

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PFC [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is PFC [REDACTED]. My surname as a child was PFC [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1975. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Springburn in Glasgow. My dad was [REDACTED] and my mum was [REDACTED]. Dad didn't work because he was schizophrenic and had a drinking problem. My mother was disabled with spina bifida and couldn't work.
3. I'm the youngest of four children. My brother [REDACTED] is four years older than me and was born in 1971, my sister [REDACTED] was born in 1973 and my other sister [REDACTED] was born in 1974.
4. We moved about a lot when I was a child, probably every year or so, because my mum and dad used to get into a lot of debt with money lenders. We stayed in different areas of Glasgow and we stayed in the countryside in Perthshire. We missed a lot of schooling because of that. We were poor and mum and dad's decisions might not have been quite right, but they loved the bones off us kids. They looked after us as best they could and we were happy.
5. I've since learned that there were social workers involved with us, but I don't remember anything about that. I also know that we were in Ruchill Disease Hospital at one point

for two weeks when I was still in a cot, but I don't remember that, although I've since found out it was because we all had dysentery.

6. I remember starting school when we lived in Provanhall and then going to Albert Primary School, which we called 'Wee Albert', after we moved to [REDACTED] in Springburn. The head teacher at Wee Albert was a lady called Mrs Tortolano.
7. While I was at Wee Albert school, my sisters and I were all sent to Fornethy School for a few weeks and my brother was sent to Seafield. We actually went twice, but the time I remember the most was the first time, when we stayed at Viewpoint. I reckon I was in either primary two or three that first time, so I would have been seven or eight years old. I'm not sure how old I was the second time we went, maybe a couple of years older.
8. I don't know why we were sent to Fornethy, all I do know is that my mum and dad were having really bad issues financially at that time. My mother has since told me that the reason we went was because the head teacher at Wee Albert school, Mrs Tortolano, had advised her it would be good for us to go for a holiday.
9. I was really excited at the thought of going that first time, because I thought it was a holiday we were all going on. My mum told me that I'd get to go on a boat on the river and that I'd get to see horses.

Fornethy House School

10. Fornethy House was a beautiful, palatial building surrounded by well-kept gardens. The main entrance was in a turret, where there were double doors leading onto an entrance foyer that had parquet flooring. Stairs were on the left and there was a large room that was used as a playroom. There were big fancy bay windows in this room and black and white checked flooring. Further on past those two rooms the hall curved slightly and there were other, smaller rooms, a big library and the dining hall and

kitchen. The dining hall was a big room and part of it looked like a sunroom that had been added on.

11. Upstairs there were quite a few dormitories for us all to stay in, possibly about ten and each with about twelve or fourteen beds in them. I remember one was called Clover, another was Islay and another was Spey. I was in Clover which had the bathroom to one side and the dorm teacher's room on the other side. There were no curtains on the windows, just wooden shutters that were closed every night and a metal bar put over them.
12. The woman who was in charge of Fornethy was called Mrs Fletcher and she was the head teacher. She was a tall, thin woman, probably around sixty, who was mild in her manner and very well-spoken. She had white hair that she wore in a bun sometimes and was always well dressed. I've since done some research and I think she actually owned Fornethy at one point.
13. I can't remember the names of any of the other staff, but I do remember what the woman who was in charge of my dorm was like. She was called our dorm teacher. I remember what she looked like, what she smelled like and I remember the clothes she wore. I just can't remember her name.
14. At the time to me she was an old woman, but I would say she was actually late twenties or early thirties. She was quite a stout woman and she had a strong Highland accent. She had short, curly brown hair and was quite old fashioned.
15. There were quite a lot of other staff, but they weren't involved with us every day. None of them spoke with a Glasgow accent, they all had Highland accents and none of them wore a uniform, they just wore casual clothes. There were dinner ladies as well and they too spoke with a Highland accent. They were lovely. They always tried to talk to us and they were kind to us.

16. The only man on the staff was a groundsman, who was a wee old man, who had a traditional-styled walking cane. I only ever saw him outside, he was never in the building.
17. A church minister used to come every day to take us for prayer. I don't know his name either, but he was young, skinny and small with brown hair. He was really strict and mean and he seemed to be on the same level as Mrs Fletcher. None of the staff ever talked down to him.
18. All the children at Fornethy were girls, ranging from about six years old to fifteen or sixteen, and I think there must have been eighty to one hundred girls in total. Some of the girls were English and some were Irish. Those girls seemed to be quite well-to-do and always seemed to have much more money than I did.

