

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PLP

Support person present: No

1. My name is PLP. My date of birth is 1959. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in our house which was just off [REDACTED], in the West End of Glasgow. My parents both worked. My mum was an ex-beauty queen and my dad was a big handsome man that everyone fancied. He worked at Rolls Royce and we had loads of money. We were never without and we always had holidays. Anything I ever wanted, my dad was always buying for me.
3. I had two aunties, my mum's two sisters, who both married but never had children. They used to take us out for afternoon tea and we were spoilt. At Christmas we would have three family presents because they were like our other mothers.
4. We used to go on the QE2 every year for our holidays with my aunties and uncles and my mum and dad. That was the kind of life that we had. I carried that on when I married and my husband and I took our children on the QE2 three times a year. We were VIPs because we were past passengers. We met lots of big stars and they would ask who we were because we were well known on the QE2. It was a good life that my mum and dad started with us.

5. My mum worked three jobs. She worked at Glasgow University, the Western Hospital and in the school. She did anything and everything and she was a saver. My dad worked as a [REDACTED] in Rolls Royce. He made big engines for jumbo jets and he was [REDACTED] in Britain who could make them. They used to come in a big Rolls Royce and take him away to Derby to get him to do this thing. We thought it was amazing. My dad was hands on and he really did look after us. When we went out with my dad in Glasgow he would tell us to look up at the architecture. We were never out of the art galleries.
  
6. I had two sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was four years older than me and [REDACTED] was two and a half or three years older than me. I went to Downhill Primary School and I was in primary seven. I had passed the exam to go to the senior secondary, Hyndland. That was the highest school and I knew I had got in there.
  
7. I had a friend in primary school, [REDACTED], who never had a dad and in those days everyone had a dad so it was unusual that she didn't. Her mum was a district nurse and she was working all the time, you never saw her out of her uniform. [REDACTED] had been away somewhere before and I think she said it was Rothesay. She said that she was to go because her mum worked all the time and she needed a break. I just took it that it was also because she never had her dad to look after her but in those days you didn't ask about those type of things so I never knew where her dad was.
  
8. She said that she was allowed to go to this place because her mum worked all the time and did I want to go? She said she had been to one before which was really good and they had had a disco. We had just turned eleven and I thought a disco would be great. She said it was really good fun so I said I would go with her. I asked my mum and I don't think she was too pleased at the beginning so I kept on at her and eventually she said I could go. I don't know who arranged for me to go to Fornethy or if the school knew. I think it was my mum who dealt with all of that.
  
9. I went up the town to catch the bus. It was Buchanan Street or something. My mum was all about show and because she was an ex-beauty queen everything had to be

about how you looked. She used to put facemasks on us when we were four and do our hair. It was all about looks so she made sure I looked good for going there.

10. We didn't know that Fornethy was for children who were ill or who were poor but when we arrived at the bus station and got on the bus I could see right away that they were all poor souls. I wasn't brought up to look down on people so I just thought it was strange. I had a lovely suitcase and lots of clothes and I was just shocked. I was never out of church when I was a kid so I was a very good Christian and I would never look down my nose and anybody but I remember thinking they were just wee souls. Most of them came from really bad areas in Glasgow that I had never been too. I had never seen anything like this before and I had never seen kids as poor as that before. There were a couple of girls and a boy in my class who we used to think smelled and I used to think that was a shame but I had never seen it on a big scale like this. [REDACTED] wasn't poor, her mum worked all the time and she never had any siblings.
11. When I got on the bus I thought the kids were poor wee souls but they were still children and they were wee pals for me. There were two wee girls who were sisters, one was five and one was six and they were just adorable. I don't remember their names. I had never had anyone younger than me in my family because my cousins and sisters were all older than me. It was the first time I had been round wee ones other than the kids that lived in our close. It was lovely being round all of the wee ones.
12. There were quite a few of us on the bus, maybe about fifteen of us. I can't remember off hand because I was too excited to take everything in. We were excited to be going on our holidays and I was thinking that I was going on holiday to somewhere like I had been to before. I was getting excited thinking this would be fun with no mum and dad. It was all girls on the bus and they were mostly younger than us. There were a few who were maybe between eight and ten but mostly there were five and six year olds. [REDACTED] and I were the two oldest.

13. The bus journey was good and we were all cheery. When we got nearer to Fornethy there had been a bad road accident and we were sat there for ages. We were all asking if someone had died and they wouldn't let the bus go by it. It was out on the country roads. The next thing was that they told us all to put our heads down before they drove us by where this big crash was. We were all whispering and asking each other if we thought someone had died.
14. I went to Fornethy on the [REDACTED] 1970 and it was the [REDACTED] weekend. I don't remember them ever saying how long I was going to be there. If I had known it was meant to be for six weeks then there was no way I would have went. I was very close to my big sisters and they treated me like a wee princess. There was no way that I could have been away from them for that length of time but nobody told us.

#### **Fornethy House, Blairgowrie**

15. Outside the building was a white, greyish colour. Inside it was all dark wood and it had a big staircase. It looked like an old haunted house. I watched a program called "The Haunting of Hill House" and the inside of it took me back to Fornethy. We knew it had been owned by two spinsters and we were convinced that they were haunting it.
16. There were between fifty and seventy kids there, something like that. Fletcher was the headmistress. Robertson was second in command and then [REDACTED] PWH. The others came after [REDACTED] PWH. There was a teacher whose name I can't remember but it was [REDACTED] RHB [REDACTED] RHB, maybe [REDACTED] RHB. There would be the odd wee student and there was a housekeeper whose name I don't remember.
17. Fletcher wore pearls and she had a stick. She always had her hair done and she looked like the oldest of them all. I would say Robertson would have been in her late twenties when I was there. She used to wear suits like my mum would wear, with a wee jacket and a skirt. She always wore dress gloves. Robertson was quite tall and lanky. I can't remember [REDACTED] PWH as clearly. All I remember was that she smoked cigarettes constantly. She would put out a cigarette and then she would light one. I

think the housekeeper was quite tall but I might have seen her as tall because she was such a beastly woman.

### **Routine at Fornethy House, Blairgowrie**

#### *First day*

18. When we arrived they took us in to sit on these long benches and we had our suitcases. I was taken aback by the way they spoke to us when we were sitting there because I wasn't used to being spoken to like that. They spoke to us very strictly and like we were nobodies. I don't think it was a teacher who greeted us, I think it was the housekeeper. [REDACTED] and I knew right away that we had walked into something really bad.
19. They told us to go out the back door to play and then we were talking to another girl. There weren't many older girls there but this girl was a wee bit older than us and she said she was leaving next Saturday. We arrived on a Saturday and she was going home the following Saturday. She told us that it was really bad. I said that I didn't think the teachers were that bad because by that point they had spoken to us and gone for their tea break while we went out to play. The girl said that the teachers we had met weren't the normal teachers, they were the stand in teachers, and they wouldn't be back until Tuesday.
20. The girl filled us in on what it was all about and I remember thinking this was awful. The kids all looked really scared which was really strange. They hardly spoke and it wasn't like play time at school. The girl told us that the teachers were really strict and they were violent. She told us all the things we weren't allowed to do, like talk to each other, and she gave us some tips. She told us that if you ran away then you got sent home early. She said there were a few who had run away. To make it easier for us while we were there she told us all of the fly things the older ones did. She told us to hide our food if we didn't like it and not to leave it. We had just arrived and we were

getting all of this information. I was shocked. I said to her I feel as if I know you and she had that feeling about me, it was strange.

