

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

PGS

Support person present: No

1. My name is PGS. My date of birth is 1958. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My mum and dad are PGT and . Before my mum married she worked in chemistry research. My father had his Masters Ticket in the Merchant Navy and was away at sea nine months of the year. I didn't spend a lot of time with him or get to know him very well. I have one brother, , who is eighteen months older than me.
3. We lived in a flat in the south side of Glasgow and I had a happy childhood. I remember my father coming home from sea with his arms full of presents for us. He was like an out of season Santa Claus and it was great for a couple of weeks, but then he would disappear again. My parents' marriage broke down for various reasons and they divorced when I was about five. My mother was left to bring up two children on her own and I know it was very difficult for her. She wasn't getting any money from my dad so had to try and find a job where she could also look after us. My mum did a four year college course, followed by a further year to specialise in infant development, and became a primary school teacher.
4. My brother and I went to Annette Street Primary School in Glasgow and it was great. I enjoyed school and did really well. The head teacher was a Mrs Fisher. She knew

about our circumstances at home; that my mum was on her own. I believe my mum was studying for exams while at the same time trying to look after us and the house when Mrs Fisher suggested that my brother and I go to a residential school for six weeks to give my mum a break and to allow her to study. My mother agreed. [REDACTED] was supposed to go to - Seamill I think it was called - but that didn't work out because at the last minute he became ill and he stayed at home.

5. I hadn't come from a difficult background. There was no social work involvement with us and we were a very normal, reasonably well educated family. Apart from my parents divorcing there were no problems. My mum very occasionally 'lost the rag' with us but what mother doesn't when she has two children to bring up on her own.
  
6. I would have been seven when I remember going somewhere in Glasgow for a medical before I went to Fornethy. It was in the early part of the year, before [REDACTED]. My mum couldn't take me because she was at college so a neighbour and friend, [REDACTED], took me instead. It was a miserable, wet, cold day and we went to a clinic which was full of children. I remember the walls were painted a terrible green colour and the place smelled damp. The nurse eventually called us in and asked [REDACTED] lots of questions about my medical history. She asked me if I had had my BCG but I didn't even know what that was. I have a distinct memory of [REDACTED] being really exasperated because she was late for an appointment. She just rolled up my sleeve to show the BCG vaccination mark to the nurse.
  
7. My next memory is my mum taking me to Queen Street train station. We met a woman there who was dressed all in tweed, including a tweed hat and she was maybe about forty five. There were two or three other girls there who were about the same age as me. We all got on the train and it pulled away with my mum standing on the platform. This was the first time in my life that I had been away from home on my own and I started crying. The lady dressed in tweed was really nice and she took my hand. She told me not to worry and that I would see my mum in a few weeks. She said that in the meantime I was going to have a great wee holiday. I didn't think I was going for a holiday, I thought I was going to school. She had a wee bag of Edinburgh rock and she gave me a bit. It was the first time I had tasted it.

8. The train eventually got to Blairgowrie or whatever station it was and we got off. The lady in tweed disappeared and we were met by another woman. It might have been a minibus that took us to the school, but I can't remember exactly. The next thing I remember was arriving at Fornethy.