Routine at Fornethy House

First day

19. The first time we went to Fornethy must have been between [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] 1982 and we were there for six weeks.
20. I remember leaving from Wee Albert primary school on a bus that took us to Buchanan Street bus station and then getting another bus from there to Fornethy. My sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were with me and a few other girls went from our school as well. I didn't know the other girls because they were a bit older.
21. We had all been given a list of things to take and my mum had bought all sorts of clothes for each of us that we had in our suitcases. We had welly boots, underwear, vests, pyjamas, trousers, a toothbrush and toothpaste. Everything was brand new because mum wanted it to be special for us.

22. We got off the bus at the station in the nearest town and then we got a minibus to Fornethy. We were all super-excited. I was so impressed when we arrived because the building in the grounds looked idyllic. I thought we were going to stay with the Queen.
23. We all had to take our own suitcases off the bus. My mum had bought me red shoes for the trip and I had to take them off as they were so slippery on the parquet flooring. We were guided into the playroom where there were chairs set out for us and a couple of toys.
24. We all stayed in the playroom with our suitcases as other girls arrived from elsewhere. We were just milling about, talking to each other and it seemed as if we were in there for ages, but all the girls were having a great time. Once everybody was there, we were told which dormitory we were to be in. I was put in Clover with my two sisters and we were taken in our groups up to the dormitories.
25. We got to our dormitory and had to leave our suitcases on our beds before the woman who was our dorm teacher told us to go back downstairs again. We were shown into one of the smaller rooms downstairs where I thought we were going to get checked for nits. We used to get our heads checked for nits at school every week, so I wasn't bothered.
26. The next thing I knew though, we had to strip off all the clothes we were wearing and we were each put into a bath. The dorm teacher then scrubbed us all with carbolic soap, even our hair. I could actually taste the soap. It was very embarrassing for me because there were girls who were coming into bloom having to stand and wait with nothing on. The dorm teacher didn't care, it was like she was washing a dog.
27. I had to get out of the bath with my hair soaking and put a towel around me before I was told to go through to the next room where two other ladies were waiting. I had to stand while these two ladies pulled a bone comb through my wet hair to de-louse me. I had long hair and it was agony. They scraped the comb through my hair and I was screaming and crying, telling them they were pulling my scalp off my head, but I was

just told to stop complaining. After that, with all the skin on my scalp ripped and bleeding, they put some sort of lotion on. It stank and it stung and I have never been so traumatised.

28. Everybody got the same treatment and everybody was crying. We were given the pyjamas we had brought and we were put back into the dormitory. When we got back to the dormitory our cases were on our beds and they had all been emptied by someone. All that was on the bed was the underwear we had brought and our vests and big football socks that they gave us, which were rolled up in a ball. I was asking where my own stuff was, but my sister [REDACTED] told me to shut up and not ask.
29. We left the towels we had been given in the dormitory and went back down to the playroom in our pyjamas, where there were a few girls from some of the other dormitories. Mrs Fletcher came in then and gave us a speech about what their expectations of us were and what the rules and regulations of the place were. We were told if we didn't obey all the rules there would be a consequence.
30. Most of us were still crying and didn't know what was going on. I just wanted to go home. We were bombarded with rules and then another woman came in with a box of sandwiches for us all. We were ravenous, but that was all we got. We never got a proper meal and I knew that if I didn't eat the sandwich I would have to go without. After the sandwich we got a biscuit and a choice of water or milk.
31. After that we were sent back upstairs and, even though we'd all had a bath, we had to wash ourselves again in the bathroom. The dorm teacher showed us what she was expecting of us when we washed and she checked each of us to see if we had listened to her.
32. I was a hyperactive child and I just wanted to go home so I was complaining and that meant I had a target on my back for the rest of my time at Fornethy. I messed things up and, even though all the others were allowed to go back to the dormitory, I wasn't allowed to leave until I had done everything exactly the way she had said.

33. Once the dorm teacher was satisfied I had put all my washing stuff back exactly as I'd been told, I was allowed to go back to the dormitory and we were all told which was our bed. Then she told us that in a couple of days she would be picking a dorm captain out of the older girls. She said that the dorm captain would be an older girl who would be in charge when she wasn't about.
34. She told us that a light would be left on all night so that we would be able to see to go to the toilet. She said that once a dorm captain had been chosen we could go with that girl, but for the first couple of days we were reliant on the dorm teacher.