21. I didn't really believe it. I thought that was how she felt but I had to make up my own mind. I had to see for myself because the teachers who were there that day weren't that bad. I just didn't think this Robertson, PWH and RHB, would be as bad as she said they were. I had never met people like that before. My teachers, my Sunday school teachers and everyone around me at home were all lovely. I was being told that there were these evil people but I couldn't believe it.
22. We went up to the dorm and were shown our beds. The housekeeper was shocked by how many clothes I had. She said she had never seen a kid with so many clothes and then she took them away. She said that I couldn't have them all because it was too much. She asked what my mother was thinking of, buying me all of that. I don't even know if I got half of the clothes that my mum had packed. She took them away with the suitcase. She took everyone's suitcase away. She was just a horrible woman and I knew then that the older girl had been telling the truth.
23. I think we went for dinner but I can't remember much else about the first day. I remember that night we went to the tuck shop because it was a Saturday night and they were putting films on. We were to line up, the teacher would shout your name and then you would go in. They shouted PLP and I walked in. That was the first time I had seen Fletcher and she just absolutely scared me. She laughed and said that she thought I would be a "big fat thing with a name like that". She said I was as skinny as anything and she thought I was going to be a big fat thing. Then she told me not to bother taking any sweets and to get out. My dad was always generous with money so I knew that he would probably have given me the most money in that school but she just told me to get out. I wasn't really that bothered because I was so shocked at the way she had spoken about my name. That was the first time I had met anyone so evil. That was what I remembered the most from that day.
24. Then we went into the hall and started singing these songs. At home I was never out of church and I was there every night. My church was like my second home. I used to

take my friends and they would be surprised that I could just walk in. I would go and get a biscuit and a juice and all the ladies would say hello to me and ask to see who my wee friend was. We would play hide and seek in the church because there were lots of places to hide.

25. When I went to church I used to sing these lovely songs all of the time but that Saturday night we were singing about "kissing and a cuddling with Fred". I thought what kind of song is this? I had never heard songs like this. I thought it was really weird but that was what we were told to sing so we sang it. To me, being a Christian, it was weird. They were also Christians because they were always at the church but they never sang any Christian songs. The teachers led the singing. All of the girls who were there knew the songs off by heart. I thought it was weird for children to be singing about kissing and cuddling with Fred. I was quite grown up as an eleven year old because I had teenage sisters that I was around and I thought it was inappropriate.
26. Then we watched films and went to bed. After we went to bed we heard glasses and laughing and giggling. That was the first time that I heard that the staff were having parties.

*Mornings and bedtime*

27. The two wee girls that we came with were in our dorm. There were two lines of beds down each side of the wall facing each other. The youngest one was facing my bed, there was someone else next to her, who was about eight, and then it was her sister. On my side there was a girl who was about eight next to me and then there was [REDACTED]. I faced the wee five year old from the bus and [REDACTED] faced the wee six year old. I think there were eight of us all together but there might have been six. If you came with someone then they put someone in between you, maybe that was to do with talking, I don't know. [REDACTED] and I weren't next to each other but we were all in the same dorm.
28. At night time we went up to our dorm and we were left alone to get into our pyjamas or nightie. We had to take our pants off and leave them on the chair beside our beds. We had to help the wee ones. The staff would come in and put lights off. A blue light

came on in the hall and once that was on you weren't allowed to talk or get out of bed. I think it was the housekeeper and one of the teachers who came in at night and then first thing in the morning it was always the housekeeper.

*Mealtimes/Food*

29. All of the children ate at the same time. The food was absolutely awful. We used to get a napkin and hide food in our pants if we didn't like it and then we would put it down the toilet. With the wee ones it was just fighting through mealtimes and it wasn't a lovely experience. Fletcher or Robertson would be fighting with some kid over something they didn't want to eat and they would be telling them to finish it and putting it down their throat even when they were sick. If a child didn't like what they were eating then they would pull their head back and put it down their throat. That was Fletcher and Robertson, they were the main culprits. I don't know if they were doing it so we would all see because they made such a big thing of it.
30. We had to sit and watch that. Every mealtime was a bad experience. There was always one kid who wouldn't finish their food at every meal. We were all so ill and upset for everyone else. People were force fed constantly but the teachers looked like they enjoyed it and they must have because they never let one kid away with anything.
31. The teachers didn't want anyone to know about the cruelty that was going on and they didn't even want the domestics to know but they never hid it from the domestics in the dining room so they did know and they must have seen it. The only people who would have seen the cruelty that was going on outside of the teachers were the dinner ladies and the housekeeper. The dinner ladies were there behind a screen so they could see into the dining room and they would have heard it because it was bad in there. It wasn't just one child each mealtime, it was two or even three.

*Washing/bathing*

32. The older ones all got showers and the younger ones were bathed. They would have two nurses who would scrub them in a wee tin bath. I don't know how often we had a

shower. It might have been once or twice a week, we didn't have one every night. I don't remember what time of day I had a shower but I think it might have been during the day. I don't remember getting my jammies on afterwards.

33. We had to queue for a shower and while we were waiting the caretaker, [PWI], would always pass. He would wave to us and we would be saying "there's [PWI] again". We would be embarrassed because we were all naked. I was eleven and I was at a stage where I was very self-conscious. I didn't want to be standing there with a lot of strange girls and an old man going by. He would have been about forty when I was there.

*Clothing/uniform*

34. The housekeeper left me with some clothes but hardly anything compared to what I was used to. It was just a few pairs of pants. My mum had put in all brand new pants and socks but she took everything away. We could put our clothes beside our beds and we also had a chair beside our bed.
35. They wouldn't let us change our pants every day and we had to use the same pants for three days in a row. They smelt awful. That was disgusting and it upset me as much as the beating but they still looked at us as if we were scum. I thought they were scum. I will always remember Robertson smelled and the older girl said that was because she was on her period. I said that my big sister was on her period and she didn't smell like that.
36. Me and [redacted] used to turn our pants every second day. On the third day we washed them in the sink in the toilets and put them on damp but at least they were clean. They wouldn't let us go to bed with pants on. They had to be taken off and laid on a chair beside our beds so that they could check them every night. It was just weird. I had hundreds of pants and they wouldn't let me wear them.

*Leisure time*

37. I don't remember any toys at all. I never saw any books and I never saw anyone sitting reading. We were like robots. The only time that we got to play in peace was when we were outside playing during the teachers' tea break. I spent my spare time cleaning. I don't know what the wee ones would do.
38. On a Saturday night we would all watch a film and the staff used to bring in their families, including their children. I remember wishing I was one of their children so that they would be nice to me like they were to their own kids. They were lovely to their kids.
39. The kids used to come in and watch films with us on the Saturday before their parties. I only saw their children on a Saturday when they would bring people in. There were men who used to come in as well, their husbands. They would sit and watch a film with us but they were always in their wee clique and we were the scum that sat on the other side. That was the way they looked at us and treated us even though they were being paid to look after us

*School*

40. Although there were school lessons, it wasn't anything spectacular. There was nothing that made you say that you had learnt something new since you'd arrived there.

*Healthcare*

41. The housekeeper would be the one that you would tell if you were sick but you would just be sent to your bed. There was one wee girl who was really sick one night and she was just sent to her bed. Normally if someone was sick or had an accident then it would be me or [REDACTED] who would clean it up because it was beneath the staff but that wee girl had been really ill so the caretaker, [REDACTED] PWI, had to come and clean it up. She was just sent to bed.

42. I don't remember anyone having a doctor in because they didn't want anyone in. I ran away at one point and they weren't happy that I had caused the police to come in. I knew, even at that age, that that was because they were hiding the cruelty.

*Religious instruction*

43. They went to church on a Sunday but I wasn't allowed to go. They would tell you on a Saturday who was allowed to go and it was only about eight girls that would be allowed to go. It wasn't the whole school when I was there. They never chose me and I was so upset because I needed to pray to get away from there. I felt terrible because I was used to church every day and we always had something going on in our church so to not be part of that and not even be able to sing a hymn or go to church was upsetting for me.
44. I would pray every night. I could hear the wee ones crying and I would be crying too. It was the only time that you could cry and not upset the wee ones. I would pray every night to Jesus, asking him to come and help us because I didn't know who else was going to.

