

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PFE

1. My name is PFE. My maiden name, and the name I was known by when I was at Fornethy House, was PFE. My date of birth is 1960. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going to Fornethy

2. My father's name was . He was born on 1928. My mother's name was . Her maiden name was . She was born on 1930. I have two older sisters. There is quite a big gap between my sisters and me. was born on 1950. was born on 1951. I was born at Rottenrow Maternity Hospital in Glasgow. My older sisters left the household prior to the time I went to Fornethy. One had married and the other had gone into nursing. In a way, by 1971, I was like an only child with my parents.
3. My parents were decent working people. Looking back, it was a nice home with good parents and nice holidays. I had everything I needed and was taught right from wrong. I learnt from my parents how to speak properly and how to respect people. I didn't come from an abusive home or anything like that. It was a very loving household. I can't say that there were any social problems in my family or in my house at all.
4. When I was younger we lived in Easterhouse which is located to the east of Glasgow. At that time it wasn't considered a deprived area but it was starting to get

that way. I went to Blairtummock Primary School in Easterhouse. In 1970 my whole class, with the teacher, went for a whole month to a residential place called Galloway House which was to the south of Wigton in Dumfries and Galloway. Secondary Institutions -

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

5. Around that time I had a friend called [REDACTED]. She came from what would have been regarded back then as a dysfunctional family home. She came from a single parent family and they didn't have a lot in their house. I was aware of that at the time. She said that she was going to "the resi" and that I could go too. The way she described it was much in the same way as Galloway House. Because of that I thought that it was the same sort of thing. I don't remember anybody saying anything bad about Fornethy House at that time. I don't remember anyone else from my school who had been or were going to go.
  
6. I then started asking my mum repeatedly whether I could go. To begin with my mum was reluctant to let me go. I think that was because she didn't want me to go away for longer than a month. After I pestered her for some time she ultimately agreed. I don't remember her having any concerns. It was a different time back then. I don't remember my dad saying anything to me about it. The only thing I remember him saying before I went was "don't let anybody use your hairbrush."
  
7. [REDACTED] was then pulled out of going by her mum. I'm not aware of what the reason was behind that. I don't remember how long before I went that the decision was made. It wasn't anything like on the day I went itself. It might have been as much as two or three weeks before. Even with that I decided that I was going to go anyway. In my head I thought it was going to be like the Enid Blyton book "In the Fifth at Malory Towers."
  
8. I think it would have been the school who was initially approached for me to go but I don't know what the procedure was after that. I think they provided a form to allow you to go but I can't be certain. I don't remember anyone from my school speaking to me about Fornethy before I went. As far as I know there was no contact between

Fornethy and my parents or myself before I went. There must have been something sent telling us what we should take though because I remember taking a suitcase.

9. The only thing I remember is there being a medical before I went. I remember going for my medical with my mum. I think that was done in a Glasgow Health Board medical centre. It was possibly done in a place in The Gorbals where the nautical college is located now. The only other place I can think that it was done was in Woodside Medical Centre in Maryhill. It could be that I am mixing that up from a time I went for a medical prior to another trip I made in later life. I don't know whether I had to attend the medical because I had had a shadow on my lung when I was younger and I needed a check up to go or whether it was for something else. From the medical I assume there was a letter provided saying I could go.
10. On the day I went I was taken by my mum to Bothwell Street in Glasgow to a place that looked like a big Education Department office. We waited in there until a bus or coach came to get me. I don't remember there being other children congregating to be collected. I think there were only a handful of girls on the coach that went with me that day. It wasn't a coach full of thirty kids or something like that.

### **Fornethy House, Kilry, Angus**

11. I went to Fornethy on one occasion only. I'm not absolutely sure when I went there but I think it was about [REDACTED] 1971 for about five weeks. I was definitely eleven years old, it was after the school holidays at my primary school and it was before [REDACTED] time. It could have been around the half term time during [REDACTED] term.
12. I had no idea where I was at the time but I have since learnt more about the location of Fornethy House. It was a few miles away from a town called Alyth. It was near a reservoir which I think was called Blackwater Reservoir. The house and grounds were located in quite thick woods quite high up in the countryside. It was surrounded by farmland overlooking what I now know to be Glen Isla. To walk to Fornethy

House you had to follow a path all covered in stones on a hill called The Stoney Brae.

