

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PJG

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is PJG. My maiden name was PJG and I was known as PJG when I was a child. My date of birth is 1963. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Stobhill Hospital in Glasgow. My parents were and . My mum passed away in 2016 and my dad in 2017. I have one sister, , who is eighteen months younger than me.
3. I was brought up in Glasgow. My earliest memories of childhood are of my mum and dad arguing. My dad developed a bit of a gambling problem. There was a lot of shouting that escalated into eggs being thrown against the wall. I did ask my mum how old I was when that happened, but she couldn't remember the incident. My parents were always arguing but it didn't lead to violence. There was no involvement from the police or social workers.
4. My dad had various jobs, he was never idle. He worked on the railway until I was about three years old. Then he worked at the Singer sewing machine factory in Clydebank. In later years, he managed a couple of pubs. He would move jobs for more money.

5. My mum worked in a whisky bond as a machine operator. Both of my parents worked full time. There was always food on the table and my sister, and I always had the best of clothes. Every Saturday my mum would take my sister and I into town shopping and we would go for lunch at a Chinese restaurant. We had a relatively good life, when things were stable. My parents would take my sister and I on holiday every year, sometimes we took my granny too. We went to places like Blackpool, Scarborough, and Ayr.
6. My parents weren't drinkers, they didn't go out much. If they did go out, they tended to take my sister and I with them. We only tended to have babysitters for the period between when my sister and I finished school and my parents finished work. We had a neighbour next door who would watch us for about an hour. There was a period of time when my dad was a postman, so he was in the house earlier and we didn't need a babysitter.
7. The arguments between my mum and dad did get worse and there was a change when we moved from Maryhill to Milton when I was about fourteen years old. There was one instance of violence, and my mum packed her bags and left. My dad was left with two teenagers. I don't know how he managed it, but he did.
8. I had been diagnosed with epilepsy around 1971, when I was about eight years old. I was suffering from absence seizures. It was my mum who notice it when we were out shopping. She asked me to pick something up off a shelf. I picked it up but then just froze. She took me to the doctor that week and he made a diagnosis. I had tests done after that and I was given quite strong medication. I was very small, and the medication didn't agree with me at first, it made me really tired.
9. When I was diagnosed with epilepsy we couldn't go on holiday that year. The girl who lived next door, [REDACTED] was unwell too. It was something to do with her parents giving her too many vitamins. [REDACTED] was friendly with my sister and [REDACTED] kept going on about this place she had heard about that she wanted to visit

It was a residential school where you could go out walking and do other outdoor activities.

10. My mum also had to update my school about my appointments at Stobhill Hospital for my epilepsy check-ups. While she was in the office at the school, the headteacher had a chat with my mum and suggested Fornethy to her. My mum told the headteacher that our neighbour [REDACTED] was going to Fornethy as well, but my mum said she wasn't comfortable with me going there on my own, and it was then suggested that my sister [REDACTED] could go with me.
11. [REDACTED] and I were both taken for a medical at a school in Royston. I know where the school in Royston was because my aunty lived at the top of the hill. I think they were testing to confirm that I had epilepsy. Then we had to wait and see if we were accepted to go to Fornethy. There was nothing wrong with my sister [REDACTED] and my epilepsy was under control, although I was extremely pale. It's just the way my skin colour is.
12. It was decided that we should go to Fornethy as the outdoors was viewed as being good for me, and to give us a break. [REDACTED] kept going on about it, she thought the place sounded amazing.
13. After waiting a couple of months, we were told that we were accepted to go, and we had to get all these outdoor clothes and outdoor shoes. That was on the acceptance letter. I remember the Saturday morning that the letter arrived.
14. We were originally told that we were going to Fornethy for four weeks. I don't know who told my mum that. Then, the week before we were due to go, we were told it was six weeks.
15. I think it was 1972 or 1973 when I went to Fornethy, so I would have been nine or ten years old. I think we went to Fornethy in [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. I'm sure the medical exam we had was in the school [REDACTED] holidays, then we started the [REDACTED] year

knowing that we were going to Fornethy. There are a lot of details about Fornethy that I don't remember, there are a lot of blanks.

16. I made it quite clear that I didn't want to go to Fornethy. I had no interest in it at all. It was my sister [REDACTED] who wanted to go, and she wouldn't let the idea go.