*Work*

45. When we first arrived [REDACTED] and I were put to work. We were told to go to the kitchen because two of the domestics were off ill and we had to do the dishes. I don't know if that was true. I came from a house where I had two big sisters who did everything for me so I hadn't lifted a dish in my life. I had never dried a dish but there I was in a kitchen washing and drying dishes along with [REDACTED].
46. Then Fletcher made us clean the floors. You would be down on your hands and knees dusting the floors with the dusters. We had to do the library floor and then we had to do all the dorms. I didn't mind that, I quite enjoyed it because we were away from the teachers. By the time the girl we had spoken to on the first day had left and we were the oldest ones there. The cleaning never bothered us. We had to make the wee ones beds, tie their shoe laces and brush their hair. We had to look after them. I was making

about six beds every morning and then going into other dorms. Basically the older ones were put to work as soon as they arrived. It wasn't a punishment, it was work we had to do.

47. We had to go and collect the milk from the kitchen at night and take it down to the assembly room. I didn't mind collecting the milk but I didn't like going through that place. It was like a haunted house, it was a horrible building. It doesn't look like anything on the outside but inside it was such a scary place with lots of dark corridors and there was nobody there. [REDACTED] and I had to walk through it and get all of this milk and biscuits and bring it down to the assembly room and give it out.
48. The kids that sat on the floor were bed wetters and we weren't to give them milk. I was appalled by that. I was eleven and I thought it was terrible treating kids like that and yet they thought nothing of it. We were to give those kids half a biscuit. The children who sat on the chairs got a full bottle of milk and a biscuit.
49. Robertson and Fletcher never lifted a finger and Fletcher had a wee woman who ran about her all the time. She did everything for her and got her a cup of tea or whatever she wanted. That woman idolised Fletcher.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

50. I don't remember anyone having a birthday while I was there.

#### *Visits/Inspections*

51. I never saw anyone inspect the place. I only saw the minister and his wife and the staff's friends and family. We would get a half hour talk about being quiet before anyone came in, that is why everyone kept quiet for fifty odd years. They did a really good job.
52. The minister used to come every Wednesday for his dinner but I don't know why he did that. Maybe they wanted to show they were good Christians and in with the Church,

it made them look good. I was at an age that I could see things that the younger ones couldn't. I knew what they were up to. They were saying look at us, we are the best teachers in the world with all these children who are so lovely and well fed. They were showing that we had long walks that we didn't get in scummy Glasgow. That was the way they were portraying themselves.

*Family contact*

53. On Tuesday morning, after I arrived, we were in a classroom and Robertson told us to write a postcard home to our mum's. I wrote to my mum that she had to come and get me because this place was terrible and I had never seen anything like it. I told her about the beatings and everything. I went up to Robertson and asked for a stamp. She told me that she wanted to read my postcard and she grabbed it from me. She read it, tore it up and slapped me really hard across the face. I had never been hit by an adult before and I was so shocked. I was crying.
54. She then told us to write what was on the board and we had to write about how wonderful it was and how we loved it. I remember then asking the girl who we had met on the first day how we could get word home to our mums. She said that we had to put something in the postcard that our mums would think wasn't normal. I decided to write to my big sisters because, with me being the youngest, my mum wasn't as attentive to me as she had been to my sisters. I sent a postcard to my big sisters because I was closer to them than to my mum and I thought they would see it. On the next postcard I wrote "how's the dog" because we never had a dog at that time. I later asked my sisters why they never picked up on that but they told me they just thought I was going off my head. I told them that I was trying to get across that there was something not right.

*Running away*

55. The older girl had told us that if you ran away then you were sent home early. By the second week I was thinking that I couldn't do this anymore and I needed to get away from this place. [REDACTED] and I planned that we were going to run away but the whole

school knew. The two wee sisters were saying that we couldn't leave them. I told them that they couldn't come because they couldn't run fast but they begged us not to leave them. I knew I would be in more trouble for taking them. I knew at eleven it was wrong for me to take two children away but they wouldn't let me leave without them.

56. We hadn't planned to actually run away, we planned to pretend to run away and then come back. The idea was that they would think we had run away and would send us home. I was a clever eleven year old, I wasn't stupid. I didn't think that I could make my way back to Glasgow from Fornethy. I could hardly walk the seven miles that they took us out so there was no way I was walking to Glasgow.
57. We had stolen some biscuits when we went to get the milk and we were going to eat them while we were away. We went out walking that day and we kept going back and back in the line. On the walk, there was grass that you could jump over and then hide down the back of the bank so that was what we did. We waited while they walked away and it was the best feeling ever. I had the five year old and [REDACTED] had the wee six year old. The four of us just sat there and it was lovely. We got our wee biscuits out and we were thinking this was good. We thought we would sit there for a couple of hours and then go back and be sent home. It was Saturday and we had only been there two weeks.
58. The next thing we looked over and saw that the police were out. We could see them quite far away and we thought that was good because we could go back and tell the police how horrible the teachers were and they would send us home. We went back at 12 or 1 o'clock in the afternoon but Robertson was there and she wouldn't leave us alone with the police. She told us to get up to our dorm so we all went up to our dorm. She locked us in the room and then went out and left us.
59. I was sitting on my bed, [REDACTED] was sitting on her bed and the wee girls were on their own beds. One of the wee girls was crying her eyes out because she was terrified. I went over to cuddle her and tell her that she would be alright. I told her we had done it and we were going to get home. The next thing Robertson came in, grabbed me by

the hair, punched and kicked me in a frenzy and flung me over to my bed, telling me to get away from her. Then she told me to get off the bed so I sat down on the floor.

60. Robertson looked at PWH and said they would need to tie us up in case we jumped out of the window. I was wondering if this woman was stupid because why would we jump out a window that was one up? We weren't that stupid. Robertson asked PWH what they could tie us with and PWH said that she didn't know. Robertson then said that she knew and then she went away and came back with the monitors' sashes. She took them and tied the four of us to our beds while we sat on the ground. She said to us that, when Fletcher came back, we would get a beating. The wee girl was sobbing her head off. I was just so scared. I was wishing my mum and dad would come and get me because I couldn't do this. I couldn't do it for them either. I was trying to stay strong for them.
61. By nine o'clock at night it was pitch black and they hadn't given us any water or let us go to the toilet. I remember telling the wee one to hold it in. I told them that we would get through this and I talked to them the whole time. If it hadn't been for me having such good sisters then I don't think I could have done that but I kept thinking my big sisters are here with me. Robertson came in at nine at night and untied the wee one first then she came to me and said that we were alright because Mrs Fletcher had had a lovely day. ██████████ had won ██████████ and Mrs Fletcher was too drunk and too happy to bother with battering us. She told us to go down and get our milk and biscuit. We went down and someone else had brought down the milk and biscuits. That was all we had and then we went to bed.
62. When I wasn't sent home straight after running away I thought it hadn't worked and the older girl must have been wrong. She had gone home the week after we arrived so I couldn't say to her that she was wrong. When I eventually went home I found out that they had phoned my mum and told her that I had run away. She thought that was me being the cheeky one but never thought anything more of it.