Mornings and bedtime

35. The first time we went my two sisters were put in Clover dormitory with me when we arrived. [REDACTED] didn't stay with us long though because she was moved to another dormitory to be the dorm captain. I didn't know why she was moved at the time, it was only when she told me later on that I found out. My sisters were both in a different dormitory to me the second time we went.
36. Another girl was the captain of our dorm and that meant she was in charge whenever the dorm teacher wasn't about. I can't remember our dorm captain's name, but she was a tall girl, about thirteen years old, with long, curly hair. She could tell us what to do and what not to do and she was usually a nice person, but it really depended on her mood how we were treated.
37. My sister [REDACTED] was quite a mousey girl and used to come into my bed at night sometimes for comfort. The dorm captain knew and normally didn't mind, but if she was in a bad mood she would tell us to get back to our own beds.
38. We had to get up at the crack of dawn. There were no clocks so I don't know what time it would have been. The dorm teacher would come in, open the shutters and we were all told to get up.

39. As soon as we got up, we had to pull our sheets back and stand at the side of our beds until the teacher came round to inspect if any of us had wet our beds. Then we went for a wash in the bathroom next door. We had to wash exactly how we had been shown, or the dorm teacher would wash us herself and she was rough.
40. After washing we got dressed and went downstairs to the dining hall for breakfast and after breakfast we all went to the playroom. I don't know what the bigger girls did, but the minister came every day to speak to the young kids. After the minister had spoken to us we were all told what we were going to be doing that day. Some of us would go and clean out the rabbit hutches outside, others would get shown how to paint stones and some of us would be told we would be cleaning. You got allocated either a fun thing to do, or a really rubbish thing to do.
41. After we had done that we would go back to the playroom and be told what we were doing next. We might be told we were to go outside to play for 45 minutes, whatever the weather was like, and then we'd go back in for lunch. After lunch we would either be back outside, supposedly for an hour, but sometimes it was much longer, or we would be in the playroom. We were rotated round in what we were doing. If you had done the rabbits in the morning, you might get to be inside doing something else in the afternoon.
42. In the evening we just milled about in the playroom until it was time for bed, which was always early. At bedtime we all had to go for a shower and then we were given a choice of a glass of milk or water and a digestive biscuit before we'd get ready for bed. Because the dorm teacher's room was just outside the door to the right, she could hear everything, so we knew to be quiet.

Bed Wetting

43. I had a problem with wetting the bed and with night terrors both at home and at Fornethy. I used to wet the bed practically every night, because I was afraid to go to the bathroom in the dark. In the morning we all had to pull our bedding back for the

- dorm teacher to check. She used to lift the sheet up and look and then throw the sheet back down if I'd wet it and tell me to strip it all off and roll it up into a bundle.
44. Depending on the dorm teacher's mood, I would either have to leave the bundle at the end of my bed while all the other girls changed their beds, or sometimes if I wasn't doing it fast enough she would flick the sheet onto me, which was horrible.
 45. I then had to take my bedding to the laundry basket and pass all the other dormitories on the way. Every girl that wet their bed had to do the same and all the other girls started to call it the 'walk of shame'. It was embarrassing.
 46. You then had to go back and stand outside the dorm until everybody went for breakfast before you were told to strip your wet pyjamas off and stand in a cold shower. We weren't allowed a hot shower.
 47. We weren't punched or anything like that for wetting the bed, but we were shoved about by the dorm teacher, poked in the chest and asked why we had done it. I was told I was disgusting, that I was making the room smelly. There was no support and no understanding, it was pure humiliation.
 48. After a couple of weeks I used to wet the corner of my bed so that she wouldn't see it and I would get a few days grace.

Mealtimes/Food

49. We got three meals a day and the main meal was at teatime. I thought we got lunch a bit early after our breakfast, because nobody was really wanting to eat at lunchtime. Teatime was when it was starting to get dark.
50. We always sat with the rest of our dorms and the meals were like a silver service. Supposedly they were teaching us to be ladies and there were rules for everything. They tried to teach us table etiquette and if any girl spoke at mealtimes, or sat the wrong way at the table, they were punished. I was smacked on my legs with a ruler

for having them crossed. If a girl had their hands on the table, they would be smacked with a ruler too. The teachers would walk round the tables and they would target certain girls.