13. I had never heard of Fornethy until I went there. However, I am pretty sure that I knew that Fornethy had something to do with Glasgow Corporation or the Glasgow Education Department. I thought that they ran it back then. That has been confirmed to me since. I remember there being quite a few of these residential places. I remember there was one down in Dunoon and another in Castle Toward. They were all over the place. I had an awareness of these places before I went to Fornethy but I never heard anything bad said about them.
14. In adult life I learnt a little bit more about the house. It was originally owned by the hugely wealthy Coates Paton sisters who were from the Paisley area. Fornethy House was one of their summer retreats. When they died it was given over to the benefit of the children of Paisley. I wasn't from Paisley so seemingly its use must have been opened up to children from other areas later on.

#### *Layout of Fornethy*

15. The house was a big old white rendered house. I have a memory of a round turret staircase that was almost like a main entrance. I think that when the building was a house that might have been the grand entrance that was used. On the ground floor was either one or two dining rooms which contained big round tables. The rooms were oak panelled. There was a cloakroom with benches and coat hooks in it like you would have in a school. That is where we would all sit to get on our outdoor clothes and wellies. The shower room was located on the ground floor near the cloakroom but further down the corridor. There might have also been a classroom but I don't have clear memories of that. The bedrooms, or dorms, were upstairs but I couldn't say how many there were. There was a bathroom containing two baths also on that floor. There was a playground but I don't remember anything being in it.

### *Staff structure*

16. All the staff were women. I have no recollection whatsoever of there being any men either working inside the house or outside in the grounds. The staff members' roles varied between them either being a teacher, in charge or auxiliary type people who worked making the food or doing the washing and the cleaning.
17. I don't remember there being a lot of staff at all which I find strange. I only remember there being a few people, maybe two or three authority figures. Looking back I don't know how that number of people could have looked after that number of children twenty four seven. I don't know how they managed that, whether that was through rota shifts or through living there. I don't remember staff living on site but they must have. We would never have seen where the staff lived or slept if they did live there. I imagine that they would have lived there because Fornethy House was quite far away from anywhere else.

### *Staff*

18. Mrs Fletcher is the only staff member who I remember by name. She was either the headmistress or the most important person there. She was definitely the boss of everybody there. I don't remember her specific duties. All I remember is that she was someone to be feared and that you had to sit up straight whenever she was around. I think she had blonde or fair hair. She either had short hair or wore it up. I think she was in her early forties. I don't remember her wearing a uniform. I don't remember having anything like a conversation with her.

### *The children at Fornethy*

19. There would have been at least forty girls there. The age range would have been from about six years old up to about eleven or twelve years old. There was nobody of secondary school age. It was definitely the case that over the time I was there children would leave. You didn't all come and go at the same time. Every week some children would come and go.

20. I don't remember anyone else from my class or from my school being there when I was there. The strange thing is that I don't really remember any of the other children who were there at the same time as me. I can't picture anyone. I don't remember playing with anyone else or being friendly with anyone else. The only person I remember is a wee girl who was in the bed next to me in my dorm.
21. I knew back then that the other children hadn't come to Fornethy as "bad children." There was nothing like that. I knew that they had come because they didn't ever get a holiday or their mum was sick. I realised that this was what these places were about at that time. It was all to put the country air into city girls' lungs. That wasn't my background but that was how I thought about the background of the girls back then and now.

### **Routine at Fornethy House**

#### *First day*

22. They must have greeted us and taken us to our rooms when we arrived but I can't remember anything surrounding that. I think we only went into the building using the main entrance on the first day that I was there because I don't remember using it again. I have a vague memory of being told that we weren't supposed to use it over the five weeks I was there. The rest of the time we must have used another door.

#### *Daily routine*

23. I don't remember how we were woken up. We went down to breakfast together after getting ready. You wouldn't have just wandered down like you were in a hotel. We all went down together. We had breakfast in the dining hall then were told to gather in the cloakroom area to get ready for going outside. During the day we went on walks. I remember we would sit in the cloakroom waiting before we went to bed at

night to get showered and changed. I remember sitting down there, singing songs and waiting for our Ovaltine and bread and butter.