### **Fornethy House, Kilsyth, Perth and Kinross 1972/3 for six weeks**

17. I remember going to Fornethy. I remember we got picked up by the bus outside the secondary school on Woodlands Road. It was quite a cold morning. My mum and my dad were both there. We had our suitcases with all our stuff in them. We were nervous because we had never been away from mum and dad. My mum and dad tried to reassure me and told me to look after my sister.
18. There was a single decker coach, it was chartered for picking up children for Fornethy. When we got on the bus, the attitude of the teachers changed. We all had sweets for the bus journey, but the teachers told us, "No sweets." They took the sweets off us all. I went along with it because I was brought up to not question my elders. Some of the kids were being sick on the journey and they got shouted at by the staff. [REDACTED] and I were looking at each other and it must have been going through my head, "Where are we going? Who the hell are these people that are shouting at a wee lassie for being sick on a bus?" I don't know the names of any of the staff who were on the bus. They were all female and they were part of the staff in Fornethy.
19. I don't know how many children were on the bus, the coach wasn't full. There were no other pickups, all the kids came to the school where we got on. The bus journey was quite long. It seemed longer after we saw a lassie getting shouted at for being sick.
20. Fornethy House was near Alyth in Perthshire. It was in the middle of nowhere, it was in beautiful surroundings. Alyth was the nearest town because that's where they used to take us to church.

21. Fornethy House was a big house. Obviously to me as a child it seemed huge, but it was quite big. There were other buildings outside the main house, but I don't know what they were. There was a big lid outside that could have gone down to a basement or a coal bunker.
22. Almost all of the staff at Fornethy were female. There was a young guy who used to take us walking and there was an older guy who was like a janitor or a general caretaker.
23. There was a female member of staff. She was blonde, her hair was up in a ponytail. She was young, she reminded me of my aunt, my mum's younger sister. Something makes me think that she was a domestic assistant. I think she was there in the mornings, but she never did anything to anyone, but I would assume she saw what the other staff did. For some reason myself, my sister [REDACTED], and our neighbour [REDACTED] were in this woman's bedroom. I don't know why we were in her room. There was a bottle of vodka in her room.
24. The only member of staff whose name I can remember was Mrs Fletcher. I remember her name because of Angela Lansbury's character in Murder she wrote. Mrs Fletcher was in charge of Fornethy. I don't know if Mrs Fletcher stayed at Fornethy, I don't know if she had her own house. I know she had a huge office.
25. There was one member of staff at Fornethy who I would describe as being evil but I don't know her name. She was quite heavily set. She had salt and pepper coloured hair. It was black and silver. She wore a white overall, so I don't know what her clothes were like underneath. I don't know what age she would have been because I was nine years old. She was definitely older than some of the other staff. I saw the heavy-set woman with Mrs Fletcher quite a lot, so I think she was like a deputy head. There were other staff, but they just passed me by, I didn't have much dealings with them.

## **Routine at Fornethy House**

### *First day*

26. It was all girls in Fornethy and the age range was from about five years old to about twelve years old. I think there were about 70 or 80 kids at Fornethy.
27. When the coach arrived at Fornethy we saw this great big house. It looked nice, it looked grand. Bear in mind that we were used to growing up in a tenement in Glasgow. We went inside and it was very dark inside. It was all dark wood. There was a handle going up the stairway and it was dark. There could have been wood panelling rather than just dark furniture, I'm not sure. On the landing upstairs there was an old fashioned, chunky, radiator. Then the stairs went up again and there was a bigger landing. I think that's where my dormitory was.
28. We got shown to the dormitories by one of the female staff, I can't remember her name. We probably got shown around other parts of Fornethy when we arrived, but I can't remember.
29. I can't really remember what was downstairs on the ground floor. There were some coat hooks somewhere, but I think they were at the side on the ground floor.
30. I think the front door at Fornethy was locked but there were a lot of doors in and out of the building. Sometimes you went out one door and came back in through another door. You never really got your bearings with the place.
31. I was quite an avid reader even though I was young. I could read before I went to school. The look of Fornethy House started to take on the qualities of some kind of fictional place I had read about. I started to imagine it was going to be like something out of 'The Famous Five'. That all changed the first night I had to stay there.