51. I actually thought the food was fabulous. At breakfast we got a morning roll and then cereal or porridge and fruit. At lunchtime we would get a cob roll and a bowl of soup and then something else.
52. I had been brought up to eat what I was given, so I never had a problem, but my sister [REDACTED] was a vegetarian and she had the most horrible time. There were other girls who couldn't tolerate some things and they were brutally treated as well. They would be sent to stand outside, facing the wall, until everyone had finished.
53. We all had to stand up from the table at the same time when we had finished and then march in a line out of the dining hall. The girls who hadn't eaten something would then have to go back in. That never happened to me, but my sister told me they were forced to eat whatever they had left, even if it was cold. If they didn't eat it then, it would be put back for them at the next meal. If they didn't eat that time, they wouldn't eat anything until the next day because they weren't allowed in for the next meal.
54. Every day girls were force fed by their dorm teachers. I saw my dorm teacher forcing my sister and other girls to eat. We were told to stop eating and watch because the girl had turned good food away. My sister had refused to eat a stew and the dorm teacher forced some into her mouth with a fork. My sister gagged it up and was ill for two days afterwards. We all had to watch and if we didn't we were smacked with a wooden ruler by one of the teachers.
55. The worst time was when a wee girl who didn't like fish was forced to eat it. She spewed the fish up and the dorm teacher made her pick it up with her hands. I wanted to help, but I couldn't. I felt awful, but I knew if I said anything I would get in trouble myself.

Washing/bathing

56. In the bathroom upstairs there were wee cages along the wall with each of our names on them where we had to keep our wash things. We were in charge of our own cage and we had to keep it immaculate. There couldn't be any toothpaste on our toothbrushes. The soap had to be smooth with no dirty bits on it. The facecloth had to be folded a certain way and if any of it wasn't done right, the dorm teacher would rip it out of the cage and make us do it all again.
57. We were shown what was expected of us when we washed on the first day. We had to wash our hands, then our faces, ears and neck and then brush our teeth. After we'd washed we had to put all our stuff back exactly how we had been shown.
58. The bathroom was quite big with toilet cubicles that had doors for privacy, but the showers were all open. We had to have a shower every night and we all had to stand and wait our turn while the dorm teacher stood and watched us. There was never time to wash properly, we just seemed to get in the shower and then the dorm teacher would tell us to move and let the next girl in.
59. Even though there were older girls, we all had to stand naked beside each other. It was embarrassing and it was a horrible experience. The older girls used to get angry because they were standing naked next to the younger ones and the dorm teacher would then get angry because we might not be doing things fast enough, or neat enough.
60. Even though I had brought my own towel I had to use the ones that were provided, which were thin white 'waffle-like' towels. There were never enough and that meant that if you were last you had to use a towel that another girl had already used.

Clothing/uniform

61. We were given clothes to wear, including a blue woolly skirt that was sometimes too long, even though my mother had bought new things for us before we went to

Fornethy. The only things we got to wear that my mother had given us was underwear and pyjamas. Mum had to iron our names onto them before we went.

62. My mother had bought us new boots, but instead we were given wellies to wear outside and they never fitted us. We were also given black shoes, but again they never fitted us. It was like first come, first served and we just had to grab a pair, whether they were too big or too small. Even on a Sunday we wore the same things.
63. There was a basket in the showers for us to put our clothes before we put our pyjamas on, but I don't know who washed everything.

Leisure time

64. We never got to socialise with any girls from the other dorms, except when we were outside. We were out playing in the grounds in any weather. I'll never forget when it was my sister's birthday it was heavy snow and we all had snow inside our wellies. There were triangular huts in the grounds where we used to shelter from the rain and a couple of swings and a really dodgy-looking climbing frame.
65. We smaller girls didn't seem to do anything except stay in Fornethy the whole time. There weren't very many toys in the playroom, just a jigsaw puzzle and a couple of board games. Most of the time we made up our own games to play and were left to our own devices. I did get to paint stones one time and I made a wee wicker basket another time and on Saturdays they used to play music in the playroom.
66. Every couple of days a box came round the dormitory that had different girls' comics in it, like 'Bunty' and 'Judy'. Those comics were older than some of the girls that were there though. That only happened every second evening, because the box would be in one of the other dormitories the next night.

Schooling

67. I had been told before I went to Fornethy that I would have classes, but I never did. My sisters told me they went to a classroom while they were at Fornethy, but I don't remember getting any school at all. I was always either in the playroom, or outside playing, or being taken for walks in my wellies with some of the other younger girls.
68. The walks were up to heather fields and were relentless. If you stopped you were told to stay where you were and they came and got us on the way back. By the time we got back to Fornethy we were exhausted, both physically and mentally. There was nothing enjoyable about those walks, it was almost like we were in a chain gang. If you couldn't keep up the bigger girls were told to hurry you along.