### **Fornethy House, Perth**

9. Fornethy was in Alyth near Perth. I was sent there in [REDACTED] 1966 when I was seven and a half. I knew I was only going to be there for six weeks. I am not sure if it was my mum or my teacher that told me this. I am not sure that I knew it was to enable my mum to study, and until I got there I was quite happy to be going. When I was there I was brainwashed into thinking that my mum had sent me there because she didn't want me. Mrs [REDACTED] LBD the [REDACTED] SNR often said this to me.
10. It was a huge house and it was beautiful. As far as I know it was built in the 1900s for the Coats' family who donated it in the 1950s to Glasgow Corporation. It had a long driveway leading up to it and there were woods round about it. Inside the front door was wood panelling and a curved staircase leading upstairs to the dormitories. There were at least three dormitories, probably more. Along from the dormitories was a room with sinks and toilets. There was another bathroom which had two or three huge baths. Downstairs were coat pegs where we hung all our outdoor clothes. There was a dining room somewhere and another large room with black and white linoleum on the floor in big squares.
11. There might have been fifty or sixty girls at Fornethy, possibly more, I am not sure. I just know there were lots of girls. No boys. The age range was from about five up to thirteen or fourteen. I was in Ogilvie dorm with about five other girls. I don't remember the names of any of the other girls.
12. The [REDACTED] SNR was a Mrs [REDACTED] LBD who was around retirement age I would say and had white hair. Mrs Fletcher was another of the teachers. She had reddish brown hair and was in her forties. The only other teacher I recall, whose name I can't

remember, but [REDACTED] god [REDACTED] comes into my mind when I think of her for some reason. She had black hair and was rather plump. PWH wasn't her actual name but when I am talking about this member of staff I will refer to her as PWH. There was a domestic lady in her fifties who was really nice. It was very strange because we weren't allowed to speak to the domestic staff and they weren't allowed to speak to us. There was a younger woman there latterly who I suspect was there as part of her teacher training. There would have been other teachers, maintenance staff and groundsmen of course, but I can't picture them.

13. My memories of Fornethy are quite fragmented and I can't give a detailed account of the daily routine from waking to bedtime. One thing I do remember vividly was the smell. There was an all pervading stench of carbolic soap and vomit. It sounds disgusting and it was.

### **Routine at Fornethy**

#### *First day*

14. When we arrived we were in the large entrance hall. Our suitcases were taken from us then we were taken upstairs to the bathroom. We were stripped and checked for lice then two or three of us at a time were put in baths. There were a few women domestics bathing us. The lady who dealt with me would have been possibly in her fifties. She had her hair in a net and was wearing white cotton overalls. I was scrubbed down with carbolic soap using a really rough cloth. When it was time to get out I stood on the rim of the bath to get down because it was so big. The woman grabbed my hand and shouted at me. I got a fright and the woman immediately apologised for shouting at me and explained that I could have slipped and hurt myself. She was very apologetic.
15. When this happened a teacher, Mrs Fletcher, was standing in the doorway. She called me over and as soon as I got to her she grabbed me by the wrist and beat the hell out of me.

16. That first night I lay in bed sobbing. One of the other girls in the dorm, who was about ten, came over and told me that I was just homesick and that I should shut up or that everyone in the dorm would 'get it'. I eventually fell asleep.

*Mornings and bedtime*

17. I can't remember who woke us up in the morning. Those who came from a 'decent background' and knew how to wash were left to get themselves up and ready for the day. I am not sure what help the others got but not much. We then went down for breakfast.
18. At bedtime we were left to our own devices to brush our teeth and get ourselves ready for bed. I am not sure what time bedtime was, but Mrs Fletcher was always there making sure we were getting ready. I wore my own nightie. Every night before bed we were given a glass of milk, which tasted funny, and a digestive biscuit and I would be out like a light.

*Mealtimes/Food*

19. All our meals were in the dining room. We sat at the tables and our food was brought to us. All the girls ate at the same time. Breakfast was porridge and the other meals were just typical school food. There was no choice. You had to eat everything on your plate otherwise you were made to eat it.

*Washing/bathing*

20. The only bath I had at Fornethy was on the first day that I arrived. After that I had showers. We didn't shower very often, maybe once a week. The showers were in cubicles along the wall but there was no curtain or door to afford any privacy. On the other wall was a wooden bench.