*Mornings and bedtime*

32. There must have been about twenty beds in the dormitory I was in. There were four dormitories. Our dormitory was called Glenesk, I think. The other dormitories were called Reekie, Clova, and I can't remember the fourth one. I think they were named after the hills round about Fornethy.
33. In the dormitory there was a unit next to every bed that we had to put all of our clothes into. The unit seemed really tall, but I was only little. It had a hanging rail and some shelves. We had to put all the clothes we had in there, including all of our toiletries. I don't think I saw my clothes again until I left. I don't think my clothes were left in the unit, but I was too scared to ask where they were.
34. That first night in Fornethy, there was a wee girl in the next bed who was crying. A lot of girls were crying, you could hear them under their covers. My sister [REDACTED] and our neighbour [REDACTED] were a couple of beds up, and I said to [REDACTED] that it was O.K. I asked her if she wanted me to come up to her, or if she wanted to come down to my bed for a cuddle. Then I heard someone outside the dormitory shouting, "Shut up. The lights are out." I have got a feeling they swore as well. There was a blue light that came on. It was like a security light of some description.
35. In the morning someone would come to the dormitory and shout us to get up. The door of the dormitory was never shut, it was always left open. We got up early, about 6.00 am or 6.30 am. We then had to get our hands and faces washed. We went for breakfast, then came back and brushed our teeth.
36. We went to bed early, about 6.30 pm. We were up early and out all day, so we were shattered. The staff would come into the dormitory and tell us it was lights out. At night, I don't think we wore pyjamas to bed, even though we had pyjamas with us. I think we wore vests and pants to bed. When they put the lights out in the dormitory the little blue light would come on. I don't know exactly what time they put the lights out, but it was early.

*Mealtimes/Food*

37. We went for breakfast in the morning. The food was rotten. I was a good eater even though I was tiny. When I was at school, I liked school dinners, I liked my food. Even though my mum and dad both worked we had a home cooked meal every night. There was only carrots and salads that I didn't like to eat. My sister was a different kettle of fish, there were a lot of things that she didn't like.
38. It wasn't like a dining room where we ate, it was more like a classroom. You couldn't leave food on your plate. If you didn't like something it made no difference, you were held down on the floor and your nose would be held while they fed food into you. If girls were sick onto their plates, they were forced to eat the vomit along with the food.
39. The force feeding didn't happen to me, but I saw it happening to a lot of other people. At the table I was sitting at there were about eight girls. I think there was only myself and one other girl who didn't get force-fed. Over the six weeks I was at Fornethy, I would say that I saw girls being force-fed every other day. It was always done by the heavy-set woman and another female member of staff.
40. My sister [REDACTED] was force-fed porridge because that was one of the things she didn't like. I think that eventually I ate it for her. Then she was starving because there was nothing else that was given to her to eat.
41. After we went out for our walk in the morning, we would come back and have lunch.
42. I think there were monitors, older children, at the dining room tables. I think their role was to keep us in line. There was one time my sister [REDACTED] and I got caught swapping food. We got shouted and bawled at. I can't remember what food it was. I think it was at dinner time, it wasn't at breakfast.
43. One thing I struggled with was boiled eggs. They were hard-boiled and they were all black because they had been cooked the night before and reheated. I forced myself to eat the boiled egg because there was no way I was going to be force-fed.

44. Some kids were physically sick when they were force-fed. I saw that happening. Two members of staff would hold the kids down and force food into them. I don't know the names of these staff members.
45. The woman with salt and pepper hair seemed to be everywhere. She was in the dining room, she was definitely in the showers, and she seemed to be outside the dormitory at night. I think she was in charge of our dormitory. She was the one who would hold girls down, pinch their noses, and stuff food into their mouths with a spoon. She said to the rest of us, "This is what will happen to youse if you don't eat your food."
46. The force-feeding was primarily a morning thing. I don't know why it was mostly in the morning. I do remember seeing it at some time other than breakfast. It might have been at teatime, but we usually got sandwiches and stuff like that at teatime, so that might have been easier for people to eat.

#### *Washing/bathing*

47. We had baths at Fornethy. We got a bath every other day. I was at an age where I was starting to develop, but I still wore a vest. My breasts were starting to develop, and they were tender. We had to stand, naked, to get into the bath. I was quite far back in the queue. By the time I got to the front of the queue I was trying to hide myself a bit.
48. The heavy-set woman with salt and pepper hair said, "You've got nothing to hide, so get your hands down." Then she got me in the bath and took a scrubbing brush. It was like the scrubbing brush my mum would use to clean her part of the tenement stairs. The heavy-set woman with salt and pepper hair started to scrub me, including my private parts. I was screaming out, "Leave me alone." She dragged me by the hair, pulling me back, and scrubbed me again. It was sore. Eventually she let me go. There were red scratch marks all over me, including my privates. It made it sore to go to the toilet. After that I didn't want to have a bath or a shower. I was a nervous wreck.

49. The heavy-set woman used the scrubbing brush on most of the other girls. She didn't use it on my sister, but I don't know why. I was quite easy going whereas my sister was a bit more feisty, a bit more mouthy, but even she knew not to overstep the mark. I think my sister had seen what happened to me.
50. When we were queueing for the bath, there were loads of us, it was everybody from my dormitory. The bathroom was to the left of Glenesk dormitory. I don't know if it was just for my dormitory or if it was for Reekie, the other dormitory on that level, too. I don't know how often they changed the bath water or if they changed the bath water. The water wasn't hot, it was cold. I don't know if it started off hot for the front of the queue.
51. My sister and I both had long hair when we were at Fornethy. We could do our own hair at that age, our hair was always tidy.