*Bed Wetting*

63. The first morning after I arrived, we got up and the wee girl in the bed next to me had wet the bed. The housekeeper came in to show us how to make the bed. She grabbed this girl by the hair, she kicked her and punched her. It was just awful. It was awful when it happened to you but it was more awful for me to watch it than it was to get it. She was only about eight. The housekeeper grabbed her by the hair and pulled her from the bed then, when she was all curled up at the edge of the bed, she started kicking into her. I thought I need to get out of here, this is the most horrible place I have ever been in. The girl's face was black and blue.
64. After the bed wetting people would come in for me from other dorms and ask me to change their beds. I used to get up and take my top sheet and give them that. I would put theirs on my bed. Someone else would come and I would give them my bottom sheet and take their bottom sheet. The housekeeper would inspect the beds every morning but she never checked our beds, she only checked the wee ones beds.
65. One morning I was able to change every bed that was wet, she came in and said she couldn't believe that there wasn't one bed that was wet. Little did she know, [REDACTED] and I were sleeping on the wet bed sheets. If we didn't have any dry sheets left then we used to pull them up and tuck the wet bit underneath or down the bottom. We became very fly just so we didn't have to get up in the morning and witness all of this screaming and crying because it was awful.
66. The best time to change the sheets was during their parties because they wouldn't hear us. One girl would come for me and say that a girl in another room had wet the bed and ask me if I could help. I would be terrified of being caught because you had to get up and go down another corridor to get to the other dorm but if they were having a party then you knew it was an easy night because they were so engrossed in their party. Friday and Saturday nights were good nights because that was when they had their parties. I don't know where they had them but they were bad, you could hear the singing and glasses clattering.

67. We used to keep the housekeeper talking on laundry day so that we could shove in all of our wet sheets and she wouldn't know.

### **Abuse at Fornethy House, Blairgowrie**

68. There was one time [REDACTED] and I and a few others were looking out the window and we saw millions of wee frogs and we thought we would go and get them to show the wee ones. We thought that would be good for them and it would cheer them up. We had never seen anything like that coming from Glasgow in the seventies when it was dead smoky so we climbed out of the toilet window and caught some. We were hiding them but this girl went away and told Fletcher. Fletcher got us and told us to go to the assembly room. The whole school was to sit down and there were about five of us up at the top.
69. Fletcher told us to take our pants down to our ankles which we did. She told us to tuck our skirts up which we did and then she told us to bend over and touch our toes. I always remember thinking why have we to bend over and touch our toes. Then she started shouting at us to bend over and touch our toes so we did. She got a strap out and battered every single one of us across our bottoms with the strap. We were all screaming. I was affronted because I was eleven and I was showing my bum to everybody in the school. I thought all the girls would be laughing but not one of them laughed, they were all traumatised by it.
70. Fletcher gave the belt to Robertson and she belted every single one of us, then [REDACTED] belted us and then [REDACTED]. We had to keep bending over during this. Then there was a student teacher who wasn't that much older than me and she went and hit us with the belt but she tapped us and I was so relieved. I looked at her and her face was all red as if she was ready to cry. We were all screaming, we had all these bruises on our bums. My school teacher had a strap for your hand but I had never seen it used on your bottom. We had a lot of bruises from that. That was the only time I saw the belt, ever other time it was a frenzied attack. That was the only organised

punishment and I think it was because there were five of us and they wanted to show everyone us being belted.

71. They used to take us out walking for seven to ten miles and if you didn't keep up they would get your head and bang it against your friends head. I have never felt pain like it in my life. Robertson and PWH were guilty of that. If you were too slow then that's what they would do. We were the oldest and we couldn't keep up. Robertson did it to me and [REDACTED] and I never slowed down after that because I couldn't go through that pain again. That pain was terrible, I would say it was even worse than the belt on the bum.
72. I was a bit of a mother to all of them but especially to the two wee girls that we came with, they were gorgeous. Then one night Robertson came in and took the wee five year old away. I panicked because it was like someone had taken my baby. She brought her back about half an hour later. I was thinking hurry up and go and then, when Robertson had gone away, I jumped into her bed and asked her what had happened. She said Robertson had taken her to a party and given her crisps. I asked her if there was anything else and I asked her why they had taken her to a party but she said that she didn't know why. I remember she seemed ok but I was panicking because I never let them out of my sight.
73. The other thing that stuck out and upset me terribly was when the wee five year old put sugar in her porridge one morning and Fletcher went and shouted at her. I was sat at a table a bit away and we were all whispering and trying to find out what was happening. You had to whisper because if they caught you talking then you were stripped. Someone said she put sugar in her porridge and the next thing that happened was that Fletcher punched her in the face. She punched a five year old like a man would punch another man. She told her that was an English thing to do and that we don't put sugar in our porridge, we only put salt in. I wouldn't have done that to a five year old and I was eleven so I couldn't understand how they could do that. She had blonde hair and was so cute like a wee dolly. I don't know how they didn't have any maternal instinct towards her. My friend, [REDACTED] didn't have any but she didn't have siblings so I showed her what my big sisters were like with me. I looked after them the

way my sister looked after me. I was lucky that I had two big sisters. I looked after them and they never left my side the whole time I was there. I never cried in front of them and if a teacher punched or hit me then I never cried if they were about. I only cried when I was on my own.

74. At least I was old enough to understand that I would be going home. The five or six year olds never thought that, they thought they were there for good. They were terrified and they walked about with pure fear. My heart went out to them more than it went out to myself because I felt like I was in charge of them. I mothered them and I did look after them. All you heard was that wee baby crying all the time. Those kids were just traumatised. We called them the wee ones. They used to hide behind me. They wouldn't look at the teachers. They were absolutely terrified.
75. One time this wee girl went and battered another wee girl and because I was the oldest everyone looked up to me. They came and got me and told me what had happened. I took the girl into the bathroom and I told her not to hit the other wee girls because we had enough going on with the teachers so we needed to stick together. I told her not to hit the other wee girl or I would hit her. She went out and told Robertson so when I came out of the bathroom Robertson was waiting for me. She took my pants down and she took me over her knee and started battering my bum. That was in the cloakroom beside the toilet and it was in front of everyone.
76. My dad might have put me over his knee when I was naughty but he never took my pants down. That was when I was younger, not at eleven. I always analysed things and I couldn't work out why she took my pants down. She didn't care that I was eleven and going into puberty and I was embarrassed. It was the same with the incident when Fletcher made us bend over and touch our toes. That annoyed me because I couldn't work out why we were to do that. I realise as an adult it was because it was more painful but they humiliated us by doing that too.
77. I saw Robertson do that to others but that was her being kind because that was an organised one and most of the beatings weren't. The others were just as you walked by. Fletcher, Robertson and PWH would all hit you as you went past and that was

why we were all so scared. We were scared to pass them. No one would go up to them or speak to them and we wouldn't even look in their eyes. We were so scared of them. They just hated us. As soon as you walked into the dining room they would hit you. Everyone was cowering away from the staff, especially the wee ones.

78. Nobody spoke to them. There would be the odd girl who would be made to be a monitor and they would grass on the others. You felt sorry for them too because they were just trying to survive like us all. They had the sashes. I never got one. █████ did at the end but she was still on our side so that was good. I was too much of a rebel and they didn't trust me. They didn't trust me to go to church, they didn't trust me at all.
79. We all had injuries. █████ and I were in competition and when we went back to our room we used to sit and count the bruises on our legs. They never really spoke to you without grabbing you, punching you or beating you. All of us were black and blue and we all walked about with bruises constantly. When they dragged you, pulled your hair or punched you it didn't bother you because you were used to it. Even now when I talk about it, it is only certain things that bother me.
80. One night the domestics came up and started asking █████ and I questions. I can't remember what they asked but they were asking what is was like or something like that. I said that I was sorry but we weren't allowed to talk to them and they asked why we weren't allowed to talk to them. I said I didn't know why but it had been drummed into us.
81. They had taken us into the assembly room when we had first arrived and drummed into us that we weren't to talk. Fletcher did that as soon as we arrived but she would do it again if there was someone coming in that day. Fletcher would remind us that we weren't allowed to speak to anyone including domestics. We were not to speak unless we were spoken to and even then we were to watch what we said. She told us that almost every day. If the minister was coming on a Wednesday for dinner then before he came Fletcher would tell us no to talk to him. She would walk up and down telling us not to talk to each other and not to talk to outsiders. It was drilled into us. You were

scared if the minister looked at you because you didn't want to talk to him in case you said the wrong thing.