### *Sleeping arrangements*

24. I slept in a dorm. The dorms had names but I don't remember what they were. I think mine was on the first floor and on the left hand side of a corridor. When you went into my dorm my bed was the second one on the left. The beds were like hospital type white metal beds. I think there were maybe about twelve children in the dorm I was in. It was mixed ages. I remember that the girl next to me was either really younger than me or really small. I can't remember her name. She was a tiny wee blond girl. She cried all of the time. I remember that after they turned the lights out at night they turned on wee blue night lights in the corridors and they left the bedroom door open. I think staff patrolled at night.

### *Washing / bathing*

25. When you first arrived you were made to have a bath. The room with the baths in it was on the first floor. There were two old free standing baths. Two children were bathed separately in each bath at the same time. Up until that point I had never had a bath with another person in the room bathing at the same time as me. After getting into the bath there were two auxiliary staff members who stood either side of the bath. The women then proceeded to wash me as if I was an infant. I remember them saying "oh you're tall, you've got a broad back, you'll be a policewoman." I remember thinking that I would never be a policewoman. I was dead mad at that. I had some tan marks from where I had had a swim suit on during a holiday my family had been on to Spain. One of the women said "you've got sunny burn marks, where have you been?" and I told them that I had been to Spain. I remember them laughing when I said that. I knew as soon as I said that that I shouldn't have. Another comment they made was surrounding me not developing or not having "boobs." I was mortified when they said that.

26. After I had the bath I was given a wee red tin of Gibbs toothpaste. I'd never used that before. You had to use that throughout your time there. I find that strange because I know that my mother would have packed everything for me. She would have made sure that I would have had all the toiletries that I needed. However, I don't remember using anything that my mother would have sent with me.
27. I don't remember having a bath other than on my first day. The rest of the time we had showers. Showers were had at night time. I think that happened in the evening but I don't know how often that was. We would line up outside of the room waiting our turn. There were cubicles but I can't remember whether there were curtains on them. It wasn't like one big communal shower like you would see at a swimming pool. As one girl came out the next one would go in. There was a teacher standing there making sure that happened. I don't remember whether we were provided with soap but we must have been. I remember that when we went for showers I noticed that there were some girls who were already in puberty. I wasn't at that stage when I was eleven and I remember finding that quite shocking.

*Mealtimes / food*

28. We all ate together in a dining room for breakfast and lunch. I think we got a lighter thing in the evening before bedtime. That was something like white bread and butter and an Ovaltine. I don't remember getting excess food or being underfed. I don't remember being hungry or pigging out on sweeties in my dorm or anything like that. I don't remember what the quality of the food was like. There were teachers who looked after the dining room during mealtimes. I'm pretty sure that the teachers ate with us and were present in the room because of that. One of them would have been Mrs Fletcher.
29. One of the big things was that the staff expected you to eat whatever you were given. The staff would stand over us and tell us that we weren't allowed to leave until everything was eaten. I remember other children crying because of that. I remember children just making themselves eat things and it all coming out again.

They weren't force fed by the staff it was more they stood over them. All the other children would be sitting around the table waiting.

30. I don't remember being made to eat the food they provided. I don't remember it being such a big issue for me because I always liked my food. I was the kind of kid who liked school dinners. I do remember never really being given porridge before and it was something that I had never liked before. I remember having to finish the porridge. I couldn't eat porridge for twenty years after I went to Fornethy.

#### *Chores*

31. I don't remember doing any chores but I think we had to make our bed.

#### *Clothing / uniform*

32. One of the first things that they made you do when you arrived was put on this pinnie type thing. It was like an old fashioned Laura Ashley floral type apron. Everybody had to wear that over their clothes indoors. That's basically what you wore all of the time indoors.
33. If you were outdoors you wore your own coat over your own clothes. I don't think you were allowed to wear trousers. I don't ever remember wearing trousers. I seem to remember that we had to wear skirts when we went out for walks. I think they provided the wellies because wellies weren't something I would have usually worn. Back then wellies were seen as being what the poor kids wore. I would've worn proper boots. I remember the wellies rubbing on my legs during the walks outside.
34. I don't remember anything surrounding clothes being washed or what the facilities were for that. I know that my mother threw away all of my clothes when I returned. I don't know why she did that.