*Clothing/uniform*

52. Despite having been told in the acceptance letter that we had to have all this outdoor clothing to go to Fornethy, we never saw any of it. Our clothes were taken from us, and we were dressed by the staff as if we were Dickensian ragamuffins.
53. We had to get trainers and plimsoles. We wore the trainers for playing outside and the plimsoles for inside the house. We had other footwear for walking. We didn't know that when we got there, we would just be wearing smelly old wellies, and that's all we wore. Where the shoes were, I don't know.
54. We wore tartan skirts, they were all different colours. They weren't uniform. We had hats and gloves with us, but we never wore them when they took us out. We were freezing.
55. We wore white blouses with pinafore tops, like a tabard, over the top. They had wee flowers on them. They were like the flowers we had to sew on clothes later on when I was at school in Glasgow.

56. Our underwear had to be bundled and left somewhere to get washed. All of our clothes had our nametags on them, but we never saw our other clothes until we were leaving.

*Leisure time*

57. There was a kind of dancing thing that happened on a Friday or Saturday night. We were told that some other children would be joining us and there were wee girls there who had Down's Syndrome. I don't know where those kids were because they weren't with us during the day. I think they must have come from outside Fornethy, but I don't know where.
58. I remember one of the Down's Syndrome girls saying that she liked my hair, and she wished she had hair like mine. I told her that she could grow her hair like mine but then one of the staff told the girl that she could never look like that, that she was ugly. Two other members of staff had a laugh at that, and I remember looking at the little girl's face and seeing how upset she was. I too was upset at the way the staff ridiculed the girl.
59. There was a T.V. room. There were books you could read. We had discos there on Friday or Saturday nights. There was a cupboard with board games that we were allowed to play on a Friday night, but I can't remember anyone playing them.
60. At weekends during the day, we would be outside, playing. There were swings and things we could play on. We couldn't play on them during the week because they would have us away from Fornethy, walking.
61. Most evenings we would sit talking to one another. The weird thing was that we weren't really allowed to talk to each other during the day. I was quite a quiet child, so it didn't really impact on me. I didn't want to talk to anyone, I just wanted to go home.
62. I felt like the staff were watching me. It might just have been that I felt like that because of what Mrs Fletcher did to me. If she saw me, she would be poking me.

63. Mrs Fletcher took me in her car. I remember being in the back seat on the leather seat. She told me she was taking me to a spelling B in the church hall, but we never got to the church hall. I got taken to somewhere with pillars, then I passed out. When I woke up, I was still in the car, and I got taken back to Fornethy. I have no memory of anything. I put it down to being in a car, travelling, I was tired, and I hadn't been eating right. I possibly fell asleep, but I don't know. It was weird.
64. Then, on another occasion, we did go to a church hall and there were all these local people there. When I saw the church hall on the second occasion, I knew that was not where I had been taken to before. The church hall was an L shaped building and there were no pillars. What happened on the first occasion, I don't know. I don't know where Mrs Fletcher took me. I was on my own in the back seat of her car, neither my sister nor anyone else were allowed to come with me. [REDACTED] did ask to go with me but I think Mrs Fletcher said no. The second time, we went in a minibus and my sister was with me as well as other people.

### *Schooling*

65. We didn't have teachers who came in from outside Fornethy, we were taught by the staff at Fornethy. I don't know if any of the staff were teachers. We never learned anything at Fornethy. I was in the same class at Fornethy as my sister, but she was two years below me in primary school.
66. They had stuff like Janet and John books, stuff I had done in primary one. They had colouring-in on scraps of paper. For me, it was years and years behind what I was doing at my school. The girls in my class were a mixture of girls from all the dormitories. When we started at Fornethy we were all told to go into different classrooms, and we just stayed in those classrooms for the whole time we were there. We didn't change classes. It was the same teacher, or member of staff, throughout. Again, the person that comes into my mind is the heavy-set woman. I have got a feeling she was a teacher and did the other jobs because she was in charge of our dormitory.