Healthcare

69. I never saw a nurse or a doctor at any time. If one of us had fallen and cut our knee, we were just expected to sort ourselves out. One time I burst my nose when I fell and I was sent to the toilet with another girl to clean myself up. The dorm teacher had shoved me and I fell over and smashed my face off the floor. The dorm teacher just sent me away with the older girl and didn't even come with me or check if I was concussed.

Religious instruction

70. We had to say prayers every evening and every morning with the minister from the local church, who was a horrible man. When the minister took us for prayers in the morning he used to talk about the reasons we should be grateful to God and the opportunities that we had in Fornethy. He was trying to tell us what a great place Fornethy was, even though he must have been able to see that most of us just wanted to go home.
71. We all had to go to the local church on a Sunday as well. I don't know what religion it was, probably Church of Scotland, but there was no choice, everybody had to go. I'm not sure how far away the church was, but I think we all had to walk to it in our wee groups. After the service we were all expected to clean the church.

72. I was told to go under the table one time during morning prayers by the minister. We all had to read a passage from the bible, but I couldn't read, so I refused. He told me to go under the table and sit in a basket there with my legs crossed and a bag of sugar or flour on my head. Afterwards I could hardly walk. He used that punishment regularly on other girls as well.
73. My dad used to read passages from the bible and from the Koran and used to tell us that God's house is every house. He used to question why you need to be in a particular building and on your knees, but it was nothing like that with this minister. The feeling I got when I first saw that minister was that he was saying that he was the power and that God was with him.
74. When my dad talked about religion it was like skipping through Eden, not someone dictating, as this man did, that "you shall do what God tells you or you are bad". He portrayed the bible as a scary horrible thing and he used to pick passages out in order to manipulate the situation. He tried to make us feel that God would be disappointed in us.

Work

75. Most of the smaller girls had to clean the place a lot of the time. We would be told to clean the bathrooms, or the dormitory, or we'd have to take the laundry down. We never cleaned the kitchen, but we did occasionally have to tidy the dining hall.

Birthdays

76. My sister [REDACTED] had a birthday while we were there and the kitchen staff made her a birthday cake for it. That happened every time it was a girl's birthday. I didn't see any girls getting any presents though and certainly [REDACTED] never got anything.
77. The cake was brought to their table in the dining hall and shared out amongst the rest of the girls on their dorm table. My sister [REDACTED] was in a different dorm by that time

and she wanted me and [REDACTED] to have some, but she was told we couldn't because we were in a different dorm. I could see [REDACTED] was upset that she wasn't allowed to give [REDACTED] and I any cake, but she didn't make a big deal of it. It was the same for any other girl that had a birthday if their sibling was in a different dorm.

78. We weren't allowed to be with [REDACTED] on her birthday either. I only saw her at mealtimes and even then if I had been caught talking to her I would be in trouble.

Visitors

79. The reason we had been making the wicker baskets and the painted stones was because a fete was to be held that our parents were supposed to come to. It was probably held about a month after we got to Fornethy and a couple of weeks before we left.
80. A few local people came in to buy things but, even though the staff had told us our parents would be coming, we knew they wouldn't. They didn't drive and we were miles away from them, however we quickly realised that none of the girls' families came. In fact in the whole time I was at Fornethy, no families came.

Personal possessions/pocket money

81. We weren't allowed any personal possessions, not even a soft toy. Before I went I had looked out things that I wanted to take with me, but my mother wouldn't allow me. She had a list of things we were allowed and I had to stick with that. The list had things like socks, pants and a toothbrush on it, but nothing personal and no toys, or comics.
82. Every child had been given money by their parents before they went to Fornethy and we were allowed a sweetie shop once a day, usually before lunch. A lady used to sit in a wee office with packets of sweeties and would write in her book what we got. After a few weeks the money that my mother had given us was starting to run out and we hardly got anything. I know for sure that if my mother had been told the money was running out she would have given more, but that never happened.

External Inspections

83. Although, as I've since learned, the social work had been involved with us, no social worker ever came to see us at Fornethy. I never saw anyone from outside come to inspect the place either. I know one of the other girls would have told me if someone from outside had asked them any questions.

Family contact

84. We had to write letters to our families every week, but we never got anything back and my mother never received any. Some of the wee girls that didn't have any sisters with them used to ask Mrs Fletcher if there were any letters for them because their mothers had told them she would write, but nobody ever got one.