*Possessions / pocket money*

35. I took a bag with me with things in it. I think you had something like a hospital locker to put your stuff in. Your outdoor coats, and things like that, were put in the cloakroom downstairs. I have a feeling that my parents sent in magazines and parcels with treats for me. I think the staff held onto those things when they were sent in because not everybody would have got that. I'm pretty sure that they placed them into some sort of communal type thing for all the children but it could be that we just didn't get what was sent in. I think they were trying to avoid the difficulty of some children getting treats and other children not.
36. I think my parents sent in postal orders. The staff took the postal orders that were sent in then gave us pocket money out of them later on. When we went to the shop in Alyth we were given money to buy sweeties. You had enough money to go into the shop and buy two quarters of loose sweets. You were supposed to buy those so you had something to have when you watched the movie that was shown on Saturdays.

*School*

37. There had to have been some sort of conversation with my school about continuing my school work whilst I was at Fornethy. I don't remember any conversations like that with my teachers before I went. Because that didn't happen it makes me think that I must have been there during some sort of term break. I don't clearly remember any classrooms but there could have been. I don't remember ever being taught any lessons. I don't remember receiving any form of education. I don't remember making anything, drawing, arts and crafts or anything like that.

*Leisure time*

38. I don't remember anything like a recreation room or playing indoors. There was nothing like the things kids would do now like drawing or painting. On Saturdays we were shown a movie but I can't remember where that was shown. It could have

been in the dining room. I don't remember any activities being put on whatsoever. I don't remember playing rounders or skipping ropes or any of that.

39. I don't remember a library or anything like that. I was really into books back then. The only thing that came close to anything positive was when we sang. That's about the only thing that made me happy there. We would sit in the cloakroom and sing all these little songs. There were teachers there running it. Everybody had to sing during those times. I was always into singing as a child and I still remember the words to some of those songs now.

*Walking during the day*

40. I remember walking for hours and hours during the days I was there. Most of the time during the day was spent outside. We walked in twos in lines along country roads and through woods. I remember walking back and forth from Fornethy House to Blackwater Reservoir. I always remember seeing a sign at the reservoir that said it had been opened by Her Majesty the Queen. I remember walking across the reservoir wall there. I also remember walking to and from Alyth. The village had a little burn that ran through it, a little shop and a phone box. We would walk through that village and I would see the people who lived there looking at us as if to say "There's the Glasgow children." It was a horrible feeling.

*Religious instruction*

41. I can't remember anything surrounding religion or praying. Children were from lots of different schools and there wasn't a focus on any particular religion or religion at all. We had to go to the local church each Sunday. The church wasn't in a village. It was more like a country Church of Scotland church. I don't know whether it was only the Church of Scotland children who went to that or whether everybody had to go.

*Trips*

42. There were no other occasions where we were taken on trips anywhere. The only places we ever went to we walked to. It was places like Alyth or the Blackwater Reservoir. They were all within the periphery of the area.

*Birthdays*

43. I don't remembering anything surrounding birthdays being celebrated. There weren't any celebrations of anything.

*Letters*

44. We had to send our parents letters from Fornethy. I remember sitting down and being made to copy something off a blackboard to put in the letters we sent home. That's what makes me think there must have been some sort of classroom there. All the letters were read by the staff before they were sent. I think the staff were happy as long as you were writing something along the lines of "I am having a nice time." If you wrote something that they didn't like they would score it out and make you rewrite the letter.
45. We definitely got letters from home but I don't know how many. The staff there must have read the letters that came in. I think that because there was a time when one of the teachers commented on something in one of the letters they sent to me. I can't remember what the teacher's exact comment was but it surrounded my dad saying in the letter that I was not to let anyone use my hairbrush.

*Visits / Inspections*

46. I don't remember anyone from the outside ever speaking to me. I don't remember there being any visitors or outsiders coming into Fornethy.

### *Healthcare*

47. I remember getting cream rubbed into my legs following the wellies rubbing on them during the walks. It was Germoline or something like that. I think that was done in the cloakroom.

### *Running away*

48. I don't remember anyone running away during my time there.

### *Bed-wetting*

49. I didn't wet the bed however there was a big thing surrounding bed-wetting. It was treated as if it was a bad thing. If in the morning the staff found that a child had wet their bed they made them stand beside their bed. Those that hadn't wet their beds would go out for breakfast and those that had were left in. I think they eventually came down to breakfast later on. I don't know what the children who wet their beds were made to do after we left the dorm to go down for breakfast.

