

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

RLW

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is RLW. My date of birth is 1972. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born and brought up in Pollok, Glasgow. I lived with my mum and dad and my four big sisters and two brothers. My mum was and my dad was. Both my parents are dead now. My mum passed away from cancer in of 1977 and my dad died in 1985.
3. From the oldest down, my sisters are, who passed away a couple of years ago, she was a lot older than me and lived with my gran. Then it was who is about fourteen years older than me, who is nine years older and who is four years older. My older brother is, who is about fifteen years older than me, and my younger brother was who was a year younger than me. has also passed away now.
4. My dad was in the army, he went through the ranks and was quite high up. He was in Germany but after and were born I'm sure he moved permanently back to Scotland. That's certainly the only place I remember us living. I remember he was quite upset when he had to leave the army.

5. I would describe my childhood and life at home when I was very young as being normal. Then in 1977 my mum suddenly passed with cancer. [REDACTED] and I went to Fornethy and everything changed.
6. I don't know if there was social work involvement with the family when my dad was looking after us but I do remember the 'the cruelty people' coming round to the house, that's what everyone called them. I think that was just because we weren't going to school. My dad would say it was too wet or it was too warm, so we didn't need to go to school that day. I'm not sure why, maybe it was just because he wanted us around him. He would make up any excuse for us not to go to school and we certainly didn't mind. That was just [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and me.
7. We didn't have an allocated social worker or anything like that, we just got occasional social work visits, to do with our attendance at the school. We all went to McGill Primary School in Pollok. I actually loved school. When I came back from Fornethy I put my head straight back into class again and caught up with all the work I'd missed during those six weeks I'd been there.
8. It was because of my mum passing away that me and my big sister, [REDACTED], went to Fornethy. That was around [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] 1977. I remember I was five and in Primary 1.
9. I do remember my dad speaking to [REDACTED] and me about going to Fornethy. I think he'd spoken to the school and I feel our family doctor, Dr Jheeta, may also have been involved. Our doctor had been involved a lot with my mum when she wasn't well.
10. I remember my dad asking us if we wanted to go on a holiday and we were quite excited about it as the only holiday we'd known was Saltcoats in a caravan.
11. I remember we got clothes to go to Fornethy and my sister [REDACTED] sewed labels on all our underwear and shirts and things to make sure none of our items were stolen. I have a very vivid memory of her sitting sewing on all these labels.

12. I don't remember being told much about it other than that we were going on a holiday.
13. I do remember getting taken for a medical before we went to Fornethy. I think it was in or near India Street in Glasgow. I remember [REDACTED] talking about it and it was the same building we went to, to get new school uniforms. They checked my hair, weighed me, measured my height and took my blood pressure at that medical. I'm not sure if they did anything else.
14. I remember my dad saying we had to get a medical to make sure we were okay to go. It could have been something to do with the school as well, I'm not sure. I also remember a nurse at the school going through my hair with a nit comb and making sure we were all clean before we went. We got the same again when we got there anyway.

Fornethy House, Alyth, Perth

General

15. My dad and [REDACTED] took us to get the bus to Fornethy. It was from somewhere in Glasgow, India Street again, I think. There were lots of children, all girls, getting on the bus together. I remember [REDACTED] and I were so excited.
16. It was a big bus, there was over twenty kids there, so lots of families with their mums and dads, all so excited and waving goodbye. [REDACTED] and I sat up the back of the bus and I remember everybody singing. There would have been adults, but I can't remember who or how many there were.
17. I do remember going over this big bridge which was really high with water underneath. I remember being really scared of that bridge because we were so high up. To this day, I still have a fear of heights and bridges, and it's because of that journey.