82. One time [REDACTED] and I were caught talking and Fletcher told us that we had to go to the library. We were told to strip to our pants and then we had to stand facing this fireplace. It was absolutely freezing cold and we were standing in our pants. The girls had made up a story that the women who used to own the house were buried at the side of this fireplace. We used to be scared of the teachers and we were making up stories to make us even more scared. It was awful. You would stand there for hours and hours in your pants. If you were caught talking, even if you whispered, then you were sent there. That happened to me three or four times and it happened to [REDACTED]. It happened to everyone who was caught talking.
83. We scared ourselves rotten by saying that the fireplace was haunted and that was why we had to stand at the fireplace. Then as I got older I was convinced that maybe there was something behind that fireplace. I thought there were people watching us or something because she used to do that constantly. She told kids to strip and stand there and I don't know what that was all about. I know stripping made you feel vulnerable and cold and I think that was what she wanted to do to us.
84. Fletcher was evil and Robertson was evil. Fletcher, Robertson and PWH [REDACTED] were the three worst ones out of all of them but they were all like that. They passed that cruelty down so that things stayed exactly the same. I spoke to girls in the support group and it was exactly the same in the eighties as it had been in the sixties and seventies. The first headmistress that they talk about was the one who taught the rest how to be cruel to children. I think it was taught.
85. They were evil and I had never met evil people before, I didn't know they existed until I went there. Those wee girls needed somebody to help them, they were coming from poor, horrible backgrounds and going into something that was one hundred times worse than where they came from. That hurt me because I could see that they were poor wee kids at eleven so how could the adults not see it? And they were being paid to look after us. They made money out of us and out of those poor wee things that had

nothing. They bettered their lives and got a house when they came out. Those kids went back to a homes where they never had holidays and that was supposed to be their holiday time.

86. The teachers looked down on us like we were Glasgow scum, we were the sum of the earth. I looked on them as smelly country people because they smelt and they weren't hygienic. I was never out of a shower when I was at home but they just stank, especially Robertson. PWH had a fag out of her mouth constantly, smoking over everyone and dropping ash over everyone. She stunk of tobacco. They spoke to us like we were scum even in front of other people, but not when the minister was there. When he was there they were all nice.

#### *Sexual abuse*

87. I was sexually abused by the caretaker, PWI. He was a wee man who was about my height at the time. I was quite tall but he was really small. He was about half the size of my daddy. He used to come round every time we were out playing. The teachers would be having their tea break and he would come about. It was lovely because he was such a lovely wee man. He smiled and he cuddled us. Although we cuddled the wee ones, I had no one to give me that except for him. When he came about it was just wonderful and we used to cuddle him and talk to him all the time. We all just loved PWI.
88. There were two men there. There was another one who never looked our way, never bothered us. He was younger than PWI. He used to drive the van that took them all to church but I was never allowed to go to church because I was a run away. I never even knew the younger man's name, no one even spoke to him and he never spoke to us. I later learned that his names was also PWK.
89. PWI, the caretaker, lived there and I am sure his wife was a domestic there but I don't know who his wife was. Fletcher used to go about with this woman who looked like a domestic. The only way I can describe their relationship was like a teaching assistant who hangs about the teacher all the time and looks up to them. I think it was

his wife who hung about Fletcher. She did everything for Fletcher and she looked up to her because she was a teacher.

90. I didn't know that PWI lived there until one Saturday night when one of the wee girls was sick. Usually Fletcher would get me and to go and clean it up but it was really bad and it was everywhere. Fletcher said that they would need to go and get PWI. One of the teachers, I think it was PWH, got up to go and get him. I was wondering what PWI was doing here on a Saturday night and then I realised that he must live there. Anyway he came and cleared it and that was how I guessed that he lived in the place.
91. One Friday Robertson said to me that Fletcher wanted me so I went down to see her and she told me that I was going home the next day. I was so happy. I came out and there was PWI in this long dark corridor. I have told my husband that I would love to go back there because I see it all of the time and I want to see it in real life.
92. I shouted "PWI, I'm going home tomorrow, I'm going home tomorrow". He never spoke he just put his arms out and I ran to him and cuddled him but I could feel this thing pressing against me and hurting me. I told him he was hurting me and asked him to let me go but he wouldn't. I was pushing away to try to get back to see him and it was as if he was in a trance. I was crying and asking him to let me go but he was still hurting me and I didn't know what the thing was. I started hitting his back and asking him to let me go. I asked what he was doing. I was really confused and crying. I was a bit hysterical by that time.
93. He let me go and I ran to the bottom of the stairs that I had to go up to get back to the classroom. I was scared in case he grabbed me when I was going up the stairs so I stopped and turned round to see where he was before I ran up them. I knew I would be slower running up steps and I wanted to make sure where he was so he wouldn't grab me again. I looked and he was still at the same bit, just smiling at me. I went up and into the classroom and I sat down. I had been crying and the girls asked what was wrong with me. I told them I was fine and I was going home.

94. I know it sounds awful but it was what I would describe as a dry ride. That's what I would describe his as doing and that's why he was in a trance but I was only a wee girl and I didn't even know what the hard part that was hurting me was until I was fifteen.
95. It didn't occur to me until I spoke to the police but he must have known that I was going home the next day and that was why he assaulted me. I was one of the older ones and he might have been thinking I would tell so he assaulted me the day before I went home.
96. That night we were in the dorm and the wee ones were all round me. I told them to stay away from [PWI]. They were asking me why and saying that he was lovely. I told them again, more insistently, that they were not to go near him. I remember getting on the bus and thinking that I had left them with him and I was so scared.

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

97. I didn't tell my mum about [PWI] straight away when I arrived home. It was night time and I was just about to go to bed. I think my mother was tired because she worked three or four jobs a week. I said to her something had happened with this man [PWI] but she stopped me and said don't tell me anything like you've been sexually abused. I thought, was I sexually abused? I still didn't know what had happened to me. My mum said she didn't have time for that and she had work in the morning. Mum was always like that because I was the baby and everything she did for the first time was with my sisters so by the time she got to me she was kind of fed up with it all. She never liked to hear bad news and if she didn't hear about it then it hadn't happened. I never said anything after that.
98. I spoke to my sisters when I came home and I asked them about the dog thing in the postcard but they said they just thought I was going a bit nuts. I told them it had been awful and I asked them why they hadn't listened to me. They were teenagers and they weren't really interested. I was home, I was safe and that was it. To be honest I was

relieved and I didn't really want to talk about it anymore. I was still scared to talk about it.

99. I only told them about the dog thing in the postcard. I never told them I was beaten. I never told anyone. It had been drummed into us not to tell. I think I wanted to forget about it. I was home and I wanted to forget. I didn't want to talk to [REDACTED] anymore, I wanted nothing to do with her. I just wanted to get on with my life now that I was away from them. I was still scared of them and I was scared that they could still get me.

### **Leaving Fornethy House, Blairgowrie**

100. I ran away once, on the [REDACTED], and I was eventually sent home on the [REDACTED]. We thought Fletcher would send us home right away but she didn't, she kept us for another two weeks. They didn't keep runaways for the six weeks but they still kept me for four weeks. Maybe Fletcher needed us because there weren't many older ones and she needed someone to look after the babies. Maybe she was getting older ones coming in that Saturday. They couldn't do without us because we did the hair brushing and we made the beds.
101. [REDACTED] was sent home with me but the five and six year old stayed there. We went back on the bus to Glasgow. I was relieved to go home and I couldn't wait to get out of that place but at the same time I was upset because I was leaving all of my babies behind and I didn't know how they would cope. I was worried about the two wee ones but by that time I had to look after myself because I had had enough. They had ground us down so much that we didn't have any oomph left in us whatsoever. All the joy of being an eleven year old had been taken away and I had to get out of there. It was a good feeling but at the same time sad because of leaving the wee ones.