### **Abuse at Fornethy House**

50. The place wasn't a free for all. Everything was quite regimented. You didn't just wander about where you wanted. When you were out you were out and if you were inside, when you shouldn't have been, they would question that. When we talked we were told by the staff not to talk. There was near silence. I think that is why I remember everybody seeming to talk in whispers. I don't remember any playing and laughing or anything like that. I think the children weren't encouraged to be friends with one another.
51. I didn't appreciate it at the time but what the staff were carrying out was bullying. The rules and consequences for misbehaving certainly weren't read out to us. I've a strong recollection of fear, anxiety and being really lonely. You had that horrible

feeling of just waiting for something bad to happen. I think children just toed the line. I just remember that you didn't misbehave. You just didn't do that and did what you were told because you knew there would be consequences.

52. I felt that the staff put you down. They told you that you were "the poor kids from Glasgow" and that you had to shut your mouth. That's how I think about it when I reflect back on my time there. I often thought that I wasn't targeted as much as some of the other more vulnerable children. I was a big eleven year old and it was easier for them to pick on other girls. I think because I was older I was more able to pick up the rules and navigate through the ordeal than some of the other children there.
53. I think there were definitely hands put on children by the staff. No one was "battering lumps out of me every day." I don't ever remember being slapped or punched by anyone. However, I remember being pushed back into line on occasions when we were out walking. I think we saw a dead sheep or something like that and we were all pushed roughly to move on. I don't remember any other incidents with myself. I think children definitely got slapped across the head. I don't know why I think that other than having seen that happening. I know that happened but I can't remember specific incidents or the staff involved. I know I had a fear of being hit and that had to have been from somewhere.
54. I don't remember any staff members being particularly nice to me. I think the auxiliary staff might have been nice. I remember crying in bed at night but no one ever came to speak to me. There were children crying at night time all of the time. I think there was a bit of a hysteria phenomenon going on there. Nothing was ever done. I don't remember anyone ever saying to me anything like "are you happy here? Do you want to go home?" I remember being upset when children left because I wanted to go too. You were there, you were there for the stretch and that was it. It was like "don't greet for your mammy because she isn't coming to get you."

*Mrs Fletcher*

55. Mrs Fletcher was a presence. She was always just “there.” The day I arrived I was shown to my dorm then went down to the dining hall. When I went into the room I realised that I didn’t know where I should be sitting. I looked at a girl and she sort of said that I should sit with the other new girls. I must have then made a face like a grimace or something like that. At that time I had long hair made into a ponytail. The next thing I knew I was being dragged across the room by Mrs Fletcher by my hair. She had me bent double forward and dragged me whilst walking. She had my hair and was pushing me right down. She then threw me into a seat at another table. I was then told to sit down and shut up by her. It was painful, humiliating and I was in utter shock. That was done in front of the whole dining room of children. Nothing like that had ever happened to me in my entire life. I remember everybody staring at me, me being bright red and trying not to cry.
56. That night I lay in bed thinking “you’ve just got to do what they tell you and not make a fuss.” I decided from then on to keep my head down. That’s basically what I literally did. I was a shoe gazer for the next five weeks. I just avoided everything after that incident. I was all “yes Miss” and “no Miss.” I kind of just resigned myself to it.

*Unnamed female staff member*

57. There was another incident which involved a female staff member who I don’t remember the name of. It was a teacher but I don’t think it was Mrs Fletcher. One night the wee blonde girl who was in the bed next to me was crying. I don’t remember her name. She was about six years old but could have been older and have just been small. I reached out my hand across to her bed and she reached out her hand to me. She took my hand and I said to her that everything was going to be ok. She continued to cry and was asking for her mummy. The next thing I remember is a staff member coming into the dorm and pulling my bed clothes off of me and my bed. The bed clothes were also pulled off the wee girl’s bed. I was then dragged out in the corridor. The wee girl was discovered to have wet the bed so she

was stripped naked and put out into the corridor with me. The staff member then told us both to stand at various places in the corridor. I was there standing in my nightie in my bare feet and the wee girl stood there naked. The staff member then went away.