18. It was all girls at Fornethy, from about my age, five, up to girls who were going through puberty.

Routine at Fornethy

First day

19. Fornethy was in Perth. The building itself was like a fairy tale castle. I felt like a princess because it was this big white mansion house, just like something out of a fairy tale. It was huge, really big and absolutely beautiful. We were all thinking it was going to be good fun.
20. When we arrived, I remember very clearly being greeted by Miss Fletcher, who was the head teacher, Miss Robertson and Miss PWH, who were teachers, and some auxiliary nurses and other domestic staff. Miss Fletcher dealt more with the older girls while Miss Robertson dealt more with the younger ones, that's my memory.
21. There was also a caretaker who was called PWK. I was scared of PWK, I had this fear of him and wouldn't go near him but I don't know why. He was a scruffy guy who worked outside in the gardens and he would hang about some of the older girls when they were in the playground. I just found him very creepy and avoided him as much as I could. I don't recall him ever doing anything to me, I just had this instinct to stay away from him.
22. I didn't know how long we were going to be at Fornethy. I realised when we came back that it was six weeks, but I never really understood how long we were going for. It wasn't discussed with me, I just thought we were going on a holiday.
23. I remember you went into Fornethy through these big doors. There was a main corridor and spiral stairs that took you up to the first floor. My dormitory was called 'Reekie Linn' and was right at the top of those stairs. There were more dormitories on the second floor but we weren't allowed up there.

24. The house was huge and had a kitchen, a dining room and lots of different rooms. I remember a big, long corridor with swinging double doors that led to the classrooms which were up some stairs.
25. I remember going in, having our cases taken from us and then being taken up the stairs to our dormitories. That might have been by Miss PWH but I can't say for sure. We were shown where our beds were then we were brought back down the stairs and taken in to get a bath and have the nit cream and all that.
26. We had to strip off in the bathroom and there was quite a queue of girls all standing naked waiting to have a bath. There were two baths and this queue of girls. Me and my sister went in a bath together and I remember the water was only as deep as my ankle and lukewarm.
27. Miss Fletcher scrubbed my sister and Miss Robertson scrubbed me. It was scrubbing, not washing, and they were using what I can only describe as the sort of scrubbing brushes you would use to clean shoes. They scrubbed us with the brush and used carbolic soap. I'll never forget the smell of carbolic soap, as we used it in school.
28. Miss Robertson scrubbed my skin so hard and so rough that my skin was burning, it was like it was on fire. I remember looking at my sister and she was getting scrubbed as well. I was in shock, I didn't know what was going on, I didn't know why the women were being so heavy handed with us. My skin was raw, it was so painful and they scrubbed us all over our bodies. Then they took us out the bath, put a towel round us, got us dried and put us into Fornethy clothes. It was a school pinafore type thing.
29. We then went into a separate room along the corridor, to get de-loused. We had nit lotion rubbed in and combed through our hair. I don't know who did that but they were nice and not heavy handed. I think it was a domestic member of staff.

Mornings and bedtime

30. The girls in each dormitory were mixed ages. I remember one, [REDACTED], who was a couple of years older than me. I was in the same dormitory as my sister, who was four years older than me. I think there were about six girls in our dormitory.
31. We each had a bed and I remember I had a wee single wardrobe with a drawer at the bottom of it. I kept my underwear and that sort of stuff in there. I think there was a mirror and a wee sink but that was it, it was pretty basic.
32. I remember it was still dark when we all got up in the morning. It was about six or seven o'clock. We got washed and dressed, brushed our teeth, brushed our hair and went down for breakfast.
33. After breakfast we would be out the house. We would go to a place called the 'backwater reservoir'. We would walk there and it was about three or four miles away. I remember walking for miles and miles to get to the place and being fascinated by it.
34. We also walked to a wee farm place, Middleton Farm, I think it was called, where we did some strawberry picking. Sometimes we would walk to the wee village and then sometimes we would just stay at the school and play in the garden.

Leisure time

35. While Fornethy was a horrific place, not all of it, every day, was bad. I did have some good days at Fornethy. I remember going on a lot of long walks and I remember doing lots of activities on the walks. There were these 'wishing stones' where we played, I loved getting taken to them.
36. There was some strange behaviour by the teachers with the wishing stones though. I remember they would get us all to stand in a circle around these white stones, which were built into the ground, and we would all hold hands. The teachers would tell us we could wish for anything we wanted to but we were not allowed to wish to go home because if we did we would never return home.

37. It was like a ritual, we would skip and sing round these stones, then run down this hill to release the wish but we weren't allowed to wish to go home.
38. I did love being outdoors though, so I enjoyed all the outdoor activities. I remember going to the 'rocky bridge' as well, the teachers took us over that. It was made of wood and I remember being scared of the bridge because it moved.