### **Life after being in care and immediate impact**

102. I was still at school with [REDACTED] but I never spoke to her. I went to High School with her and I remember seeing her. She looked at me with this sadness in her eyes and I had sadness in mine when I looked at her. It was too painful to talk and that was the only time that we crossed paths. I never spoke to her again. I think she felt guilty because she was the one who told me to come and I felt angry at her because she had taken me to a place like that. But then I wasn't angry, I just didn't want to speak to her because speaking to her would take me back there and I didn't want to be back there. I couldn't have anything to do with the pain that we had suffered together. We were stripped together, beaten together, tied up together and belted on the backside with the strap by all of the teachers together. All of that pain took me back there and I didn't want that.
103. We had two weeks of being a robot before we left, we were scared to talk. We became part of Fornethy by the time we left whereas when we went we were just normal children full of fun and happiness. By the time we left we were Fornethy girls that were moulded into what they wanted us to be.
104. I got into a lot of trouble as a kid but [REDACTED] went the opposite way. She was never in trouble and she went right into herself. I went about with the wild ones in school. I heard [REDACTED] became a doctor.
105. My mum thought I was brilliant when I came back and she couldn't believe it when I got up in the morning and made everyone's beds. She said it had done me the world of good. My mum started work really early in the morning and she was pleased someone was getting up and cleaning the house and making the beds. She would come back to a nice clean home. I had been lazy before I went and as the youngest I would get away with murder.
106. When I went to High School I became a rebel. I couldn't stand teachers. I used to dog school and play truant constantly. I had passed an exam to get into one of the best schools in Glasgow at that time. I was clever and I got into quite high O-Level classes but I never sat an O-Level. I never went in for any of them. I hated school, I hated teachers and I was cheeky. I couldn't take being bossed by anyone.

107. I started smoking. PWH had smoked but before Fornethy I had hardly been around people that smoked. My mum had the odd cigarette but I never actually saw her smoking. I heard she had the odd one when she was stressed but I never smelt it off her or saw her do it. I started smoking and drinking, I was wild. I just went off the rails. I fell pregnant when I was sixteen and my mum took me to get an abortion when I was half way through my pregnancy. She took me to Brighton.
108. When I was fifteen I was kissing a boy and I asked him "what's that" and he told me that it was an erection. He didn't say it like that, he said it was a 'hard on'. It took me four years but then I realised what had happened in Fornethy and I was so devastated. PWH had been an old man, my daddy's age. I went home and took [REDACTED]. I vomited a lot and my mum said it was like the exorcist, there was green stuff coming out. I thought it had taken me four years to find out what PWH had done to me. As I got older I realised exactly what it was that he had been doing. That was it, I couldn't go near men after that. I was shocked. I had wanted to know what he had done to me because it had bugged me for four years but when I knew it upset me something awful.
109. When I was sixteen I was a window dresser in a really expensive boutique in the West End. I came home one day and I was going up the stairs and this guy grabbed me by the ankle and put his hand over my mouth. He grabbed me and told me how much he loved me and that he had been watching me. He was actually a stalker, although it wasn't called anything in those days. I found out from my neighbour that he was a twenty five year old, married man with two kids. His kids would have been around two and three at that time. I remember later walking along Dumbarton Road with my three kids, going to my mums. I was married by this time and my three kids were only babies. He was walking along with his wife and two teenagers by this time. He was laughing and joking with them and then he looked at me and his face just dropped. I just gave him the biggest evils for what he had done to me, grabbing me like that.
110. The reason that I didn't tell anyone about that was because I didn't think anyone would be interested. I knew everyone thought PWH was the most wonderful man. No one

would believe me so who was I going to tell. When that happened to me at sixteen it absolutely devastated me as well. I was so scared and I was scared every time I went out in case he was still stalking to me. I thought who is going to listen to me because they didn't listen to me with [PWI].

111. Not only did that man grab me going up the close, my sister's husband then tried to get into bed with me when I was sixteen. My mum used to have to go down to London with my daddy after he had an accident and he was in a private hospital. My sister's husband was drunk one night and was trying to get into bed with me. He was telling me that he loved me and that he had seen me in the shop. He was an old man to me. I was scared for my big sister who was expecting my niece at the time.
112. I am really close with my big cousin because she is only eight months older than me so I told her what had happened. I told her that my mum kept sending me to my sister's house when they went away to London. She told me I had to tell my mum what had happened so I did and the first thing she said was "don't tell your dad" because my dad would have killed him. I asked my mum not to tell my big sister.
113. My big sister later divorced and it was her that put him out. When he left and met another woman she became jealous. My mum was trying to be a good mum and told her that he hadn't been any use anyway because he did this to your wee sister. I was shocked and I couldn't understand why she had told her.
114. He used to still do it when I was married with three kids. He would ask me to run away with him but I would just ignore it. That's what I have done all my life because of what happened with [PWI]. I knew people wouldn't believe me with him. The only reason that I told my mum was because my cousin had said that he might blame me but he didn't and he didn't deny it to my big sister. He told her the truth so that was one good thing about him but he had known me since I was fourteen.
115. My niece who is now in her forties knows about it now. She says to me that he wasn't that much older than me so I explained to her that in those days I wouldn't go out with anyone who was a couple of months older than me. When I was sixteen an old man

to me would be eighteen and her dad was twenty so that was an old man to me. We have had discussions about it. He is in America now and she doesn't see him. It doesn't affect me now but all of that affected me when I was young and when I saw my granddaughter turn sixteen I worried she had to go through what I had been through.

116. After school I went into window dressing and I was a bit wild. My mum knew this man who had children and I started going out with his son. We were friends at first and then we became engaged when I was seventeen. We married and he is still here. We had three children, two sons and a daughter. My daughter passed away very recently.

### **Impact**

117. By the time I left Fornethy I was a different person to who I had been when I had arrived. I was quieter. I know that I had completely changed. Fletcher had gone on and on about not speaking to people. We were so scared of her that if she had told us to jump in the fire then we would have done. She was good at what she did because we very rarely did speak to one another. After the first two weeks we became what she wanted us to be which was robots. That was the way we all became.
118. We ended up so beaten down that we stopped talking and we stopped looking at each other. We went with the flow for the last two weeks that I was there and I did what I was told. Even [REDACTED] and I stopped talking. We just stopped everything. It was weird that for the first two weeks we were still in the mode of being normal but for the last two weeks we became like the kids who I had noticed when we arrived, not smiling and not talking. We were beaten down that much. When I came back from Fornethy, I would jump back if anyone put their hand up.
119. I hated my name after that first day at Fornethy when Fletcher had said that she expected me to be fat. I sometimes go as my middle name, <sup>PLP</sup> [REDACTED], because I detested my name after that.

120. My sister is an ex-chief inspector in the police and I have always thought that you shouldn't get into trouble but if I saw Fletcher today I would feel like punching that woman for what she did to those kids but I know that I wouldn't actually do that because I'm not like that. I wouldn't want to lower myself to being like her but I don't think that woman should get away with anything. She should pay for what she did to every single one of us but especially to those wee five years olds who didn't know they were going home and who thought they were staying there forever.
121. I hate walking anywhere because of the long walks that we went on at Fornethy. To this day I won't walk the length of myself.
122. We moved into our first flat after we got married when I was nineteen. There was a girl who lived at the bottom of the close who was a bit older and more streetwise than me. She was the eldest of her family and I was the youngest in mine. She was my first married friend and we had our first children around the same time. She said that I would never be able to drive because I was too nervous. I was surprised that she was able to see how nervous I was because I thought I had hid it well.
123. I nursed my uncle in England for thirteen years and every morning for thirteen years I had to put sugar in his porridge because he loved it and every day that wee five year old would flash back in my head and I would remember Fletcher punching her in the face for putting sugar in her porridge.
124. I still hated teachers even when my children were at school, I hated them when my grandchildren went and I still hate them to this day. My granddaughter asked me to go to something at the school because her mum was working. It was something to see about going into sixth form. My grandchildren are brilliant at school and we haven't had any problems with them but I hated going with her and I wanted to get out of there. I couldn't be in that environment anymore or around those people. I think they are control freaks.
125. My granddaughter was being bullied and my daughter and I went to the school. A teacher came over and told me that I couldn't park where I was and did I want her to

go and get the headmaster? My daughter said that would be good because she had been trying to get the headmaster all week. The teacher looked at me and asked again if I wanted her to get the headmaster. I told her I wasn't afraid of the headmaster when I was twelve so I certainly wasn't going to be afraid of him now. I told her she should go and get who she liked and not to threaten me. Even as an old lady this is how I feel about them, I think they're control freaks. They damaged me in that way.