67. We learned about Fornethy and how it was owned by the Coates sisters. They owned a factory in Paisley. They didn't have any family to leave the house to, so they gave the building to Glasgow Corporation so that children from inner city Glasgow could go on holiday. The staff told us that Fornethy was owned by Glasgow Corporation and used as a convalescence home. It made sense to me then that I was at Fornethy because of my epilepsy and my sister was allowed to accompany me. I think that was about the only interesting bit of schooling I got at Fornethy. The rest of it was years behind me.
68. In the morning we got ready to go out on a walk. After we had lunch, we would go into the classroom. Sometimes we would go to the classroom in the morning and go for our walk in the afternoon.
69. They had us out on a walk every day for about two or three hours. It was exhausting. It didn't matter if it was raining, they still took us out. We would be soaked. We had to wear wellies to go on the walks and I ended up with a bright red ring on my legs where the top of the wellies would rub against my legs because we were wearing skirts that were like long kilts. My skin was red raw.

#### *Healthcare*

70. We didn't get a medical check when we went into Fornethy. We got checked for head lice when we went to the bathroom or the showers. It was a bit heavy handed. Again, it was the heavy-set woman with salt and pepper hair who did this. That's what makes me think that she was in charge of our dormitory.
71. I can't remember getting my epilepsy medication at Fornethy. I took big, orange tablets, like castor oil tablets. I assume they did give it to me, but I can't remember taking it there.
72. I don't know if there was a nurse at Fornethy. I assume there was someone medically trained. I didn't have any cuts or bruises at Fornethy. I wouldn't have gone to any of the staff if I had something like that.

### *Religious instruction*

73. One of the things we had to do at Fornethy was say a prayer at nighttime. The staff taught us the prayer, they told us what to say. I don't know if we learned it during the day or if someone was there with us at night.
74. There were certain religious parts of being at Fornethy. We got wee stories out of the bible. I did go to church before we went to Fornethy, I went to bible class in a memorial hall in Glasgow. It was more just as place for kids to meet but we got all the stories out of the bible.
75. We went to church every Sunday at Fornethy. I think you got picked to go. I don't know how they picked you. I think that because my sister and I tried to run away, the staff kept an eye on us. We went to church in a minibus.

### *Trips and holidays*

76. Apart from taking us out on walks, the staff at Fornethy didn't take us anywhere like the cinema, or the beach.

### *Work*

77. We had to make sure our bed area was tidy. We had to make our own beds. We had to make sure the bedclothes were all smooth when the staff came round to check. Someone would come round to check when we were at breakfast.

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

78. I wasn't at Fornethy for my birthday, or Christmas.

### *Bed Wetting*

79. Everyone was told that if you wet the bed, you have to strip the bedding off. That was barked at us. I can't remember when we were told that.
80. After the first night in Fornethy, when I heard the girl in the next bed crying, I woke up. The girl in the next bed had got up before me and she was standing at the end of her bed naked, crying. Her underwear was lying on the floor, her bedding was rolled up on her shoulders, and her hair was all chopped in, like someone had cut off chunks of her hair.
81. I hate to use the analogy but the girl who wet the bed and had had her hair all cut off in chunks looked like someone on World War Two film footage being rescued from the concentration camps.
82. The girl was standing naked, freezing, and shaking. She was petrified because she had wet the bed. Her bedclothes were soaked with urine. That girl was younger than my little sister. I think she was about five years old. There was a member of staff that was standing outside the dormitory, and she came in and dragged the girl away.
83. That first girl I saw who wet the bed was there for about two weeks and then she left, because her stay must have started before I got there. There were always children leaving and arriving. Anyone who wet the bed had to stand, naked, with their bedclothes over their head. I saw that happening every day I was at Fornethy, but I didn't see anyone else with their hair cut short like that first girl. That must have happened to her before we got to Fornethy.
84. Because I had epilepsy, I got medication and the medication that I was on, made me really tired. When I first got the medication at home, there were a couple of times that I wet the bed. I wasn't a bed wetter usually, it was the medication. Because of that, I was petrified of wetting the bed at Fornethy, I couldn't sleep. I kept looking at the blue

light that came on at night in the dormitory. I thought that if I kept looking at the light, I wouldn't fall asleep. I didn't wet the bed.

#### *Visitors*

85. We didn't have any visitors. My mum did try to contact me by phone one time, but she didn't try again because she thought we must be having a good time.

#### *External Inspections*

86. I didn't see anyone coming in from outside to do any inspections. I didn't see anyone out of the ordinary, but it was such a big place with so many staff I didn't pay attention to the staff unless they spoke to me or interacted with me.

#### *Family contact*

87. We wrote letters home, but we couldn't say what we wanted, we had to follow a script that was on a board. When I wrote letters on the first or second day, I was told they couldn't be sent. They were ripped up by one of the staff and I was told to copy the script that said we were having a lovely time.
88. I don't know if that script was what sparked my mum's curiosity or suspicion about Fornethy because my sister [REDACTED] and I both wrote the same letters.