Schooling

39. We were put into different age groups for the classes. I wasn't in the same class as my big sister, we had different teachers. I was in the same class all the time I was at Fornethy. My teacher was Miss Robertson. I don't recall ever being taught anything by Miss Fletcher.
40. School classes were after our morning walks or activities. The classes were different on different days, some days we wrote letters in the classes, some days we made things or read books, so it was a different sort of curriculum. We did go to class most days and we did get taught but it was just a bit different from school.
41. We didn't go to classes at the weekend but we did go to Sunday School on Sunday. On Saturday's we went out and did activities, more long walks and things like that.

Religious instruction

42. There was a Christian element to Fornethy. We said prayers every day and things like that. I still remember the prayer we said every morning before breakfast. We had to say prayers at night as well.
43. The bigger girls all walked to the local church every Sunday. I didn't go to that church, which was strange, but the minister would come to Fornethy every Sunday for the younger ones. So Sunday School for the younger ones was actually in Fornethy. The Sunday School teachers were nice and the wee minister man was nice as well.

44. That was actually a good part of Fornethy. It was my solace. I enjoyed Sunday School and after I left I begged my dad to let me go to Sunday School. I'm very much of a Christian faith.

Sibling Contact

45. My sister and I were definitely deliberately kept separate. We were together in our dormitory but if we were in line to go out for walks for the day and things like that, we were never allowed to be partners. We were never allowed to play together at Fornethy either. We all had to play with girls that were our own age.

Running away

46. I remember crying to my sister and saying that we should run away. There was a fire escape outside the building and it was next to our dormitory so I asked her if we could use it to run away. She told me it was all woods outside and we had nowhere to go. I said we could go home and she told me we would be going home soon.
47. Every day I wanted to run away, and we didn't, but when I got back home I did start running away. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
Secondary Institutions I didn't realise until I was older that me running away all the time after I had left Fornethy was just me running away from Fornethy, me trying to escape.
48. I think some of the girls did try and run away but I don't think they ever got very far. I can't remember any specific girls running away. You would have just been brought back anyway.

Abuse at Fornethy

Miss Fletcher

49. Miss Fletcher was like the big matron type you saw in the 'Carry On' films. She was very strict, a disciplinarian, and all the girls were scared of her. She had blonde hair and a weird-shaped mouth, kind of bucked teeth; her teeth and mouth were quite protruding.
50. It was when we were actually in Fornethy House that a lot of the abuse happened. So not when we were on the long walks or in class but when we were in the building. That's where I was hit or where I witnessed a lot of the teachers hitting other kids. I witnessed a lot of abuse towards my sister.
51. The dining room is where I feel I have a lot of my memories of abuse towards me and my sister [REDACTED]. My sister didn't like custard and prunes and I remember Miss Fletcher making her eat them. [REDACTED] stood up and threw the plate off the table. Miss Fletcher then grabbed my sister by the hair and dragged her out of the dining room. My sister was screaming at Miss Fletcher. My sister was that kind of kid, she would fight back, and she did fight back, but she was dragged out the dining room. I don't know what happened to her outside the dining room and [REDACTED] has never spoken to me about that. There was a lot of abuse happened in the dining hall.
52. I witnessed a few girls being force fed in the dining hall. A lot of the kids didn't like certain foods depending what was on offer. I remember seeing a girl, I think her name was [REDACTED], being force fed porridge. It was a horrible thing to see. Her mouth was forced open, then held like that, while the spoon was forced down her throat. The girl was gagging, it was awful. I'm not sure but I think that was Miss Fletcher.
53. I never got force fed food because I always ate all my food. I ate everything. After I saw what happened to my big sister I thought that if I was a good girl and ate my dinner, I wouldn't get punished. [REDACTED] was a fussy eater and still is to this day. She doesn't like peas or beans or eggs and she always says the smell of rotten eggs reminds her of Fornethy.
54. There was an incident with Miss Fletcher in the dining room when she said I wasn't to get a cup of tea because I pee'd the bed. My sister said I didn't pee the bed so Miss

Fletcher grabbed this very small cup of tea and literally forced the tea down my throat. I can only remember feeling sort of disconnected from my body, it was like I'd blacked out and I felt I was outside of my body, I could see myself slumped on the table. Miss Fletcher was hitting my back and my sister was screaming. I think I must have choked and completely blacked out. I can only describe it as some kind of out-of-body experience, it was horrible. I remember coming around and the next thing Miss Fletcher rushed everyone out of the dining hall. That incident has stuck with me for years. I am always looking for answers as to what happened to me and what that experience was. It was so strange.

