into the line we were marching in. I went to her again to ask to go to the toilet. We were miles from anywhere and I could have gone behind a bush but she actually slapped me across the head and the legs. She told me to stop complaining and hold it in. I wet myself. I remember the pain in my legs which were all raw from the wellingtons rubbing against them in a ring and the urine went into my raw legs and stung. I had to go home like that, miles from anywhere.
63. I got slapped about the head and skelped because I had wet myself. We were on the walk and the teacher made them all sing a song to me. It was that song 'Nobody likes me, everybody hates me, I think I'll go and eat worms'. The teacher was basically

saying that I was a bad girl, a dirty girl, she's wet herself so sing this song to her. It was horrible. I am sure that when I wet myself on that walk it caused me to get a chill and that's why I was wetting the bed at night. I wasn't normally a bed wetter

64. When I got back Miss PWH hit me again, just anywhere on the body. They told me again that I was dirty. I was stripped naked and told to go for a shower. I was sent to the showers with another older girl from another dormitory. I think her name was or . She seemed a lot older than me but she was probably eleven years old. I remember her looking very sad. I was always trying to cheer her up. She was always trying to look out for me. She tried to help me a wee bit. There was something very sad and dark about her. She always looked despondent. She was made to go for a shower with me. It was her and I in the shower naked. We were giggling, I was trying to make her laugh because I was aware that she was ashamed that the two of us were naked in the showers.
65. The other girl had forgotten her washcloth and Miss PWH told me to wash the other girl. I thought she meant to give her my washcloth, which I handed over but Miss PWH said that I was to wash her. I was embarrassed. Miss PWH told the girl to open her legs and told me to wash her underneath. It was horrible but I did it. I was scared and I did what I was told. Then Miss PWH said to the older girl, "That'll teach you." I don't know how the older girl must have felt and that makes me feel sad. That's all I remember about that incident.
66. The worst two were Mrs Robertson and Mrs Fletcher. Miss PWH too, but she wasn't quite as bad even though she hit me a few times. Mrs Roberson really skelped me in the morning for wetting the bed and on the walk.
67. I don't remember much about Mrs Fletcher, I just remember being terrified of her shouting and throwing things. I remember I was in the recreation room and I was given a cup of milk. They said it was from the farm but there was grass and bits in it. I made a "Yeuch" noise and she went crazy and started throwing things at me. She threw a book at me and a ceramic cup. I can remember her throwing a blackboard duster at me but I don't know if she was my teacher.

68. I remember Mrs Fletcher in the dining room force feeding a girl. I don't know who the girl was. I ate everything I was given, I didn't have a problem with food plus I was terrified to disobey, I did everything I was told. My sister had terrible treatment with food, she couldn't eat some foods and she was force fed. The force feeding involved the teacher grabbing hold of the girl's head and forcing the food into her mouth with a spoon. The girl would be choking and being sick. I can remember my sister gagging with being force fed. I was just sitting next to her, too scared to do anything. My sister has been in Stobhill hospital with bulimia. She has suffered from it all her life and she thinks it stems from Fornethy House.
69. The only other thing I can think of was a bizarre situation where we had to walk single file into the recreation room. There was a row of seats with people sitting on them. All I remember is somebody patting their knee for me to come and sit on their lap. I looked around the room for my sister and she was away at the back. She shook her head as if to say don't go and sit. I didn't go and sit but others did. My sister tried to get me to remember more details but all I could picture was that he had brown trousers. It was definitely a man. It was a row of men and we were brought in before them in age order.

Good memories

70. I have no good memories of Fornethy House.

Leaving Fornethy House

71. I don't remember being told when I was going home. You would think I would remember that because I was desperate to get home. When we got home we were so glad to see our mum. We told her what had been happening at Fornethy House but she seemed to have switched off, like she was emotionally detached. Maybe she was embarrassed because we were on a crowded bus heading back to Glasgow. Once we got back to Glasgow, things just went back to normal and I went back to my usual school.

Life after being in Fornethy House

72. I found it difficult to reintegrate back into my home life after Fornethy. My best friend who lived next door to me had moved on to a new circle of friends when I was at Fornethy and I found it difficult to join that group even though she tried to involve me. I had become more of a loner, I didn't want to make new friendships, even though people wanted to befriend me. I made excuses to stay in the house. All my life I felt that there was something wrong with me because I couldn't mix with people. I do have friends but only a very few close friends.
- 73.
74. I worked in care as an adult and I never related the work to Fornethy until now. I left school at 16 years of age and started working in [REDACTED] nursing home where I was working with new born babies. I started dating my husband when I was 17 years old. We married in 1991. We have two children.
75. I was brought up with good values and to have respect for people, especially older people. I knew what it was like to be poor, to not have as much as some people but I also knew what it was like to suffer. When I have seen anyone else suffering, I have always wanted to help them.
76. I believed in the values and principles of care. I always followed procedures. The majority of people working in care are good people, they are working in care for all the right reasons. However there will always be some working in care for other reasons, not to care for people, some of them are just nasty. I can't sit back and watch that, I always challenged it.
77. I started off in home help and then I was in community care dealing with moving and handling. I worked with a variety of different disabilities. I was a social care worker and eventually I worked in the specialised dementia unit.
78. I advocated for the residents. In these situations it seemed to me that I felt the pain that the residents were subjected to. I didn't relate that to my experiences at Fornethy

until recently. A lot of the residents confided in me as well. This was in the residential care unit I started in.