### *Clothing/uniform*

21. Almost all our own clothes were taken from us when we arrived. They gave us all flowery patterned pinafores which were worn over our own skirts and jumpers. The pinafores had cords that tied around the body and they stunk of carbolic soap and vomit. It was horrible. These were changed once a week. I can't remember if my skirt and jumper were ever washed. I am not sure but I think I wore my own coat when we were outside. There were coats there for the girls who came from poorer backgrounds and didn't have their own to wear.
22. My mum recently told me something that I told her not long after getting home from Fornethy, however I don't actually remember this. My mum came into the living room where I was quietly playing and out of the blue I told her that when I was at Fornethy they would only let me change my pants once a week and that I felt dirty. That was the only thing I ever said to her after I got home. Apparently I never mentioned anything else about Fornethy when I came back as I had emotionally shut down.

### *Daily routine / Leisure time*

23. I can't remember what we did most days but it seemed we were outside constantly. We were regularly taken out for walks. There were probably things to do outside like playing on swings and such like but I can't remember. I do remember spending the majority of my time playing round the roots of a huge tree. I never really made friends with any of the other girls.
24. Every weekend the staff would have parties in the evening. They showed us films and I remember seeing Bambi at some point. They would play records and the girls would dance. There were older people there but I don't know who they were. They must have been other staff members, but some of them may have come from outside. I vaguely remember the minister being there. I don't remember any men but there must have been. I remember sitting in a chair desperately trying to disappear into it and looking at the floor. I avoided making eye contact with any of the adults. I have no idea what I was frightened of, but I just wanted to remain invisible. I distinctly remember the song

'My boy lollipop' being played at these parties, and every time I hear it nowadays, it takes me right back to Fornethy.

### *Schooling*

25. Although it was supposed to be a residential 'school' I have no recollection of ever getting any academic lessons. None whatsoever. The only time I remember being in the classroom was on letter writing day. I don't remember being in the class at any other time.

### *Healthcare*

26. I don't recall there being any kind of nurse there. If you had anything wrong you queued up after dinner to see a woman who was a member of the domestic staff. I went to her when I had the cut below my ear. All she did was give me a dab of Germolene and that was it. It didn't help. I didn't see her for anything else. I didn't see a doctor or dentist at any time I was there.

### *Religious instruction*

27. Every Sunday we were marched to the local church. It was about a mile away. When we got there we weren't allowed in the front door like everyone else. We had to go in the back door. Apart from that, the minister from the local church would come in to Fornethy once or twice a week. He stood in front of us preaching and I am not sure why, but I didn't like him.

### *Personal possessions/Pocket money*

28. There was a cupboard under the stairs which was the tuck shop. There was a small desk with a chair behind it and LBD would sit there with a big ledger. You could buy things like comics and sweets on a Saturday morning. We would line up, LBD would consult her ledger and then give us however much pocket money she felt we deserved. Usually it would be tuppence or thruppence. This was money sent in by

parents in the form of a postal order. My mum told me later that every week she sent in a postal order for five shillings yet I was only getting tuppence or thruppence from it. They were obviously pocketing the money.

29. Since LBD had beaten me with her shoe in my first week, when I went into the tuck shop I always shook with fear when I saw her. One day she opened the ledger and told me I wasn't getting anything because my 'bitch of a mother' hadn't sent anything. She went on that my mother didn't want me and didn't care about me. That message was subtly reinforced by her and her teaching colleagues every day at every opportunity.
30. The night before I was leaving to come home we were allowed to go to the tuck shop to buy presents for our parents. LBD was there and she gave me a half crown, which I thought was amazing. I bought some sweets for my mum (but they didn't make it home because I ate them!).

#### *Bed Wetting*

31. I never wet the bed when I was at Fornethy. I heard stories about girls who did and how they were treated really badly. They were made to strip their beds and stand in the corridor all night. I didn't see this happen.