58. I don't know how long we were standing there whilst the staff member was away but it was definitely at least an hour. It could have been as much as two hours. I remember that the wee girl lay down on the floor and curled up into a ball in the foetal position. She couldn't stand up because she was shaking with the cold. I was too scared to go over to her and comfort her. I was too scared to sit down. After some time I started walking up the corridor. I could hear music coming from a radio or something like that and laughter and talking from a room nearby. I realised that there were a couple of people inside the room but I was too scared to go and tell them that we were still there and the wee girl was lying on the floor. I also thought that if we went back to our beds then things might get worse. I didn't know what to do.
59. The staff member that put us into the corridor then came out of the room where I could hear noises from. She shouted "what are you two children still doing here? Get back into bed." The wee girl and I then ran back into our dorm and got back into our beds. I think the wee girl went back to a wet bed and it wasn't sorted out until the morning.

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

60. I remember passing a phone box in Alyth and having a really strong urge to go in, reverse a call and call home. I knew how to do that because that was something that one of my older sisters used to do from her work. I would think "I'll just run in, reverse the call and get my parents to collect me." I wanted to do that both because of the incidents I experienced and because I was generally not having a good time. I was definitely homesick. Who wouldn't be under those circumstances?

61. I would think about calling but at the same time think that if my dad came in there would be a problem and that I might make my mother upset. I was too scared to do it because I didn't want to cause a big stooshie. I also remember thinking about how my parents would get to Fornethy because they didn't have a car. I didn't even know where the place was so I wasn't sure that they would be able to find the place. All the consequences were just too much so I didn't end up making that call.
62. I don't think we spoke to one another amongst the girls about what was happening. I think we were all ashamed. That was also part of why I never spoke to my parents about what happened. I was ashamed that I had wanted to go there and of what had happened to me. I felt helpless about it all.

### **Leaving Fornethy House**

63. At the end of the five weeks or so we were taken back on a coach to Glasgow. I don't remember anything surrounding the other girls on the coach with me or whether they were the same girls that arrived at Fornethy with me. The only recollection I have is hitting the outskirts of Glasgow and feeling happy and excited. I was also panicking, like all girls do at that age, that my mother wouldn't be there.

### **Life after leaving Fornethy House**

64. When I came back to Glasgow my mother came to meet me. My sister, [REDACTED], says she was there but I don't remember that. We went home from where I was dropped off in a black taxi. I don't know why we didn't get a bus or train because that was usually what we did when we travelled to and from the city centre. I remember being so anxious and just wanting to get home. I remember my mum asking how it was and I just said "fine." She didn't ask me anything more about it. In recent times my sister has said to me that she remembers that when we came back she saw my mother open my suitcase, lift all the clothes out and put them straight in a bin. I don't know whether to take from that that the clothes had been washed all wrong, they

smelt wrong or whether there was something else going on. I don't know why she did that but when I heard that I thought that it was a really strange thing for my mum to have done.

65. When I was eleven I sat the entrance exam for the selective schools in Glasgow. Because of that I went to Glasgow High School for Girls in the West End of Glasgow. That school later on became Cleveden Secondary School. I went straight into work rather than going to university. My first job was working in the offices in accounts at Wills Cigarette manufacturers. I worked there between the ages of seventeen and a half and twenty three. I then went on to be an air hostess. I had made a lot of friends during a part time job I had and one of my best friends had applied and encouraged me to do so too.
66. I flew for twenty four years with different airlines. I also worked on private jets. I later had a job working for the [REDACTED] royal family. I left aviation when my husband and I moved to Perth. I then went to work at [REDACTED] for eleven years. I was the manager for restaurant reservations and managed a team of hosts. I left there when we moved to Inverness. I then worked for a very short time with the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in their guest service centre. Since then I have been selling new build houses for [REDACTED] Homes and [REDACTED] Homes.

### **Impact**

67. Before I went to Fornethy I was the wee girl who would say "Yes Miss" and volunteer to help out teachers. I think after Fornethy I wasn't that wee girl any more. I held back and didn't say much. I would just shut down and not speak. I think the experience made me not ambitious and left me not wanting to "step up." I became someone who was quite cautious. It left me being quite reticent in my life. I look back on my life and think about so many things that I should have pushed more for. I did get promotions in a lot of my jobs but I never pushed for it. It just happened. I think a lot of that stemmed from not raising my head up.