55. Another time, one of the girls, [REDACTED], who was a lovely girl, had pee'd her bed. Miss Fletcher came into the dormitory, grabbed [REDACTED] by the hair and literally dragged her by the hair, out her bed and out into the corridor. I remember the door of the bedroom shutting and hearing [REDACTED] screaming as Miss Fletcher dragged her along the corridor. I'll never forget those screams and the echo of what they did to her. I don't know what they did to her. I'm sure that was Miss Fletcher, because she did come into the rooms to deal with the older girls and [REDACTED] was an older girl.
56. I never found out what happened to [REDACTED]. That's another thing, we were very restricted on who we could talk to and things like that. [REDACTED] never spoke about it.
57. None of the teachers allowed us to talk to one another when we were out on walks or playing. I wasn't allowed to talk to my sister when we were out on walks and I wasn't allowed to play with her in the playground. I had to play with the kids at my age.
58. The walks were very long and we wore Wellington boots all the time. The top of the boots would rub on our legs. All the girls had red marks around their legs from the chaffing. [REDACTED] told me to pull my socks up and over the rim of the boots but when the teachers saw that, they stopped us. Miss Fletcher and other teachers knew we had chaffed legs from the walks and no one was ever offered any kind of treatment for that. We were never given any creams or anything.

59. I remember asking a teacher, Miss PWH or Miss Fletcher, I'm not sure which one it was, if I could write a letter home. She told me I couldn't write a letter home because my mum was dead. I didn't know what that was because when my mum died we were just told my mum was in heaven with the angels. I thought my mum was an angel and I didn't understand what death was. That was such a cruel thing to say and she said it to me in such a cruel way.

Miss Robertson

60. Miss Robertson was heavier built and had a kind of manly look. She had mousy brown hair.
61. Miss Robertson was the one who abused me all the time. I don't know where to start with her because she was abusive all the time.
62. After what happened in the bath, we were in the showers one day. There were loads of girls and one of the monitor girls rang the bell. A monitor girl was just an older girl who was selected to be a monitor and help out and it was a bell that was rung like an old town crier would ring. The monitor girl rang this bell and I didn't know what it was, I thought it was time to run out of the showers, so that's what I did. I ran out and Miss Robertson grabbed me. She leathered my bare backside with her hand because I wasn't supposed to be coming out of the showers. My sister, [REDACTED], was there and she started screaming and shouting at Miss Robertson.
63. It wasn't until a couple of days later, when we were in our dormitory, that [REDACTED] told me I had a bruise on my bum. You could actually see Miss Robertson's handprint on my bum, the actual marks of her fingers were on my bum. I didn't know why she did that, I didn't think I'd done anything wrong. All I did was think I was supposed to be getting out of the showers.
64. I remember Miss Robertson coming up to our room once, I don't know what I'd done wrong, but she dragged me out the dormitory and put me outside in the corridor. She

made me stand there, with this other girl, facing the wall. I remember it was really cold standing in the corridor.

65. I remember being out on a long walk once, walking down to the 'rocky bridge' and we saw a wee stoat on the ground that was dying. ██████████ loved animals, every animal was God's creature in her eyes, and she asked Miss Robertson and Miss Fletcher if we could stop and try to save the creature. Miss Robertson was horrible in the way she spoke to ██████████, saying it was gone and it was God's will for it to die. She was screaming that in ██████████'s face.
66. ██████████ got really upset about it but the way Robertson and Fletcher were with her was horrible, they just told her to move along, they had no compassion or empathy and told her to leave it to die.
67. Miss Robertson and Miss Fletcher were just so cruel. I witnessed them hitting other kids all the time, for no reason at all. Pulling hair and slapping girls happened every day. The only time that no child really got hit was when we were outside, as in, going on the long walks into the village and things like that. The teachers would put us in pairs, and we would walk two by two. When we were on those walks, away from the building, there wasn't much violence from what I can recall. That was when I felt the safest.
68. I remember Miss Robertson once coming into our dormitory and asking me to come downstairs with her. She took me downstairs into a room where there were lots of adults; men, and some women, that weren't part of the school.
69. Miss Robertson introduced me to this man who was really nice to me. I can't remember his name but I do remember exactly what he looked like. He had fair hair, he was very well spoken, he was of stocky build, not fat, and he was wearing a beige tartan checked suit with a waistcoat. He also wore circular rimmed glasses. He asked me my name and I remember telling him my name. He had a gold pocket watch that I was fascinated by because it was all gold and shiny. He showed me it and opened it up and I could see the wee clock thing. I don't know why I was there, I don't remember