#### *Visitors*

32. I never got any visits when I was at Fornethy. I think it was the week before I left Fornethy we were all lined up on the stairs waiting to go and get our coats to go out. There was a commotion and I looked up to see a woman coming down the stairs. She was going nuts. She had a girl, presumably her daughter by the hand. This woman had a black beehive hairstyle, was wearing a leopard print coat (which I thought was terribly exotic) and high heels. She was swearing and shouting at somebody upstairs and was threatening to get the police. I was amazed that this girl's mum had come and had taken her out of Fornethy. It made me wonder how I could get a message to my mum to take me out, but I couldn't think of a way. Besides, I wasn't sure she would

since I'd been told so often by that time that my mum didn't care about me. This was the only time I saw an adult in there apart from the Fornethy staff.

### *External Inspections*

33. I never saw anyone visiting Fornethy who looked like they were there to inspect how it was being run. I was never asked, at any point, how I was getting on.

### *Family contact*

34. Once a week we had to write a letter home. The first time we did it there was a letter written on the blackboard. PWH told us that we were going to write home and we were to copy the letter from the blackboard. I was used to writing letters and stories and I thought the letter on the blackboard was just an example for the girls who didn't know what a letter should look like. I decided not to follow the example and I wrote my own. I was battered by LBD because of what I had written. Every letter after that started 'Dear Mummy, I love residential school' then would go on to thank her for the pocket money, etc., etc.

### *Discipline*

35. None of the staff ever sat down with me at any point and explained anything to me about discipline. I was never told what was expected of me or what was allowed and what wasn't.

### *Running away*

36. There was a time when we were all lined up ready to go out. I think I had been there around three weeks by this point. There were two girls in the line in front of me who were sisters. One of them was crying so I asked the other one what was wrong. She explained that they had already been at Fornethy for eight weeks and were supposed to be going home that weekend but they had just been told they were going to be there a further three months. When she said that my stomach turned over and I thought

there was no hope for me of getting out. I suspected the same thing was going to happen to me and I was going to be there for longer maybe forever. By that time I felt that I was in a prison and was in utter despair. After that happened I tried to escape.

37. Later that day they marched us up into the hills and there was snow on the ground up to my ankles. We had stopped on the top of the hill and were having a rest. Lots of girls were there but in my wee group there was me, I think the two sisters and another two girls one of which was younger. I suggested to them that we should run away and they all agreed. I said that we could go down the hill and hide in the heather and nobody would notice. There were only three of us that went down the hill and hid. I lay on my stomach in the snow. The other two girls gave up and went back to the group.
38. I was trying not to breathe then all I heard was the 'crump, crump' of PWH's boots coming through the snow down the hill. I didn't look up and just lay there. She stopped right in front of me wearing her boots and black ski pants. I tried to make some pathetic excuse that my coat got caught in the heather. She grabbed me and pulled me up to the top of the hill. She then beat me over my bare backside.
39. Once it was over we all just marched off as if what happened was perfectly normal behaviour. None of the other teachers did anything to stop her and I think they were all in on it. This was the only time I tried to run away.

### **Abuse at Fornethy**

40. The first day I arrived, when I stood on the edge of the bath to get out, the domestic lady shouted at me and grabbed me because she was worried I might fall and hurt myself. Mrs Fletcher was standing at the doorway and she called me over. As soon as I got to her she grabbed me by the wrists and swung me round. She then started beating the hell out of me and was telling me that I would never do *that* again. I don't even think I cried I was in such shock. I had barely been at Fornethy an hour when this happened. It wasn't soft blows, this was a real leathering with her hands.