126. My daughter was so good at school and when she went to parents' night she would be the only one dressed in her uniform and looking smart. She was a prefect but I could never be happy for her. She was so happy that the teachers loved her but I couldn't go up there and say this is brilliant because I didn't like these people. I felt better if they were moaning about my boys than if they were being nice about my daughter. I was more involved when they were angry at my eldest son for something like throwing snowballs at a teacher.
127. I would never let my kids stay over anywhere. When my eldest son went on a day trip with the nursery I was crying. I had three children in three years and a woman came up and said that I should be glad to get rid of one of them for a few hours but I hated it. I never trusted anyone with my children.
128. Both of my sisters went to university and my oldest sister went on to be one of the [REDACTED] police officers in South Wales. My other sister became a guidance teacher. My mum was proud that three of their daughters went to that school. Our headmaster said the people who went to the other school would be our secretaries and we would be the lawyers and the doctors. I was as clever as my sisters. I did get a prize in first year but after that it went downhill.
129. I stopped talking to my sister who became a guidance teacher but I am still close with my oldest sister. My sister who became a teacher was so bossy anyway and I don't know if it was just that but I just got so fed up with her. She and my other sister clash. There is only fifteen months between them and my younger sister is always in competition with my older sister. I never got involved with their arguments but when I got older I saw the way she was talking and acting and I didn't want anything to do

with her. I don't know whether that had anything to do with Fornethy and her becoming a guidance teacher. I just couldn't cope with her bossiness and I can't cope with people like that at all.

130. I have flashbacks of the abuse all the time but more so at the beginning when I didn't understand what had happened with PWI. I am one of those people who needs to know and understand why something has happened. I wondered why it had happened because he was such a nice man. It took me four years to find out what he had done but I knew that he had done something and that it was wrong but I didn't know what it was. When I found out what he had done I tried to kill myself. That didn't work and I still couldn't tell anyone why I had done it.
131. I suffered with depression from about the age of fourteen and I smoked constantly. When my daughter died recently I questioned whether my smoking was the reason for her death. I only smoked because I was so stressed out about what had happened to me and no one was interested. I just had to get on with it knowing that I had left all those babies there and then my mum killed my other baby. All I wanted was my baby so I got one. I married when I was nineteen and made sure that I did it right so no one would take my baby away from me.
132. I brought up my sisters' two kids because both of my sisters were career women. My nieces said to me at my daughter's funeral that they had actually thought they were my babies. Now my sisters both have their daughters and my daughter is gone. My daughter was beautiful inside and out. I used to be so proud. My big sisters have beautiful girls but nothing on my daughter. We still don't know why she died and I worry it was because I was a heavy smoker. I was addicted to smoking and I would smoke rather than eat. I had started when I was eleven and when I was fifteen I was told that my lungs were black. I stopped when I was forty because I never thought I would make forty and then my daughter never made forty. My daughter was an angel and everyone was jealous of me because she was just wonderful.
133. I have never been good around men, even though I have two sons. The only man that I stayed close to was my uncle. I distanced myself from everybody, even my dad. I

came down to England and nursed my uncle who had cancer for thirteen years but any other man I don't have any time for. It was hard when my daughter died because I had never hugged my son in law but I've done it now. I took his hand when we were walking behind the coffin going to the chapel. Other people would do that naturally and then walk away but it was a big thing for me. My daughter used to say that I didn't think any man was good enough for her and I would say that no man was. My son in law is lovely though, he has a good job and he idolised my daughter.

134. My experiences with men affected me worse when my second granddaughter turned sixteen because I used to look at her and think that if she went through what I went through when I was sixteen then that would be terrible.
135. Last night I went out with my wee grandson who is ten and he will soon be eleven. He is only a wee thing but he is almost the age I was when I went to Fornethy. I was too busy to think about it with my kids but with my grandkids I think I was that age when this happened and that happened.
136. I haven't been back to Fornethy. I heard that three women broke into it and looked around it but I don't think that looked good on us. I would love to see the two wee girls again and I looked for them when I joined the support group but I didn't find them. I was twice their age so I kept wondering what it must be like for them if I was suffering like this.

### **Treatment/support**

137. I've had treatment all my life for depression. I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in 2002. My PTSD is severe and I was diagnosed by the psychiatrist whose work included people involved in the London bombings. He said it was more difficult to get over traumatic things which had happened as a child. I never told him about Fornethy. I just told him I was screaming at night. I never told anyone about Fornethy until I went to the police because I was so scared.

138. Any time I go on holiday, my grandchildren don't sleep with me because I wake up screaming. I have had to explain to them that I have PTSD and that's why I wake up with nightmares during the night. I took my three grandchildren to Tenerife and my granddaughter was meant to share with me but she ended up in the living room with her cousin and her brother. She said she couldn't sleep with me because it was really bad. My husband wasn't there and my PTSD gets worse when he isn't there. I was scared in case anything happened to them when I was on my own.
139. I am on two different tablets and the psychiatrist hadn't met someone on two different drugs for depression. I have been like this all my life with depression. I also have chronic pain. I have a friend on twitter who tells me things that make sense to me. She says people with childhood trauma end up addicted to things, like smoking. She also said that childhood trauma can cause chronic pain in adults. I have had chronic pain for eleven or twelve years and I take tramadol for that. I've also been talking to Nicola from Wellbeing Scotland.
140. It came out that a woman called [REDACTED] had gone to the papers. She had started a support group [REDACTED] I contacted the group. I wasn't [REDACTED] before that because I don't see the point of it but I joined [REDACTED] so I could join the group and speak to people. I hoped that I would find the two wee girls but I didn't like what people were saying on there and that people were jumping on the bandwagon so I came off it.
141. Someone from that group said that we were doped and that they put tablets in our milk. I said that Robertson and Fletcher would never have gone and got milk, it was the older girls who did that because that was beneath them. The wee ones wouldn't know that because they wouldn't see that. [REDACTED] couldn't remember when she went to bed at night. I said that was probably because that was the time of day when you felt good because you got away from the teachers and you didn't have the pressure of them being on top of you. I reminded her that we were out walking seven to ten miles a day so she probably went to sleep but she disagreed and said that they put something in our milk. I tried to explain that I gave out the milk. Then [REDACTED] heard that the castor oil being given out in the morning had something in it. I said to her that

was given out at 9:00 am so there wouldn't be something in that to make us go to sleep.