Sibling Contact

85. [REDACTED] has always been like a second mother to me, but I hardly saw her because she was in a different dorm. The only time I would see her was at mealtimes and occasionally in passing in the corridor, but we would be moved along and not allowed to speak.
86. I did spend a lot of time with [REDACTED] and I turned to [REDACTED] for support many times. If any girl was caught messing about though, her older sibling would get in trouble as well. That happened to me and what it meant was that my older sisters would tell me to behave.
87. If any of the staff were about we couldn't show any affection to each other or to any other girl. We couldn't even hug a crying child. When the dorm teacher wasn't about in the dorm though, we often did comfort each other. We became reliant on each other to support ourselves.

Running away

88. Running away would have been pointless because there were miles of farmland all around. I don't know of any girl running away at any time and my sisters and I certainly never did.

Returning to Fornethy

89. I'm not sure how long it was before we were sent back to Fornethy, possibly two years. I was certainly still young, because I was never made a dorm captain, but I can't remember what school I was at when we went back.
90. The second time we went my parents took us to Buchanan Street bus station and we all got a bus to Fornethy from there. It was the same head teacher at Fornethy, Mrs Fletcher, but a lot of the staff were different and I never saw the woman who had been my dorm teacher the first time. I was put in a different dorm and I can't remember what it was called, but the dorm teacher was a sporty-looking woman who was very nice, although she was very strict.
91. There was no welcome back, Mrs Fletcher didn't even seem to recognise us, and nothing had changed. We still got the bath when we arrived and the same treatment for nits. The daily routine was exactly the same and I still didn't go in a classroom. There was no instance of extreme violence, but the mental abuse, telling us we were there because our parents didn't want us, was the very same.
92. We weren't there for as long the second time, possibly two or three weeks, before my sisters and I all got the bus back to Buchanan Street and then home. After that second time, we never went back to Fornethy again.

Abuse at Fornethy House

93. All of the teachers carried a wooden ruler and they would use it to hit girls with if they weren't following the rules and regulations. That mainly happened in the dinner hall.

If we weren't getting hit with a ruler, we would be getting slapped, or we would get our hair pulled. There might be other staff about, but none of them would step in and stop it from happening.

94. We were also verbally humiliated in front of whoever happened to be there. We used to ask the staff why our mothers hadn't contacted us, but they used to tell us that our mother didn't want to speak to us because we were bad and we were trouble. It was emotional abuse. None of us had been sent there as a punishment, we thought we were going for a holiday.
95. In the shower one time, my sister [REDACTED] must have been doing something wrong because I saw our dorm teacher grab hold of her and bang her face, full force, off the sink. All the girls saw this and [REDACTED]'s face came out in a lump.
96. The children were often abusive to each other as well, but that was because they were angry and upset about how we were being treated by the staff. If something bad had happened to a girl, she would need to vent on somebody else.
97. If the staff thought you had been bad, you didn't get fed. I was often bad and so I missed out on a lot of meals and was often starved. You had to stand outside while everybody else was eating and wait till they had finished. If you missed any meals as a punishment you didn't get the milk and the biscuit at the end of the day either.
98. I felt that the way the first dorm teacher looked at some of the older girls while they stood naked waiting for a shower was semi-sexual. She was always there when we were showering and I thought she seemed to be staring. She was creepy and I felt uncomfortable and I could see the older girls found it uncomfortable too.
99. I have dyslexia and that meant the staff had a problem with me. I was seen as an issue, because although I can't read or write fast, my brain goes all the time. I am hyperactive and my mother had issues with me for years and my school had problems with me as well.

100. Perhaps because of my hyperactivity, the dorm captain went off her rocker at me one time. I had been running about the dorm, carrying on with another couple of girls when she grabbed hold of me and shoved me onto my bed. I made the mistake of slapping her on the back and after I did, she started ripping my hair out of my head. The other girls were screaming and there was a big kerfuffle.
101. At that, hearing the commotion, the dorm teacher came in. She shouted something at the dorm captain, grabbed me and picked me up by the neck and flung me on the bed. She then frogmarched me out of the dormitory and downstairs to the big library.
102. There was nobody else there and she made me sit on a sofa while she screamed and bawled at me. I swore at her and she grabbed a wooden stick from somewhere and proceeded to smack me with it on the backside. My pyjama trousers and pants were still up and I swore at her again, so she took them down and hit me on the bare backside with the stick.
103. She was hitting me on the backside with it, hell for leather until I couldn't feel my bum or the top of my legs and then she walked away from me, out of the room. I was then alone in this big room that was only dimly lit by a couple of small lights and I was so scared.
104. After a while Mrs Fletcher came into the library and inspected me, but she didn't do anything. She asked what I'd been doing in the dormitory and I tried to explain, but she never said anything. My whole body was convulsing by this time with the pain, the anger and the rage and she pulled my trousers down for a look, pulled them up again and told me to stay where I was.
105. The next thing I remember it was morning and I was getting breakfast. I don't know what happened after Mrs Fletcher left the library. I don't know if I passed out and I don't know how I got to the dining hall for breakfast the next morning.