#### *Discipline*

89. When we arrived at Fornethy no one taught us the rules. As the day went on we saw what other girls who had been there for a couple of weeks before us did.
90. There was a turret at Fornethy, and someone said to us not to go down the stairs to fetch the milk because there was a man down there, or something like that.

*Running away*

91. The situation with girls being force-fed all happened in the first few days and I decided that I couldn't stay at Fornethy. Myself, my sister, and our neighbour [REDACTED] hatched a plan to escape. There was also another girl called [REDACTED], she was about the same age as me.
92. We had been out for walks during the day, and we knew there was a fork in the road nearby with a phone box at the junction. One road went back through the forest to Fornethy, and I don't know where the other road went. I thought that if we could get to that phone box, I knew how to reverse the charges for a phone call. If I could get my mum or dad on the phone at the weekend, because they both worked during the week, then they would come and get us.
93. We were out playing, and we ran away. There was a female member of staff supervising us, but she wasn't interested, she was smoking. We sneaked away. We were away for hours. We had to try and make our way to the phone box, but we were going further and further into the forest. I saw the main road and realised we were nearly at the phone box but then I saw a police car and staff from Fornethy in a minibus. That was us caught and we were taken back to Fornethy.
94. When we were taken back to Fornethy we were absolutely freezing. My sister [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and the other girl got shouted and bawled at and then they got taken somewhere else, I don't know where. I got taken to Mrs Fletcher's office. Her office had a fireplace and a tartan carpet, whereas the rest of Fornethy had wooden flooring. Mrs Fletcher was shouting and bawling at me. She said that we could have been killed as there were hunters in the woods with guns.
95. Mrs Fletcher was poking me on the shoulder and the chest with her finger. Then she got a bamboo cane and beat the living daylights out of me until I was in agony. She

beat me all down the sides and on the legs and backside. I think I was hit about twenty or thirty times. I have no idea if Mrs Fletcher had a book to record this punishment.

96. I wasn't expecting the beating from Mrs Fletcher. I was used to being around teachers and people like that. I was used to being respected. I had never even had my bum smacked as a child before that. My parents didn't strike me, my mum just shouted. Getting hit by Mrs Fletcher was completely alien to me. The next day I was black and blue and couldn't sit down properly. The message was if you step out of line again, this is what you are getting. I probably should have got medical treatment after Mrs Fletcher caned me, but I didn't.
97. I found out after we got home from Fornethy that on the morning we ran away my mum said to my dad, "I wonder how the kids are getting on?" My dad told her to stop worrying. She knew where we were, so he suggested that my mum phone us. My mum phoned Fornethy. My mum spoke to Mrs Fletcher while my sister and I were running about the forest with our neighbour [REDACTED] and the other girl and Mrs Fletcher never said anything about it to my mum. Mrs Fletcher just made out that we were O.K.
98. I didn't try to run away again. It took us hours to get to the road where the phone box was, and I was too frightened of getting another beating from Mrs Fletcher.

### **Abuse at Fornethy House**

99. All the abuse, like force-feeding, happened straight away. That was just what Fornethy was like. It wasn't as if the staff were all nice to us for a week and then started to be abusive, it was like that from the start. It would have been like that before we arrived because there were other girls who were there when we arrived.
100. Every time that Mrs Fletcher saw me, she would grab me by the shoulders and dig her nails into me. There was some expression that she used which referred to me running away. She said something like, "Have you finished with your days out?" I took it to mean that if I stepped out of line in any way, I was going to get another beating.

101. Mrs Fletcher also used to threaten to keep us at Fornethy for longer than the six weeks we were supposed to be there. I said that they couldn't do that, but another girl said that they could. That made me think Mrs Fletcher was going to keep us there for more than six weeks.
102. Some of the girls who were there when I arrived told me that it was their second or third time at Fornethy. I couldn't understand how someone could send their child back to Fornethy.
103. Quite separate from the abuse I suffered at Fornethy, I was sexually abused by a family member from the age of four until I was approximately twelve years old. I didn't report that to the police until 1991, when I found out the man responsible was baby-sitting the children of his in-law. He had access to me after school or at weekends when we were visiting my grandparents and other extended family. It happened in a house full of adults. I don't know how he managed to do it without anyone noticing. My sister [REDACTED] was also abused by the same person. He did it to all the young girls in my family and one boy. When it came to court, 38 charges were brought against him. He pleaded guilty.

#### **Reporting of abuse at Fornethy House**

104. There was no one I could report abuse to at Fornethy. I don't know if the younger member of staff with blonde hair knew what was going on. I remember myself and [REDACTED] speaking to her when she was getting ready to go out one night, but I wouldn't have told her about the abuse because I don't think I really trusted her.