79. When I started it was more about residential care, promoting independence and helping people get out. When I finished up it was more hospital based dealing with moving, handling and end of life care.
80. I don't know if it's hereditary but my sister needed an operation on her spine and my dad had the same problem with his back. I need the same operation but I am too far gone. My dad had to give up work in his fifties.
81. I had to give up work because of my back but I didn't realise at the time that I had also suffered a breakdown. My mother and father died in 2008 in the space of ten days from one another. At that time I was also going through a lot of things at work. My oldest sister was an alcoholic and I was trying to deal with her kids and help her.

Impact

82. The main thing I took from Fornethy House were pain, fear, humiliation, despair, and worthlessness. I can't stand too much stress now. I have never had counselling.
83. My sister and I never really spoke about it until we were in our thirties. I think that was because by then we had our own children growing up, it sort of reminded me of being back at that age. I used to tell [REDACTED] not to talk about it, it was too depressing. It impacted more on my sister back then because she could remember more about it, whereas it is impacting more on me now. It is very strange. Things make sense to me now more than they ever have, my anxieties and lack of self-esteem. I know I seem quite confident but I have not always been like that and I have lost a lot of confidence.
84. I feel that my anxieties have also impacted on my children. I suffered from depression for a long time and I feel terrible for putting my family through that. for a long time I didn't know how to deal with that but I have since had counselling.

85. I am suffering from flashbacks now where I am eight years old. I am wakening up crying for my mum. It is the strangest thing. I have memories of being hit in front of people with nothing on because I wet the bed. I have flashbacks to being in the shower at Fornethy. I kept crying for my mother. The feeling is like total grief.
86. I have never been back to Fornethy House, it would be too much. I have never asked the authorities for an apology for the abuse I suffered, nor have I sought any compensation. I am in a support group. I joined after my sister sent me an article that was in the paper about two women who spoke about abuse at Fornethy House. I felt we had to let people know these women were telling the truth. Everything they said was 100 per cent true. They were asking for people to come forward to verify things. I phoned my sister and said we had to confirm things. The article said there was a support group but didn't give details however we found the group.
87. I tried to find the support group [REDACTED]. I then used the number in the article which was for Thomson's solicitors and said I was contacting them in relation to the article in the Daily Record and that the girls were telling the truth. They asked how I knew and I said that I was there and similar things happened to me. They asked me if I wanted to make a claim. I had never thought of that and I was taken aback because I didn't see myself as a victim. I could project my sympathy onto other people who were giving an account of abuse but I couldn't see myself in the same way.
88. I then found the support group [REDACTED] and spoke to someone and said I wanted to support them. I have been in and out of the support group since then because there have been a lot of people who have joined and I found it difficult to read more new accounts of what they had been through.
89. I spoke to my sister and asked her if she ever thought about the abuse we suffered at Fornethy and she told me she had thought about it her whole life. She said that I was the one who didn't want to talk about it. We had never dealt with it because we were always dealing with something else in life like our kids. Now the kids have grown up I have had time to think.

90. I am on and off the support group. Each new person that comes on to the group goes through the same impact process that I went through and it is hard to watch them go through that. I came off the support group because it was impacting on me and because I didn't agree with some things. I have spoken to Future Pathways and I am on a waiting list for counselling, with Anchor.
91. I don't know if being going to Fornethy affected my relationship with my mum. I always felt she could have been a stronger person. She was a very nice person, very quiet. She didn't like confrontation. I didn't like confrontation either but I found that because my mother was so meek I had to be confrontational. I loved my mother but like everybody else, she wasn't perfect. We clashed.
92. I don't know if going to Fornethy House affected my relationships with other members of my family but I always felt closest to my sister that went to Fornethy with me. I always wanted to be with her but we all got on really well. We were a very close family and we still are. I think I didn't understand my mothers' possible depression due to her sisters dying. I've got the same relationship with my son as my mum had with me. Him and I clash but we get on like a house on fire at other times.

Reporting of Abuse

93. I only recently made a report to the police, it was in October 2020. I haven't heard anything from them recently about that.

Records

94. I would love to get my records from Fornethy House. I have written to Glasgow Life asking for a freedom of information request. They have said that any records would be with Glasgow Council. I have emailed Future Pathways for help with this.

Lessons to be learned


- 95. I think people’s behaviour impact on people their whole lives, especially when you’re young. I think it’s a choice to be good or bad to people. I definitely think it needs to be looked at for children. I’m not a granny but my sister has grandchildren the same age as we were when we went through that at Fornethy House and to think of them going through that is horrific. For any children to have to go through that, it’s not right.
- 96. I think you need more training for staff to stop abuse happening and making sure the right people are placed in the jobs. There should be more staff for a given number of children but I know that is not going to happen because of funding.

Hope for the Inquiry

- 97. To do the right thing by children, to treat them well. How it can impact on your life. It can change a person. I sound as if I am a confident person but behind the scenes I was crumbling.

Other information

- 98. 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..... 26 May 2021