Reporting of abuse at Fornethy House

106. When I saw Mrs Fletcher I thought she was going to help me, but instead she just told me to be quiet and left me there. She told me I deserved everything I'd got for swearing at the teacher and I knew there was no point in trying to speak to anybody else. She didn't get me any medical help, she didn't even go and get my sisters. She never even spoke to me about what happened after that night.

Leaving Fornethy House

107. About two or three days before we left the first time, the dorm teacher and Mrs Fletcher told us we were to be leaving and to spend any money we had left. There was no money left, but I felt elated. I never slept all night I was so excited to be going home.
108. The night before we left, my suitcase miraculously appeared on my bed. I looked inside and saw all the clothes my mother had given me were there, except for the red shoes I'd been wearing when I arrived. Everything else was just as it had been when I arrived, folded just the same.
109. I think that another six to eight girls got in the minibus with us and we were driven away and back to Wee Albert Primary School. My parents came and picked my sisters and I up from there.

Life after being in care

110. Life went back to how it had been before we went to Fornethy. My mum and dad continued to do the best for us that they could and I went back to Wee Albert Primary. We didn't have the facilities and the opportunities that everybody else had, but that's because we were poor.

111. I had a lot of extreme anger issues when I got back from Fornethy the first time and I resented my parents. They were meant to come and see us and they were meant to write letters, but they didn't. [REDACTED] and I told my mother about the dorm teacher physically assaulting me, but she never believed us and instead we were sent back a second time a couple of years later.
112. We continued moving about a lot and we left Glasgow and moved to Perthshire six months after we got back from Fornethy the first time. After another year or so we moved back to Glasgow again and we continued moving about, staying in different places.
113. I went to a couple of classes at Westwood Secondary School in Easterhouse, but the teacher couldn't believe I was unable to read. I went home and had a big blowout with my mum and physically attacked her, something I had never done before or since.
114. I was sent to a child psychologist and he sent me to a special school for children with dyslexia, which was at Charing Cross in Glasgow. I left that school after a day because there were people taking drugs at the school and I refused to go back.
115. I got two nightshift jobs in factories in Glasgow, which was actually illegal because of my age and then I went into the hospitality industry, where I remained for many years. I had a number of jobs in different hotels, mainly as a chambermaid.
116. I started a relationship with my husband [REDACTED] when I was eighteen and ten years later I became pregnant with our first child. We now have four children.
117. I was diagnosed bipolar many years ago and, about eight years ago, I started developing symptoms of muscular sclerosis, which I was diagnosed with about five years ago.

Impact

118. I had no respect for authority whatsoever after leaving Fornethy and my mental health was never the same. I thought there was no point in being nice to anyone because I would just be punished anyway. I was extremely volatile and I was always against people who were trying to control my life. I'm even the same with medical professionals. I think they're trying to pull the wool over my eyes and trying to deceive me.
119. I had been brought up to respect adults and respect authority but that respect disappeared after the way I had been treated. I could never trust what my mother or father said either. I couldn't understand why they left us at Fornethy, where adults we were supposed to respect treated us as they did.
120. I had a lot of night terrors as a teenager and I was told that was because of my parents' lifestyle. I knew that wasn't true though. I knew those night terrors were because of Fornethy.
121. My children suffered because of Fornethy as well. I couldn't allow them to have sleepovers and they didn't get to do what other children do. They have a good life, but I have never been able to trust anyone to look after them, not even my own family and I feel as if I have stolen part of their childhood because of that. I had been sent somewhere that was supposedly going to make me a better person, but that turned out to be the worst hell you could imagine and I have never been able to trust anyone else to look after them.
122. As a result, my eldest son [REDACTED] is quite withdrawn from society. He spends most of his time online where he is happy, but he struggles to communicate in the real world. I know that I have caused him to have that personality. I smother my children, but I'm not confrontational with them at all and I can't tell them to do things.
123. I couldn't understand why my school could have sent me to Fornethy. Why they built it up as this wonderful place, where my sisters and I would have a nice holiday and so

that my parents could have a rest. I rebelled against my school and, as a result, my education suffered. I was hyperactive and I had dyslexia, but none of the teachers could understand because I was rebelling against them. They couldn't cope with me and they couldn't understand me.

