

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PIV [REDACTED]

Support person present: No.

1. My name is PIV [REDACTED]. My surname when I was a child was PIV [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1962. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was brought up at Glenacre in Castlemilk with my three brothers and two sisters. I'm the youngest and the oldest of my siblings was [REDACTED], who was about ten years older than me. [REDACTED] died a couple of years ago. After [REDACTED], there is [REDACTED], who is about nine years older than me, [REDACTED], who is six years older, [REDACTED], who is three years older and then [REDACTED], who is seventeen months older than me.
3. Our parents were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Dad stopped working when I was very young [REDACTED] so it was him that was always there while my mum worked [REDACTED].
4. Dad [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wasn't able to work.
5. Life was happy at home, just a normal childhood. I went to Castleton Primary and, as far as I remember, I enjoyed it.
6. In 1971, when I was eight or nine years old and [REDACTED] was nearly eleven, she and I were sent to Fornethy House at Kilry. I'm not aware if there was any social work

involvement with us and I don't know how it came to be, but as far as I remember we thought we were going on a wee holiday. I don't remember who told us we were going, however Fornethy House was certainly not what we expected before we went.

### **Fornethy House, Kilry**

7. Fornethy House was away out in the middle of nowhere and surrounded by trees. I remember there was a swing park in the grounds and I can remember a wee church, although I don't think it was within the grounds.
8. I've since seen pictures of Fornethy, which is a big, stone built house, but I don't have many recollections of it from my time there. Some of the staff were in those pictures, but I don't recall any of their faces either. I think there was a man who was some sort of janitor and who worked in the grounds, but I'm not sure if the rest of the staff were women. I know now that Fornethy was run by Glasgow Council, but I didn't know that at the time.
9. I think all the children were girls and were similar, primary school, age, but I don't know how many there were. It seemed like there were lots. I don't remember any of their names.
10. The greatest memory I have is of the showers and I can also remember the dining hall, where we all sat together. I also recall a spiral staircase, which might have come from the dormitory we slept in. The dormitory was long with small, single beds up each side and a carpet running up the middle. I can't say how many girls were in my dormitory, all I do remember is that [REDACTED] was in a different dormitory. Perhaps the dormitories were divided into age groups.
11. Although I don't have many memories of Fornethy, none of those that I do have are happy or nice ones. To me it was all regimented and the staff were strict and battered us if we stepped out of the strict lines. None of the staff showed us any care or kindness at any time.

## **Routine at Fornethy House**

### *First day*

12. I don't remember the journey to Fornethy, although my sister [REDACTED] has since told me that we went to a building within St Enoch's Square in Glasgow and then we got on a bus. I have no recollection of that or of arriving at Fornethy.
13. I do remember all the trees and the smell of pine when we arrived, but that's about it. I have very limited memories of arriving and I don't know if someone showed us around or settled us in.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

14. I remember all the beds in the dormitory, but I don't remember any of the daily routine. I can't even remember getting ready for bed, what time we went to bed, or what time we got up in the morning.
15. All I do remember of the morning is that we often went for a shower then, before breakfast. I don't remember my sister showering at the same time, so perhaps we went in groups from each dormitory.

### *Mealtimes/Food*

16. After we'd washed and dressed in the morning we'd go down for breakfast. I might be wrong, but I'm sure we sat on benches at long wooden tables. There were always staff present at mealtimes, although I can't remember any of their faces or describe what they looked like at all.
17. The only meal I can remember eating is breakfast when we got porridge, which a lot of the children wouldn't eat. If they didn't, they would be made to sit until they did eat it, or if they were sick they'd be made to eat their vomit. I can still see porridge all over

the table and a member of staff spooning it into a child. I have no recollection of that happening to me, but I remember seeing it happen to other children on quite a few occasions.

18. There was a tuck shop, but I don't remember buying sweets from it. I think some children also got packages of food sent from home and I can vaguely remember getting one too. I recall the excitement of opening it, but I'm not sure what was in it.

*Washing/bathing*

19. We all had to brush our teeth and wash in the communal showers. I think we were given powdered toothpaste to clean our teeth with. I'm not sure if I'd brought it with me, or if it was given to us.
20. I remember the horrible feeling of lining up naked with other girls to have a shower. There was no privacy whatsoever, it was horrible. It felt to me that we weren't treated like humans, more like animals.
21. I'm not sure whether we got a shower every morning, although I do remember being in the washroom where the showers were every morning. Perhaps we just washed at the sinks sometimes instead.

*Clothing/uniform*

22. We wore wellies a lot of the time and I think we all wore aprons, which the home would have provided. I'm not sure if we wore them on top of our own clothes though, or if we wore them all the time.

*Leisure time*

23. We all were taken on long walks in our wellies every day. I've no recollection of going to school or being taught anything, so perhaps those walks were instead of school.

We walked for hours and covered miles and I used to be exhausted. Even to this day the smell of pine trees reminds me of those walks.

24. I can recall there being a swing park in the grounds, but I've no memory of playing on it or playing anywhere else. I have no recollection of there being toys or games to play with or books to read.
25. We were shown a film occasionally, perhaps just at the weekend. We'd all sit in this big room while a film was played on a projector, but I'm not sure what films were shown.

#### *Healthcare*

26. I don't remember being unwell at any time or needing any medical attention and I don't know what healthcare facilities there were. My sister [REDACTED] has since told me that I had lost a lot of weight by the time we left. Apparently our mum got a shock when she saw how thin I was.