### **Leaving Fornethy House**

105. I left Fornethy when my time was up, after six weeks. I think there was a lead-up to us leaving. We had to get our stuff ready, so they went and got our suitcases that were full of the stuff we brought but had never had on.
106. I don't remember leaving Fornethy, but I remember getting back into Glasgow. We went back to Glasgow by coach. I have heard since that some people went back and forward from Fornethy in the minibus.
107. Both my parents were there to meet us. They were happy to see us, and I was so happy to be home. I felt safe and relieved to be back in Glasgow. I was exhausted but I think my mum and dad put that down to my epilepsy.

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

108. After I got back from Fornethy I went back to school in Glasgow. It was good, things went back to normal.
109. The arguments between my mum and dad did get worse and there was a change when we moved from Maryhill to Milton when I was about fourteen years old.
110. My mum went down to London to stay with a cousin and then my dad got back with my mum, and we all moved down there for about three months. I went to school in London. My parents decided it wasn't for them and we moved back up to Glasgow.
111. My epilepsy resolved when I went through puberty, but it raised its head again when I went through the menopause.
112. When I was about sixteen years old there was one instance of violence, and my mum packed her bags and left.

113. I left school when I was sixteen years old. I had passed my prelim exams in the February, but my parents split up between then and my exams. I wasn't fit to do my exams. I don't think I went back into school to do them. The guidance teacher, Mrs Carmichael, contacted my dad and got him up to the school to see about me staying on but I said no, I just wanted to get out to work.
114. For two years I worked in a place dealing with hair extensions and men's wigs. The boss was cheating me out of money, and I found out about it, so I left there. Then I worked in a department store in Sauchiehall Street for a couple of years, but I decided it wasn't for me, so I decided to go back to college to study financial record keeping. I completed my first course and was going to do another year's course but I fell pregnant with my first daughter.
115. After I fell pregnant my partner and I moved in together. I had my second and third daughters. I wanted to go back to work but I couldn't find anyone to baby sit the children.
116. When my youngest daughter reached four years of age, I went back to college again. By this time computers had come in. I knew that I would not be able to get a decent job without knowing about computers. After I completed my course I got a job in the office of a coffee company, in the wholesale side of the business.
117. After two years with the coffee company I went to a few other companies, then I got into social housing. I worked for a housing association until 2012 when I took a redundancy package. Since then, I have been taking short term contracts as a housing officer with different housing associations. It worked quite well until about 2018 when my health put the blockers on me working. That was hard to take because I really enjoyed my work.

## Impact

118. The biggest impact of Fornethy on me was when my daughters were very young, it was the fear of anyone doing anything to them. With other things that happened to me as well I wasn't just wary of strangers around my children. I am the same way now with my grandson. I taught my daughters to never just accept authority. If there was something wrong, then they should question it.
119. I remember when my daughters were at primary school, they each had the chance to go on a weeklong trip. With my first daughter I said no.
120. I still have a mistrust of certain things, I am cynical. It is because of the people in charge at Fornethy. I try to remind myself that not everyone is a monster, but it was hard bringing up my children. I would stop them from going to places. It caused arguments between myself and my husband. A lot of the times my husband would make me see sense because he didn't have any experiences like mine in his childhood.
121. I didn't let my daughters go on sleepovers, so my house was always full. I would have three or five other children in the house all the time. The parents in my neighbourhood don't really know me, they know my girls.
122. Regarding food, my eldest daughter is a good eater. My youngest would often say that she didn't like things and I wouldn't force her to eat them. I would think about Fornethy, and girls being force-fed and forced to eat vomit. I would often make different dinners for my girls.
123. In general, I am very nervous and highly strung. I worry for nothing sometimes. I think that Fornethy definitely had an impact on my level of anxiety.
124. I have had arthritis in my spine since I was 29 years old. It never really bothered me to begin with, but it has got worse as time has gone on and it is everywhere now. My epilepsy also flared up again too. I have given up work now and everything has slowed

down. I suffer from depression because I now have too much time to sit and think about things, including Fornethy. Things that I don't want to think about. If I hadn't been there, I wouldn't be sitting thinking about it. The abuse by my relative has been put to bed, I managed to deal with that years ago. He is dead now.

125. I think about my time at Fornethy a lot just now, too much. It is not just because of speaking to the Inquiry. It was always there, I just tried not to think about it, but if there was something on the T.V. about a children's home it would take me back there. I just haven't dealt with it.