68. If I am honest I wouldn't say that I have thought about Fornethy too much over the years. I've kind of just put it into the back of my mind. I never spoke to anyone about it because I knew that the people I would tell might be horrified. Many years later in adult life my husband and I had bought a house in Perth and were out driving in the country around Perthshire. Whilst we were driving I said that I felt I had been in the area before and asked him to drive down a particular road. All of a sudden it all came back to me and I realised we were driving towards Fornethy. My stomach started going round and was clenching inside me. It was horrible. I then said to him that I didn't like the place and I wanted to go home. I just had a horrible feeling inside of me.
69. I remember my husband being shocked about how I was but I wouldn't tell him why. Later on my husband showed me a house he was looking at in Alyth and I said to him that there was no way that I could ever live there. It was only many years later that I eventually told him about Fornethy when it started being reported about in the media. I remember he was shocked when I told him.

### **Reporting of abuse after leaving Fornethy House**

70. I never told my mother or anybody about the things that happened at Fornethy after I left there. I think I was scared that either my mother would say "you must have been doing something wrong" or that she might go straight into my school and create a fuss. I was also fearful that she would say that it was me who wanted to go there.
71. I never really told anyone anything about my time at Fornethy. I never spoke to the police or anyone else about what happened. I didn't speak to anyone at my school about what happened. I think my vanity would have stopped me speaking to anyone at school about it. I never spoke to anyone.
72. I was eleven but I knew better to not talk to anyone and treat it as if it was finished. I think my focus when I came back was being back at school, sitting exams to get to high school and going to the high school. I knew it was a bad memory and I decided

not to think about it again. It wasn't until Fornethy started to be reported about on the television that I started to think about things again. It was only then that I told my husband that I had been to Fornethy and what I experienced. I don't know how but after that I heard about the Inquiry and decided to research it. After researching the Inquiry I made the decision that I wanted to help.

### **Records**

73. I don't remember anyone making notes or have any recollection of anything being sent to my parents. I don't remember Fornethy ever being discussed in my house. It was never brought up. I have never seen any records in connection to my time at Fornethy. I would think there would be something in my medical records because I had a medical before I went to Fornethy. Likewise, I imagine there should be something in my school records because they would have needed to provide permission for me to go. However, I haven't seen anything. I'm not particularly interested in seeing whether there are any records.

### **Lessons to be learned**

74. When I was there I thought to myself this is the 'olden days'. I had come from a modern school and house and the place seemed to be a country place that hadn't changed all that much. It just seemed backward to me. It wasn't a kind place. I didn't feel comforted or I was there for any good purpose. I didn't feel like I was there to be educated or built up in any way. All they did was make us walk all of the time. I couldn't see what the end goal was further than getting children away from a bad family for a few weeks or to give parents a break.
75. I know it was a different time and different context but they should have cared for us. It is unimaginable now that someone would send children away for five or six weeks and not know what was happening to them. It seems to me that people were placing children into other people's hands just not knowing what was happening next. Looking back, there should have been more of an involvement between Fornethy

and your school and parents. I don't think it was about children being bad at school or anything like that. It was more family situations. However, I don't think they were there because of problems with their schools and contact could have been made there.

76. The staff shouldn't have had all of that control without any checks and balances being in place. I don't think that the staff had any training. I don't think there was any training or child psychology involved in the way they acted around the children. It was just a bunch of matriarchal type women running a school for, what they saw as, underprivileged kids. It was their way and that was it.
77. I would like to think that the things I experienced and the sort of place Fornethy was doesn't exist anymore. It shouldn't be the way we do things in a 21<sup>st</sup> century Scotland. The fact that a lot of these places closed down in the eighties makes me think that a lot of the lessons must have already been learned then. However, we should still listen to people and make sure that the same things don't happen again.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

78. I'm not sure what you can do about what happened in the past. If these staff members are still alive they would be in their nineties. To me it would be ridiculous to drag some ninety five year old woman out of a nursing home and try to prosecute them.
79. There were only a couple of things that happened to me. If there were other people who had been terribly abused there then I want to corroborate something they may have said. I am aware of other people who have come forward and tried to talk about what happened in all sorts of places and have not been believed. I want to help someone else be believed and support them with my evidence through coming forward.

80. There are some things that are just unacceptable. I hope that things could be brought to light so as people can have closure about what happened. I hope that the Inquiry will put an end to what happened and allow us to move on to a place where people won't be treated like children were at Fornethy.

81. 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..... PFE .....

Dated..... 26 May 2021 .....