anything after that and I don't remember going back to my bed. I do remember the man smoked a pipe and he was drinking brandy.

70. Years later, my uncle gave my dad a pipe for Christmas and when my dad lit it, it just took me straight back to Fornethy and that man in that room. The reason I know it was brandy was because a boss of mine once gave me a drink of brandy and the smell of that took me straight back to that same smell, in that room at Fornethy.
71. There were other men there in the room, they were all laughing and there were some teachers there as well. As far as I remember they were all drinking alcohol and there was lots of laughter, that's something I remember. I was the only one from my dormitory that was in that room at that time and that's the only time I can remember anything like that happening to me.
72. I actually thought I'd done something wrong when Miss Robertson came and took me away because some of us did get taken out of the dorms at night, for a number of things, like being told to stand in the corridor as a punishment. If you spoke or giggled or wet the bed at night then she would come in, take girls out and make them stand in the corridor. Miss Fletcher and Miss ^{PWH} did that as well.
73. I spoke to my sister, [REDACTED], about that when I was about eight or nine but she didn't recall ever being taken into any room. I didn't talk to any other girls about it or hear about it happening to any other girls. The teachers were always very strict about who you could and couldn't speak to anyway.

Other abuse

74. Another incident I recall was one of the teachers hitting a girl with a carpet beater thing. The girl was older, she might have been a monitor and she hadn't done something right and got smacked across the back with it by the teacher.
75. Miss ^{PWH} was a teacher who was always around and I remember she was nasty with her words towards the girls. I don't have much memory of her other than that, and

her having a horrible laugh. She didn't hit me, but I know she did hit children; I just don't recall any specific incidents. I remember she would laugh at me, she laughed at me whenever I got upset about my mum. She was verbally abusive to all the girls. If anyone asked her anything she was just horrible to you. She was very cruel. She would laugh at kids who were being hurt by other teachers, there was no remorse.

76. Miss PWH had short straight dark hair, like a bob. She was thin in build and had more of a softer appearance than Miss Robertson. She wasn't very attractive or pleasant to the eye and reminded me of the witch from the 'Wizard of Oz' film.
77. As far as I can recall virtually all the teachers at Fornethy were abusive towards the children. I can only think of one who was really nice and I can't even remember her name. She didn't shout and would always try to be nice to everyone. She let me take a book home. I remember it was called 'Chicken Licken'. She told me I could take it home so long as I didn't tell anyone.
78. When you see that kind of abuse and it happens a lot it becomes normalised and you just accept that it's part of what this is.
79. My recollection of Fornethy is that there wasn't just the backwater reservoir but there was also a lake of some kind. I was convinced there was a lake as I remember getting taken to a lake and there was another girl there. It was dark, so probably at night, and I had my pants on but nothing on my top half. I remember getting something smothered over the top of my bare chest. It was like a red sticky jelly or jam that was put on me. I don't know who took me there or who rubbed the stuff on me. I don't know why that happened, I've never understood why I was taken there.
80. I know that was from when I was at Fornethy because I went back there, a few years ago, with my daughter. It was the first time since I was five and I went back because I had to find that lake. My daughter found the lake and shouted at me through the woods that she'd found it. When I got to the lake it took me right back. That was confirmation for me but I was also so confused, it kept making me wonder why was I there? Why was I taken there? And I wasn't the only girl that was there either. I remember another

girl was there and she was wearing a light pink nightdress with a wee frilly bit at the bottom. That's all I remember.