41. One time we were in the showers and Mrs Fletcher was there. We were all going about with no clothes on. One girl was about fourteen because I remember she was starting to develop. Mrs Fletcher was smiling for once and appeared to be in a good mood - very unusual. She had a big pile of towels beside her. She smiled at me then beckoned me over to her. As soon as I got to her she grabbed me, threw me over her knee and started thrashing me for absolutely no reason. She hit me on the bare backside. I had no idea why. I assume she felt like thrashing a child and I just happened to be in her line of sight. She didn't say why she was doing it.
42. At the very first letter writing class in the first week I was there, I mentioned in the letter to my mum that I didn't like Fornethy. The teachers hit us and I wanted her to take me home. PWH came round, collecting all the letters and briefly glancing at each one. She looked at mine, glared at me and put my letter in her pocket. The class was dismissed but I was told to go with her into another room which was like a study.
43. I waited in this room for what seemed like ages until she came back with LBD. When they were walking towards me LBD was taking her shoe off and I couldn't think why. She went absolutely haywire and started hitting me all over with the shoe. All the time she was yelling that if I am told to do something I should "bloody well do it" and that I should "never say anything derogatory" about Fornethy. I didn't even know at the time what derogatory meant. This was a real beating she gave me, hitting me everywhere on my body and head. It was terrible. PWH was just standing there with her arms folded.
44. I hadn't been there very long when one of the girls wouldn't eat some of the food on her plate and she was force fed it. When they were doing that she was sick. They then spooned the vomit into her mouth. I can't remember what teacher did this. After seeing that happening I was terrified and I ate everything that was put in front of me, even things I didn't like. I was never force fed like this but saw it happening to other girls.
45. One night I was getting ready for bed with Mrs Fletcher there and a wee girl told her that I had said a bad word which wasn't true. Without asking any questions Mrs Fletcher grabbed me by the ear and pulled me along the corridor into the toilets. She

picked up a bar of carbolic soap, ran it under the tap until it was all frothy then put it in my mouth and told me to eat it. I gagged and threw up. She called me a filthy little bitch and shoved the soap into my mouth again which she said was to wash away the vomit. I am not sure that she tore the skin under my ear when she pulled me along as I may have already had a hack there, but she made it a damn sight worse. I was always getting pulled by the ears.

46. We were taken on really long walks. I think a lot of adults would have struggled on these walks. We were taken in all weathers. It was freezing and we were made to wear scratchy balaclavas. It felt like they were made of barbed wire.
47. On the one occasion when I tried to run away **PWH** caught me. She took me back to the top of the hill where everyone was and told everyone, including the other teachers there to stand in a semicircle. She told me to take my coat off, which I did, then she told me to take my knickers off. I refused at first but she aggressively insisted, so I did. She made me lift up my skirt and bend over. I don't know what she beat me with but it wasn't with her hand. It could have been a belt or a stick but I honestly don't know. I was so petrified and the pain was so bad that I wet myself. Not only was I humiliated showing my bare backside and getting leathered but to make it worse I wet myself.
48. One day we were in the classroom doing our letter writing with **PWH**. She made me stand up and announced to the class that my daddy had left the family and asked if anyone knew why. She then said that he left because he couldn't stand me because I was such a bad, horrible child. She went on to say that his only escape was to leave. I was humiliated. None of the other kids laughed. What she said hurt me so much.
49. One time we got our mail after dinner and I had recieved an aerogram from my dad. I read it and in the first line my dad referred to me as sweetheart and that he was missing me terribly. I called **PWH** over and asked her to read the letter to me. I told her I couldn't read the adult writing, even though I could, but I wanted to prove to her that her that I was loved. She started reading it until she read 'Dear Sweetheart' then she crumpled up the letter, threw it on the table and told me to read it myself.

50. PWH, LBD and Fletcher were the ones who made my life hell. PWH was more into the psychological terror although she did also beat me up when I tried to run away. That was the only time PWH beat me. Fletcher and LBD loved beating the girls. Fletcher was the main instigator of the physical abuse, but they were both nasty, horrible, cruel, sadistic pieces of work. Fletcher and LBD would often just clout you round the ear as they were passing for no apparent reason.
51. I saw other girls being beaten and smacked. It seemed to happen just about every day. I would say that I was clouted probably every day. Fletcher usually beat me with her hands. I am not aware of her hitting me with anything else. LBD often used her shoe.
52. The teachers made us learn the words to the song 'Nobody's child' which I think is particularly cruel. I don't know why they did that.