142. There was something every day. Someone would be saying something or making up something every time you went on. They were fishing for something.
143. When I got in touch with [REDACTED], she told me that she had spoken to a domestic who said that there were two [REDACTED] at Fornethy. One was a nice PWI [REDACTED] and one was a PWK [REDACTED]. I said to her that when I think back it was the nice PWI [REDACTED] who was the pervert and not the sleazy one. Everybody loved PWI [REDACTED] including the teachers so I can't see how the domestics wouldn't love him too.
144. One of the girls in that group then said "PWK [REDACTED] that liked a wee rub". She had read [REDACTED] about me. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I knew right away that she didn't know who she was talking about because this [REDACTED] was a nice PWI [REDACTED]. I know it sounds stupid but he was a nice man. My husband will ask how I can still say that but he was a lovely man. I obviously didn't know he was grooming us. If I was to pick I would say that the other man at Fornethy was a bit of a weirdo because he never spoke to anybody but I wouldn't say he was sleazy.
145. Some of the woman in that group aren't giving a damn and they are accusing anybody and everybody because of bits they have read. I came out of that group because I didn't want to be part of that. The other man could be in his eighties by now. He was a hard working guy who got on with his life and now he is being tarred with the same brush as the other one.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

146. This I am not in Scotland and I don't read up on these things. I saw something about the Inquiry because my husband follows Celtic and he was watching the news. He was watching the news and this came on. I asked my husband if he thought I should

go to the police. The only people I had ever told were my husband and my daughter when she was in her teens. My husband said we should go so I went and told the police.

147. I gave my first statement to Suffolk police at the end of 2016, start of 2017. I got a call from Tayside police three months later and I gave Tayside police my second statement. The police officer said I was the only person who had come forward from Fornethy. I didn't know what he wanted me to say to that and I am not good with men anyway. This guy was being cheeky to me which annoyed me even more. I am used to the police because both of my brothers in law were in the police and my sister joined the police when I was twelve. I just thought I was the only person.
148. My daughter suggested that I put something on [REDACTED] Forum so I wrote on that saying that I had been to the police and that if someone wanted to come forward then they could do what I did. I lived in Suffolk and I just went to my local police station so they could just do what I did. That would have been around March 2017 but nobody came forward.
149. Suffolk police took a big statement from me in July 2017. Then in 2019 I came back from holiday and my son said the police had been trying to contact me. I knew that it had to be to do with Fornethy because that was the only thing I had spoken to police about. They said they wanted another statement so I gave another statement to Suffolk police because Tayside had asked for it. I asked the girl in Suffolk why they hadn't contacted me. She didn't know why but she said she would get someone to call me. Nobody called.
150. I went to the police and gave another statement in 2020. Something happened about the girl saying "PWK [REDACTED] liked a wee rub". I phoned the police to tell them that people were making things up and saying we had been doped.
151. Dundee police asked me to give another statement because all of these things that were going about in the support group. I gave another two statements because of all of these things.

152. I was in Glasgow in March 2021 because my mum has dementia and she was really ill. I got a phone call from Dundee again asking me things about the two [REDACTED] again. They asked for another statement from me. They are never going to tell me what is going on but I guess someone said something about the [REDACTED]. They asked if I would recognise the <sup>PWI</sup>[REDACTED] who abused me in a picture so I told them that he was dead but if they showed me a picture then I probably would recognise him. She also asked me the different between the cuddles that he gave me outside in the playground and the cuddle he gave me when he was rubbing against me. I explained to her that I knew the difference and that when he cuddled me in the corridor I was crying and hitting him but he wouldn't let me go. I told her that on that occasion I was terrified of him and it hurt.
153. I told them that I left the support group and they said that was good because they didn't want me being influenced. I said it was more people jumping on the bandwagon and getting information from people and making their stories worse that they were. She said that was what they expected to happen but I was shocked that people would make up a story that would mean some poor guy in his eighties is having stories made up about him because some domestic thinks he's sleazy.
154. I told the police everything in 2017 but as other people have been saying things they have come back and asked my opinion on things. People are saying that there was a paedophile ring. They say they were all being taken to the parties where they were sitting on people's knees and being touched. I did see a little girl being taken to a party. My opinion of that as an eleven year old was that they were taking her down to show her off because she was cute. I thought they were taking her down there to say look what brilliant teachers we are and this one of our wee girls. When she came back she wasn't upset and there was nothing strange. I don't know if they touched her because I wasn't there but she wasn't upset. The last time I spoke to the police they were talking as though there will be a court case.
155. In [REDACTED] 2020 I got this feeling. I pick up on things. I looked up deaths and <sup>PWI</sup>[REDACTED] who had abused me had died on the [REDACTED]. I went to the police four years

before that and they could have got him. Since then I have heard of one other girl who experienced the same thing. He had got a hold of her in a corridor. She was in the paper but she didn't give her name. I spoke to her and said that she was a wee one in there so I felt like her big sister and I would help her if she went to the police. She said she thought it was just her but I said that there was two of us now and I was sure that there would be more. I always knew there would be more. I said I would help her all that I could. She went to the police. Ironically she went to the police on the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I wrote to her and told her that he had actually died on the day she was giving her statement.

156. I phoned and told the police he was dead. They said they would check and get back to me. I asked her if she had found out and she said she didn't know. I don't think they can say to me that he has died.
157. I told the police about the teachers in 2017. The police never said anything about Fletcher and Robertson but a reporter went to Fletcher's house. She was in the living room watching the telly but she never answered the door to him. Seemingly Robertson used to live in Essex but she is dead now.
158. You have to tell these things but when we were young we were so brainwashed into not telling things. We were so young and they beat us constantly. They didn't just beat us because we wet the bed, they would beat us when we were passing them. They would slap us on the head as we went past. We were all in constant fear, thinking we might be hit as we walked by. They just hated us and they looked at us like we were the scum of the earth.
159. On 13 August 2021 the police in Dundee phoned me and said that they have now reported the case to the Procurator Fiscal and we will now have to wait to find out if they are going to prosecute anyone.

## **Records**

160. I haven't looked to see if there are any records of my time at Fornethy. It would probably be in my school records that I went downhill.

**Lessons to be learned**

161. Children should not be sent to places like Fornethy without any checks. I shouldn't have been there in the first place. I thought it was for poor or sick children. Why the hell did they let me go? [REDACTED] was already in that system, I wasn't. My dad worked and my mum worked. I didn't need a holiday, I had holidays. They shouldn't have allowed anyone and everyone to go. Why did they allow someone's friend to go? It upsets me that I shouldn't have been there. It was different for the other girls because they were already in that system. That angers me as well, not at the time but as an adult. They should never have done that to any child. I could see it was wrong and I was eleven so how could they not see. They know that what they did was wrong but they thought that we were going to keep it forever.
162. Someone should have been out checking on the staff because these people were getting away with murder. They were partying every weekend and they were drunk. When Fletcher came back that night, after we had run away, she was absolutely steaming drunk. It was the only time I saw that woman smile, because [REDACTED] had won.
163. They wouldn't send random children to places like that without checking now. I was shocked that it was still going on when I married in 1978. I never thought it would still be going on. If my mother had listened to me then she could have saved them. I have heard there are a few mums out there who didn't believe their daughters. In those days teachers were something. Nowadays they are on twenty thousand a year and they're nothing.
164. I hope Fletcher gets the jail, even for a week. I hope all of their families know what they were all about. Robertson's daughter is on Facebook saying how wonderful her mother is. I want them to know how they treated us but they won't believe it. They will think their mothers are the best people but they were evil women.

- 165. Any member of staff could have saved those kids by speaking up and saying what was going on. One of the students could have said something but nobody did. No one spoke up for us and they just let it go on. They let us all suffer in that school. Four weeks in a child's life is a long time and some of the kids went three or four times. One girl went four years in a row. I feel sorry for those people because once in that place was enough.
  
- 166. I want to see the truth come out about what happened. I want to speak up for all of the wee ones who won't remember everything that I can remember because they were so young. I am going to remember for them and tell everyone and their granny what they did to those kids. I will go to court if I have to, not just for myself but for them.
  
- 167. The wee seven year old that I talk to who was sexually abused by PWI doesn't remember much of the rest of the school but she remembers that abuse and I am a bit like that. I remember more the really serious things that happened there rather than just being belted. I remember some incidents more vividly. Folk say trauma makes you forget these things but it hasn't for me.

**Other information**

- 168. 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.....PLP.....

Dated..... 13 August 2021 .....