81. I have no idea why I was there, or who took me and I can't remember any adults who were there. I actually thought it was my imagination and I was making it all up until I went back after all those years. It was all too real and vivid to be part of my imagination. I have asked [REDACTED] about it but she doesn't remember the lake at all.

Leaving Fornethy

82. I remember leaving Fornethy and all the girls cheering on the bus. All the older girls pulled down their pants and showed their bums to the teachers and domestic staff as the bus drove off and all of us were cheering and clapping and laughing. Miss Fletcher and Miss Robertson were there. It was such a relief to be leaving and going home.

Life back at home

83. My sister [REDACTED] was like a second mum to me. She looked after me when my mum was sick but when we got back from Fornethy she had left home. I believe she had a fight with my dad and had left home.
84. After that it was me, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] at home with my dad. [REDACTED] had married and was away by then as well. [REDACTED] then got married but she was only living downstairs from us.
85. So it was me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and after a while my dad started to get quite bad with the drinking. He became a bit of an alcoholic and would sometimes get violent and aggressive towards all of us. I think a lot of that was to do with losing mum.
86. There was a lot of resentment towards me with my dad because I looked like my mum. He sort of blamed my mum for dying and leaving us all, and there was a lot of

resentment towards me because of that. He was a good man when he was sober and he did do what he could for us. He always did his best to make sure there was food on the table.

87. My dad got worse with the alcohol from when I was seven, eight and nine and then his health got quite bad. He smoked a lot as well, he got angina and he had four or five heart attacks before he passed.
88. I found my dad the day he died. It was just after my 13th birthday, so [REDACTED] 1985. I remember my sister [REDACTED]'s husband, [REDACTED], slapped me on the face that day and told me not to make a fool of myself, because I was so upset after finding my dad.
89. I then had to move in with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and he started sexually abusing me. When he was abusing me I got involved in sniffing gas. The police then caught me sniffing gas one day and the social work got involved.
90. I was put into an Intermediate Treatment Group (IT Group) and it was when I was attending that group that I disclosed to the social work what [REDACTED] was doing to me. The IT Group was a group of children from all different children's homes.
91. I went to school the next morning and the social work arrived and took me straight to the police station to give a statement. That night I was taken into care.
92. [REDACTED] wasn't prosecuted and he's no longer with us now. He was murdered around 2000.

Fairfield Children's Home, Pollokshields, Glasgow

93. The first place I was taken to was Fairfield Children's Home in Pollokshields. That was under a three week place of safety order.

94.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Creagdhù Children's Home, Pollokshields, Glasgow

General

97. I'm sure I went to Creagdhù in [REDACTED], aged fourteen, and I was there about a year and a half, as I left when I was sixteen.

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Leaving Creagdhu

166. I was eventually called to a Children's Panel and I told them I was leaving Creagdhu and going to London. I was sixteen then. They wanted me to try a youth hostel so they took me to a place called the Blue Triangle in Govan.

167. I was at the Blue Triangle for about two hours when I saw one of the guys in the place pull out a needle and inject himself, so I ran away from there. I went to Pollock after that and sought refuge with a friend of my mum.

168. I did go back to Creagdhu for a short time. Then I left for good [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Secondary Institutions - to be published later] I was sixteen when I left Creagdhu.

169. [Secondary Institutions - to be published later]
[Redacted]

Life after being in care

170. When I left Creagdhu, I remained under supervision, and the social work were still very much involved in my life. They allowed me to go down to London, with a friend, for a while. My pal didn't want to be there because her boyfriend was in Glasgow so we came back.

171. I was then put in a homeless unit place for a while, somewhere in Possil. I was then moved to Castlemilk, where I was very lonely and isolated. I was then given a furnished flat in Priesthill. I then got my own official house through the housing at Glasgow City Council in Nitshill. All those moves were over the period of about six months.

172. I had no idea that when you leave care, to set up a home, you are supposed to get support. [RNJ] and [RMB], my social workers, did come to my house when I moved to Nitshill in Glasgow but they didn't give me any support. They told me I wasn't entitled to anything, that was where I'd have to stay, like it or lump it.

173. I was raped when I was living in that house in Nitshill, and I told [RNJ] and [RMB] about that, but they didn't believe me. They more or less said that I was asking for it and seeking attention. I didn't report that.