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

53. My mum knew that I was good at letter writing so she probably wondered why my letters were written the way they were but she wouldn't have known that I was made to copy them from a blackboard.
54. The day that the girl was removed by her mother who was wearing the leopard print coat was letter writing day. I wanted to get a message to my mum in the hope that she would come and take me away just like that girl. There was a young girl who had recently arrived. She must have been at Fornethy as a student teacher and she was taking the letter writing class. I decided that I was going to chance it and started the letter saying that I didn't like residential school but then continued as we had been told. The student teacher came round at the end and collected the letters. She had a look at mine. She put my letter in her pocket then smiled at me and patted my shoulder. That girl obviously knew what was going on and knew what would happen to me. I never saw that letter again and there were no repercussions. My mum never received it so the student must have got rid of it.

55. At playtime we were put outside regardless of the weather. It seemed we were out in all weathers at different times of the day and night. I generally played on my own because I had shut down emotionally by then. Because I had shut down I stopped taking in what was happening around me. I was just focussing on surviving and getting out of there. I was attracted to a massive tree in the school grounds that had many aerial roots. Every day I just played on my own in these roots. I got a wee twig and pretended that this twig was me. I propped it up on the tree roots then built walls all the way round as if it was a house with rooms within rooms – no doors. Another girl came over one day and tried to join in. She got her own twig and knocked one of my walls down. I went berserk at her. I am not a psychologist but looking back this was a child building walls to keep the world out. This was never identified by anyone.

### **Leaving Fornethy**

56. I think it was when we were given half a crown to spend in the tuckshop to get presents for our parents that I was told I was going home. This must have been very close to when I was leaving, possibly the day before. I can't remember who told me. I am not aware if any other girls left at the same time. I had shut down by this point and didn't notice what was going on around about me.
57. There were no goodbye hugs or any kind of farewell. I was just given my suitcase and I left. I don't actually remember leaving Fornethy. My first real memory of leaving was the train arriving at Queen Street station. I think I was on my own. My mum was there to meet me off the train. She was further along the platform and it is as clear in my mind as if it happened seconds ago. I started running up the platform, the whole time having a conversation with God even though I didn't believe in him. I was promising that I would always be good, and that I would keep my mouth shut. I threw my arms up to hug my mum but pulled them down again because I remembered from Fornethy that bad girls don't get hugs and that my mum doesn't want me and doesn't like me. Anyone watching would have thought I was demented.

58. My mum has told me that she would never forget that moment when she saw me. She said my skin was red raw from top to toe and she wanted to scream. I was covered in lesions. She took me to the doctor later.

### **Life after Fornethy**

59. I went back to Annette Street primary after I came back from Fornethy. Previously I had been top of the class but I had changed, although things didn't really go downhill. Mum tried to get me into Hutchison Grammar School which was for bright kids. I went to sit the entrance exam not long after Fornethy and I will never forget it. When I went in to the school it was all wood panelling which reminded me of Fornethy. Panic set in and I thought this was another place my mum was going to send me. I failed the exam deliberately so I wouldn't get sent there. Mrs Sloan my teacher back at Annette Street was really disappointed that I didn't get to go.
60. I stayed at Annette Street Primary School until I went to Queen's Park Secondary when I was twelve. The relationship with my mum was so bad that at sixteen I left school, which I had been regularly skipping anyway. I didn't know it at the time, but my mother had to go to court in relation to me skipping school. My form teacher Mr Crawford, when he heard I was leaving, told me that leaving school was the best possible option for me and the likelihood was I would go back to education when I was an adult. He said I had no time for the school and a school like that was of no use to me. I left home, got on the ferry and went to the isle of Arran.
61. My mum's friends had a hotel on Arran so I worked there for a while, then went back home. I then did a secretarial course at college and got various jobs doing that kind of work, eventually landing a job in the Middle East which I left in 2015.