### **Treatment/support**

126. I have attended a [REDACTED] for Fornethy survivors. I spoke to the woman who was sitting next to me and told her about the girl who wet the bed, and who had her hair cut badly. This woman I was talking to was at Fornethy in 1980 and said that her hair was cut like that at Fornethy. She said there was nothing wrong with her hair when she arrived, she didn't have lice. She said the staff took a big pair of dressmaking scissors and cut her hair. I don't think she told me what the reason was for the staff to do that. She didn't say if it was because of wetting the bed.
127. I am getting trauma therapy now. My therapist has said that my trauma is in relation to Fornethy. I have got gaps in my memory that I cannot fill in. I could give you details of every single occasion when I was abused by my relative, yet there are gaps in my memory about Fornethy, such as being in the back seat of Mrs Fletcher's car and not knowing where I had been. Why can I not remember the details of that?
128. I have been seeing the therapist every fortnight since November 2023. That was supposed to be for cognitive behavioural therapy, but he said that we had to get to the bottom of the trauma aspect first. I felt that the cognitive therapy wasn't working for me, so I stopped that. I am seeing a sleep therapist now too.

129. My concentration is really poor, due to the epilepsy. It is not as bad now as it used to be. I find my way through things now, whereas I couldn't have before. I couldn't have met with the Inquiry two years ago. I couldn't have got my sentences right. I do wander when I am speaking, I know I do. I tend to digress all the time. It frustrates the life out of me. I am trying to keep a grip on it.
130. I have not sought compensation for the abuse I suffered at Fornethy. We are not included in the Scottish Government redress scheme. People have been applying but they have been refused. We are not included in the legislation. The Scottish Parliament know about it and are supposed to be doing something to change that.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

This section relates to abuse reported after leaving the institution.

131. I remember telling my mum and dad about what happened in Fornethy straight away when I got home. I knew it was abuse. With the sexual abuse I suffered at the hands of a family member, I was too frightened to tell my parents because I got threatened. But when it came to Fornethy I told my mum and my dad what happened, but nothing happened about it. I told them about Mrs Fletcher assaulting me, I told them about us running away.
132. I can't remember what my mum's reaction was at the time, but she was the type of person who would have gone absolutely crazy about it. There was a time when the toilets in my primary school kept running out of toilet roll. My mum kicked up a fuss. She phoned the school first of all, but they did nothing about it, so she wrote to the Education Department in Bath Street, Glasgow. That's what my mum was like, but I don't know what she did with the information about Fornethy. She knew how to complain, and she would complain. That broke my trust in her. It is possible that she did something about it that I didn't know about. Even years later, she didn't say that she did anything about it.

133. I first spoke to the police about the abuse at Fornethy in 2023. I saw something online in 2020 about Fornethy House. Someone was talking about how terrible it was. I never respond to things online, but it made me think that there must have been other people that these things happened to. Then I saw the [REDACTED] Fornethy [REDACTED], then it was on the television about people protesting in [REDACTED] about wanting their paperwork from Fornethy. That's when it came out that there was no paperwork and that there were no inspections done on the school. As I started listening, it seems some paperwork has been found. Fornethy was an experiment, allegedly.
134. I contacted the [REDACTED] group [REDACTED] and they said I should contact the police. Someone came up with the email address for the police in Perth. I contacted them, and they took a statement from me over the phone, purely because Mrs Fletcher was the only person I could name. The police said they would send me the crime report number, but I haven't seen that yet. They did send me my statement to check, and I had to change one thing about my sister [REDACTED]. The police have said that there was nothing further they could do because Mrs Fletcher has passed away now.

### **Records**

135. I have never tried to get any records from Fornethy. What I was going to do was to request my medical file and to see if that included anything. I know from my work as a housing officer that the housing department keep records going back fifty years, so my medical records should be the same. From going to a [REDACTED] for survivors of Fornethy I know that paperwork that was claimed to have been lost had been found.

### **Lessons to be learned**

136. The lesson to be learned from my experience at Fornethy is to listen to children, don't ignore them. There is always one child who will speak up.

**Hopes for the Inquiry**

- 137. I heard about the Inquiry through the T.V. Then someone [redacted] something [redacted] Fornethy [redacted] about the Inquiry. I also saw something about Nicky Campbell on the T.V. I know that he was at private school, but it made me wonder if the Inquiry would cover Fornethy.
  
- 138. My hope for the Inquiry is that nothing like this happens again in any place that is responsible for kids. Such places should be properly investigated and inspected. There should be unannounced inspections, not telling them in advance what day the inspectors are coming. Pop in and see how things operate and talk to the kids.

**Other information**

- 139. 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... P.J.G .....

Dated... 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 .....