124. If I see anybody being bullied or harassed I get really angry. I get involved, although sometimes I know I shouldn't. I cannot stand by and watch other people in conflict.
125. I am extremely close to my brother [REDACTED], but not to my sisters. We live our own lives. [REDACTED] and I had a wonderful relationship as young children, but I used to take a lot of heat away from her at Fornethy and I became the mother role for her. [REDACTED] would never stand up for herself because she was too quiet and shy and I had to defend her. As a result I got into a lot of trouble because of that and I suppose I blamed her to some extent for that. When [REDACTED] got older she made a lot of bad life choices and took drugs and she blamed that on how she had been treated and that broke our relationship.
126. I lost the closeness with [REDACTED] too because she had been taken away and put in another dorm. We had all been close before, but we couldn't fix the separation when we got home. Now we hardly speak to each other.

Treatment/support

127. I spoke about Fornethy as a teenager with the child psychologist and it was then that I was diagnosed with dyslexia. About a year after that, when I was about fourteen, I was diagnosed with manic depression and it was decided I had to be medicated. The psychologist did regression therapy with me to focus on childhood trauma and I told him how horrible the staff at Fornethy had been.
128. Since then I have had many years of counselling and I know that if I hadn't I would have ended up like my sister [REDACTED].

129. After I had my first son, my dad was seriously ill and I was going through a difficult time so I went to my G.P. and was referred to a counsellor. I had a six week course of counselling, during which I mentioned Fornethy. I'd lost my mum and dad once before when I went to Fornethy and I didn't want to lose them again. My dad passed away and, just like when we were sent to Fornethy, I felt abandoned.

Reporting of Abuse

130. I reported what had happened to me at Fornethy to the police last December. I can't remember the name of the officer I spoke to, but he was at Dundee. I believe that a detective called Mark Lamont is running an investigation into Fornethy School. I gave a statement over the phone and as far as I'm aware a report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

Records

131. I've tried, but I can't seem to get any of my records. At first I went onto the Glasgow Schools web pages and I got emails back looking for more information. I was trying to get medical and social services records, but they've not acknowledged that I was even at Fornethy.

Redress

132. I believe Thompsons Solicitors from Dundee are dealing with compensation claims against Fornethy, although they are now saying that as there's a Redress Scheme nothing is going to come of it.
133. There has been a lot of discussion recently of short term abuse and long term abuse, however abuse is abuse, whether it's over a period of ten days, ten weeks or ten years. I've read in the Redress Scheme that they're saying people in temporary care don't

deserve redress for what happened to them, but how much abuse is too little? Who made that decision?


Lessons to be Learned

134. I don't think any of the staff at Fornethy had any training. They weren't like proper school teachers. They were intimidating and they bullied us. They weren't interested in us as individuals, we were just a chore to them. I would like to know who decides who is educated and trained enough to be in charge of children over long periods of time. What was their psychological state?
135. Why was there no support? Why was there nobody coming into Fornethy to check how things were being run and asking us what our experiences were? We had no voice. I wonder what Glasgow City Council were doing. I wonder why they just entrusted these people with children, as they did. They neglected the poor of their city and they were only interested in getting us off the streets.
136. There are too many people who have been to university involved in the care of children and not enough people educated in the school of life. I've helped some of my friends through their mental health struggles, which they had after they experienced abuse as children, because they have been afraid to go to their doctors. They thought that if they did go to their doctor, social services would become involved and they would lose their children. There is a negativity against mental illness.
137. People need to be trained around the social aspects of rearing a child, rather than just following what a book says. Every child is an individual and does not necessarily fit into whatever bracket a book might say. Their emotional needs change constantly, especially because they are children. If their emotions are not properly dealt with, there will be even more seriously messed up adults entering society. If they get it right in the first place, governments won't have to spew money out trying to sort them as adults.

138. I hope that any issues or problems a child in care in the future has are noted and categorised properly. If organisations have to be set up for the protection of children, those children need to come before a budget. Those children will very likely come with problems, they will be hurting for their parents and they need empathy, compassion and stability.
139. People wonder why the system is broken, why there is so much drug and alcohol abuse and why there are so many people with mental health issues. It is because those people that are suffering have been overlooked during their most vulnerable years.
140. The sad thing is that it's taken the exposure of the abuse for these highly educated people, who make the decisions for governments on how these childcare institutions are run, to come to a realisation. The abused must be listened to so that we can change the abusers.

Other information

141. 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..... 1-8-2022