174. I then went to the nuns in Pollok to get bedding and things like that just to help me out. I didn't want to be in the house in Nitshill because I was raped there and I ended up

going to stay with a guy who I started a relationship with. That was when I cut all ties with the social work. My personal involvement with the social work ended when I was seventeen.

175. That guy was 29 and I was 17 which wasn't great, but I stayed with him and we had two children together. We split up and got back together several times and I moved around between Pollok and Parkhead.

176. I went on to do various jobs, started a new relationship, which resulted in the birth of my third daughter, and since then my life has revolved around her.

Impact

177. With Fornethy I remember coming away from there and just not trusting women, I was very cautious of women. I didn't know why at the time, I couldn't register why, but I know now.

178. I felt abandoned. My mum had died and left me then I went to this place where the teachers abused me. Then I came back home, my sister [REDACTED] had fallen out with my dad, and she'd left. I just felt abandoned and even now that's how I feel.

179. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

180. I have been subjected to the whole grooming process. Looking at the bigger picture, whatever happened to me at Fornethy, that I don't remember, and what happened to me with my brother-in-law, which I do remember, was all part of a grooming process.

181. I used to get a lot of flashbacks and a lot of nightmares. Not so much now, as I think I've processed it a lot more now. I used to have flashbacks and things I didn't

understand, things that I thought were dreams, but then I'd realise it wasn't a dream, it was real, and I was remembering it.

182. My time in care also had a massive impact on my education. It's only now, through me processing everything, that I can see that I deserve a career. That's why I'm now studying criminology and law.
183. My faith has changed. I became more spiritual than religious. I look more to the spiritual element of life rather than to follow God, Jesus, Allah, Buddha or whatever. I just believed there was a higher power. It was more of a self-development rather than to follow the teachings of a bible or something like that.
184. I would say there has also been impact on my parenting. I don't have a great relationship with my eldest daughter and I don't really get to see my grandson. I was a child having children and I was a very messed up child having those children. So there was a lot of aftermath of what happened to me, that I didn't realise I was instilling into my children. I wasn't the greatest of mothers.
185. I was very overprotective with my girls. My sisters and family would tell me I needed to let the girls go out and have a life. I needed to give them a bit more leeway, and I did, which I'm glad about because they are a bit more streetwise now. My youngest one was the one I protected the most though, she has been mollycoddled. She wasn't allowed out after certain times, she wasn't allowed to travel far from the street and I had trackers on her phones. That's not a great thing to do with your child. She's moved out now, due to all of that, so there has been a massive impact on my kids.
186. Ten years ago my sister [REDACTED] told me that our brother-in-law, [REDACTED], who sexually abused me, had been sexually abusing her as well. She never told anyone about that and basically let me go off into care. She never spoke up, just the same as she did at Fornethy. [REDACTED] and I don't speak now. The last time I spoke to her was two years ago at my sister [REDACTED]'s funeral.

Treatment/support

187. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
188. I was also referred to a psychologist after I'd left care and was living with the father of my children but as I didn't trust anybody, I've never trusted authority or anybody in power, I didn't go to see them.
189. As an adult I have seen a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) at the Rossdale Centre and I was referred to Dr Ian Connor from the Anchor by Future Pathways in 2023. I spoke to him and was then referred to [REDACTED]. I went to [REDACTED] for psychology treatment and actually ended up becoming a mentor. I went on to do a six month training SVQ for a mentorship. I was then supporting others who have been through Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) mentoring them and helping them.
190. It was very similar to the voluntary work I did with Victim Support Scotland. I did that for three years. I got to meet Princess Anne through that. I travelled all over Scotland and I was nominated for two awards, two years running. That was very rewarding for me because I could be there for someone when no one was there for me.
191. I would say most of my therapy is through my own self psychology.