## Impact

66. Because of the physical abuse at Fornethy I had a cut under my ear and I was covered in bruises. My skin had broken out in lesions everywhere and when I got home my mum told me I had chilblains.
67. When I got home from Fornethy I was in such a bad way that my mum took me to the family GP. I had hacks all over my body which she assumed were because of the conditions I was exposed to outside in the cold weather. In my medical records it says that my GP had recorded it as impetigo. Impetigo is a skin disease through poor hygiene. Both my ears had cuts below them, and one was particularly bad. The bad one was split and took ages to heal.
68. Before I went to Fornethy I was a normal happy child. After being at Fornethy for about a week, I shut down completely. LBD reinforced in me every day, at every occasion she could, that my mother didn't want me. It got to the point that I firmly believed that I was never wanted and particularly that my mother never wanted me and wanted rid of me. That stayed with me all of my life.
69. The whole time I was at Fornethy I felt like I was in prison at seven years old. I thought I had been so bad that my father had left the family home and my mother didn't want me and I had been sent to prison. It was horrific. The staff made me think that. I know that emotionally I shut down. Fornethy has ruined my life. They stole it from me.
70. When I came back from Fornethy I had terrible nightmares. They were so bad that my mum took me to the doctors but she was told that I would grow out of it. Since I reported it to the police in 2021 I have started having nightmares again.
71. My relationship with my mum changed drastically when I got back from Fornethy. My mum told me I became very withdrawn and quiet and would just play by myself. Even the teachers at my school recorded in one of my report cards that I seemed to be preoccupied with some terrible problem of my own. They obviously identified that I had shut down.

72. The relationship with my mum deteriorated and got worse and worse. When I think back to all the arguments and fights we had there was no reason for it. Fornethy turned me against my mum by making me think that she didn't want me. I no doubt caused her a lot of worry too over the years and I gave her hell, especially in my teenage years. I always kept her at arm's length probably because I didn't trust her.
73. They brainwashed me at Fornethy so much that I could never trust her afterwards. We here never a 'huggy' sort of family which kind of goes with being Scottish. I could never trust her enough to open up and tell her anything. I always thought she had an ulterior motive about everything and I was terrified to say anything to her. On the other hand I was constantly worried that she was going to abandon me like she had at Fornethy.
74. My relationship with my mum is much better now and improved since I gave a statement to the police in September 2021. I realise, now that I have got to know her a bit better, that she is a good woman and if she wasn't my mother she could have been a good friend. I blamed her for everything which was stupid because she never knew what happened at Fornethy. Fornethy destroyed the relationship I could have had with my mum and it affected us both for nearly all of my life. I never had a very close relationship with my brother. We were always like chalk and cheese and never really got on.
75. I had the odd friend from the street and from school but no one I was particularly close to. I find it so difficult to make friends because basically I don't trust anybody and in fact I don't even trust my own instincts. I no longer trust myself to be able to assess a person's character. This is because I have no confidence in my own abilities. I married the one man that told me I could trust him and that marriage ended in disaster.
76. When I was 8 years old I started thinking about death and dying. I was convinced by this time that my mum didn't want me and wanted rid of me. I started thinking about what it would be like to die. My first attempt at suicide was when I was 14 then again when I was 24. I had suicidal thoughts when I was in Saudi and was referred to a psychiatrist.