#### *Religious instruction*

27. I do remember there was a church, but I have no recollection of going there, or of saying prayers or anything like that.

#### *Work*

28. After the walks we all had to take turns to wash all the wellies. I don't remember having any other chores to do.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

29. If I was at Fornethy over my birthday, I certainly don't remember it being celebrated at all and I don't remember any other child's being celebrated either. I do know that I wasn't there over Christmas, so I don't know if it would be celebrated or not.

*Visitors*

30. I don't think I had any visits from anyone and I don't recall anyone from outside the home coming at any time. My sister has since told me that we had to write letters home and the staff told us what to write, but I don't remember doing that.

*Sibling Contact*

31. I don't remember being with my sister [REDACTED] during the day at all, but whether we were kept separate or not, I don't know.

*Bed Wetting*

32. At least a few nights a week, [REDACTED] used to come into my bed at night time after she'd wet her bed. If any of the staff found us we used to get battered stupid for that and both of us were made to sit on the carpet together in the middle of the floor for the rest of the night. I can remember falling asleep on that floor.
33. We were slapped about the face and the head by the staff, just treated like a bit of rubbish. I remember crying, but I don't remember whether I had any bruises afterwards. I don't know if it was always the same member of staff that treated us like that, or if it was different ones and I can't remember any of their faces.
34. I don't know what happened to the wet sheets, but [REDACTED] has since told me that she tried to sneak them down to the laundry a few times so that the staff wouldn't know she'd wet the bed. She told me she got caught, but I don't know what happened when she was.

### **Abuse at Fornethy House**

35. As well as what happened after [REDACTED] wet her bed and how children were force fed, it seemed that all the staff were constantly physically abusive towards all the children. Each member of staff seemed to be as bad as each other, none of them stood out particularly. I saw other children being slapped on the face or the head all the time. Even if you walked by a member of staff and they took exception to you for some reason they would slap you. It became that you just expected it.
36. During one of the film nights I was pulled out in front of everybody by one of the staff because I think I'd been arguing with another girl and beaten. I was hit with something, although I don't know what it was, possibly a cane. I'm not sure how many times I was hit across my naked backside, in front of all the other children.
37. I can't describe the member of staff at all and I don't know if they were saying anything as they hit me, I just remember I was screaming. My sister [REDACTED] has since told me that she was screaming as well because they were keeping her away. It was sore when they hit me and I can remember it still being sore afterwards. I'm sure I must have had bruises.

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

38. I have no memory of ever talking to [REDACTED] or anyone else about how we were being treated at Fornethy. Certainly from what I recall of the staff, I don't think I would ever have spoken to any of them. I don't remember telling my parents when we got home either.

### **Leaving Fornethy House**

39. I have no recollection of leaving Fornethy, which surprises me because I'm sure I must have been delighted. I don't know how we got home and I don't remember arriving

home. All I do know is that we had been at Fornethy for a good few weeks, possibly six weeks.

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

40. Life carried on as normal when we got home and I never went back to Fornethy. I don't think it was ever suggested that I did go back. I think my brothers also went to a residential school somewhere at some point, but I don't know where that was or when.
41. When I was in my last year of school I went on a day release to an office and ended up getting a job in there for a few years until I got married. After I had my three daughters I got a job in a nursing home for a couple of years and then worked as an auxiliary nurse in a hospital for about twenty-five years after that, before I decided to do my nursing training. I qualified as a nurse when I was forty-six and still work as one.

### **Impact**

42. I've put what happened to me at Fornethy to the back of my head and it's not something I ever thought I would talk about again. I suppose I would rather put it to the back of my head again and forget about it. Recently I have been thinking about my experiences there, but I never have any nightmares or flashbacks about it.
43. I am a very private person and I wonder if that comes from my time at Fornethy, standing naked in line, waiting for a shower. I'm very prudish and never wear low tops and I'm very guarded about my privacy. My daughters are exactly the same, so I've obviously passed that on to them.
44. I was probably more protective of my daughters as they grew up than I might otherwise have been. My daughters went away with the Brownies when they were small and I

was quite hesitant about them going, but I was able to contact them every night if I wanted, so that helped.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

45. I've never spoken about Fornethy until recently, even to [REDACTED]. I think I'd just put it to the back of my mind and got on with things.
46. I'm not sure how I became aware, but a while back I came across [REDACTED] about Fornethy that had been set up by a woman who had been there. There are [REDACTED] from people talking about their time there and clearly some had a worse time than others. I feel privileged that I didn't suffer as much as some people did. It was horrible reading what had happened to some of them. I think a few met up recently and went to Fornethy, but I never did.
47. We were all encouraged [REDACTED] to contact Thompsons Solicitors in Glasgow, so I did. I'm quite a private person and I suppose if it hadn't been for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I would happily have let it go and not reported it.
48. I gave a statement to the solicitors a couple of months ago, but I'm not sure what's happening with the case. I've never reported what happened to me to the police or any other authority.

### **Records**

49. I don't have any records from my time at Fornethy, but I would love to see anything there is. Thompsons are looking into trying to get hold of them, but I don't know yet if they have recovered any.

**Lessons to be Learned**

- 50. I don't know if any of the staff at Fornethy would have had any sort of training, or if they did what it was like. Staff of places like that need to be caring people who know what they're doing and they need to be given proper training.
  
- 51. I hope what happened to me never happens to any other child again.

**Other information**

- 52. 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..... PIV .....

Dated..... 22 September 2021 .....