Reporting of Abuse

192. In 2020 I saw an item on the STV news about Fornethy. They were asking for anyone who had been at Fornethy to contact the police. It really shocked me and brought everything back and I felt I had to get in touch.
193. I then spoke to the police in November 2020. It was a Detective called Carol Bruce that came to speak to me. I provided her with a statement covering all the abuse I suffered and witnessed at Fornethy. That included the incident where Patricia Robertson took me downstairs and introduced me to the man with the pocket watch. I don't know what investigation, if any, was ever done in relation to that incident.
194. I was traumatised when the police came to my house and took my statement. I spent most of the time sobbing, as talking about everything just brought it all back. I found that very difficult.
195. It wasn't until about 2024 that I received a letter from the prosecution saying I was going to be giving evidence against Patricia Roberston. I then attended the High Court in Glasgow in 2025 and gave evidence as a prosecution witness, in the case against her.
196. That actually surprised me as I didn't feel I had strong evidence, not from what I now know. Since the case, I have learnt there were other women whose evidence was a lot stronger than mine yet they didn't get to court. I couldn't understand that.
197. I think seven witnesses were found not proven, I was one of them. I do believe that had my sister [REDACTED] gone to the police we would have got a conviction but she didn't give a statement. I believe Patricia Robertson was found guilty on eighteen charges.
198. Patricia Robertson got eighteen months' probation and is on a restriction of liberty order from 3pm until midnight. She's not allowed to work with children anymore either. She is seventy-seven now so I wouldn't think she will be working with children.

199. Myself and other witnesses weren't happy with the sentence and I did call a meeting with the Crown Office to express my concerns over the sentence. I was told, initially, that there was going to be an appeal but I don't believe that's happening now as it's been compared to other evidence from other cases and basically what she got will now stand. Another injustice, but what can you do?
200. I also had a meeting with John Swinney and Humza Yousaf, they were the ones that referred me to the Redress Scheme, opened doors, and helped me with that. I did get a payment and a letter of apology from Fornethy. I gave the money away but I kept the letter.

Records

201. John Swinney and Humza Yousaf were also very helpful when it came to getting my records. I managed to speak to them and when I did they told me they were there to listen, they heard me, they believed me and they were going to help me. They put me on to Birthlink and Future Pathways and helped me seek out support like that. I'm really grateful to them. If it wasn't for them I don't know where I'd be now.
202. When I got my records I saw the bigger picture of things. I saw exactly what the social workers had thought about me and said about me.
203. There was record of some of the complaints and allegations I'd made to the social work when I'd been in care. The social work responses were that I was an attention seeker, that I was a spoilt child that liked to get my own way and that I would go to any lengths to get exactly what I wanted.
204. There was no follow up ever made and no notes of any action that was ever taken. I was never believed. It was the same with the police. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Lessons to be learned

205. The most important thing is that children need to be listened to. Even if something seems farfetched children should be listened to. There is truth in them. It can be done right this time and a standard can be set for future generations so they don't have to go through what we went through.
206. A big thing for me was the negligence of my social workers, RNJ [REDACTED] and RMB [REDACTED]. It was what they didn't do because I reported so much to them and they never did a thing, there was never any follow up, there was just nothing.
207. RMB [REDACTED] was my social worker and her job was to support me. There was an occasion she actually went and got another girl to come and talk to me when I was in the process of taking my own life. I actually knew the other girl, she was from another home, but I couldn't believe RMB [REDACTED] had turned up with her. I couldn't work out the logic behind that at all. Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED]
Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED] She actually went and got another child to come and talk to me. That was her solution; to have a child talk to a child. It's crazy.

Hopes for the Inquiry

208. There has to be an awareness of what exactly did happen and the fact that it's lodged. So many people now know about Fornethy, because so many people have come forward Secondary Institutions - to be published later [REDACTED].
209. If people like us don't come forward then how are people going to know and understand the exact level of abuse that went on and how it can change now.

210. Kids need safeguarded. Back then there was no safeguarding or Great Britain Data Regulation (GBDR) protection or anything like that. Now it is a lot better and hopefully that will only continue to improve.

Other information

211. After I had been taken into care the social work got their hands on my wee brother [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] had his issues and they removed him from my older brother, [REDACTED]'s house, and put him into care as well. [REDACTED] had been living with [REDACTED] after our dad died.

212. [REDACTED] was in a few institutions, including Beith and Kerelaw, and bad things happened to him as well. I know [REDACTED] reported things to his social workers as well and nothing was ever done. [REDACTED] ended up in prison, on drugs and then he died of a drug overdose.

213. 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..... RLW [REDACTED]

Dated..... 8th May 2026