77. When I was twelve I was in one of my friend's houses when she told me she was going to a residential school. It wasn't Fornethy - I think it was Galloway House. My stomach churned as soon as I heard this and tried to talk her out of going. I wouldn't say why she shouldn't go, but she thought I had a great time when I was at Fornethy. When she came back she said she had a fantastic time, and I just couldn't understand it.
79. There is no doubt that the biggest impact on me from being in Fornethy was that it made me feel worthless. I am quite intelligent and could have gone far and achieved much more in life. When I was at school I wanted to go to art school because I was quite good. I stopped that because I decided I was useless. Whenever I thought about applying for particular jobs I became very negative about myself and convinced that I would never get it because I was no good.
80. I never had any self-respect either when I was growing up and throughout my life. I know I was capable of doing far more but I just wouldn't believe it. When I was working with British Petroleum I organised an international legal conference, which involved delegates coming from all over the world and I had to book venues and accommodation, then arrange entertainment for the wives and children. This was obviously a major project but despite this I still thought I was useless.
81. After I had reported to the police in 2021 what had happened to me at Fornethy, I sent a letter to all my close family and told them about my time at Fornethy. I knew that they would all find out eventually. I tried to explain to them why they might think I am weird or sometimes may be 'short' with them and that it could be because how my time at Fornethy had affected me. I didn't go into specific details of my abuse and told them they could look it up online to see what went on in the place.
82. I have always had a deep depression which occasionally comes to the fore.

## **Treatment/support**

83. After my first attempted suicide when I was 14 I was kept in hospital overnight. I saw a psychiatrist after that. She spoke to my mum first. It is recorded in my medical records that I did it because my mum had a boyfriend, which was a lot of rubbish. I barely spoke to my mum at the time so I can't figure out how she would come to that conclusion. She must have picked up on something my mum had told her so decided to put it down to that.
84. When I was 24, I was in the process of a nervous breakdown. My mum took me to our GP, Dr Glasser and he called a taxi and sent me straight up to Leverndale hospital. I was called into the psychiatrist's room with my mother. The psychiatrist would have been in his thirties. He was particularly weird. When I told him I wasn't married he asked if I was a lesbian. I was a personal assistant to the managing director of a photographic company at the time. After I told him about an incident where I thought I had been treated unfairly, he decided my mental state was something to do with that.
85. I saw a psychiatrist again when I was in Saudi Arabia. I had another really depressive episode and was crying all the time. I went to see the GP about something else and when I was there I burst into tears. She told me that I should see a psychiatrist. I didn't want to because of the stigma but eventually I did. The female psychiatrist I saw was fantastic. I never told her about the abuse I suffered at Fornethy because it was all so deeply inside me and I thought my issues were all because my mum didn't love me and didn't want me. Looking back I wish I had told her. I saw her on and off for a couple of years before I came back to Scotland. She prescribed some anti-depressants because she said I needed them.

## **Reporting of Abuse**

86. I never told anyone about the abuse I suffered at Fornethy. I was terrified that if I told my mum I would get sent back to Fornethy so never said anything to her. I think she put the condition of my skin down to exposure to the bad weather. I know that she went to the education department in Bath Street and complained. Mrs Fisher the

headmistress at the school was really upset when she saw me because she had suggested I go to Fornethy. I don't know if she did anything about reporting the matter.

87. I never told my mum, Mrs Fisher, the doctor or anyone else about the physical abuse. I think it was because I was a child and knew no-one would believe me. The first time I told anyone about it was September 2021. I was with my mum and she was reading a [REDACTED] with a photograph of the Fornethy [REDACTED] group protesting in [REDACTED]. My mum commented that Fornethy was where I went. Everything just came flooding back. Things which I had suppressed for 56 years. My mum thought I was having a heart attack. I told her about some of the abuse but not all of it because she is elderly and I didn't want to upset her. She felt ashamed and thought it was all her fault so I tried my best to reassure her that it wasn't.
88. After my mum showed me this [REDACTED] I went home and I decided that I should go to the police. I drove to East Kilbride police station and told them why I was there. They sent me home because there was no one free to see me. I was later phoned by a detective and I tried to tell them on the phone but I kept crying. Two young uniformed police officers subsequently came to see me a few days later and they took my statement. That was the first time I had ever opened up and told anyone everything that went on at Fornethy. I believe it was then passed to the police in Dundee. I have heard nothing from them and when I have tried to find out what is happening they won't tell me anything, just that it's with the Procurator. They wouldn't even tell me if any of the culprits were still alive. My lawyer told me to keep asking the questions.
89. After the intervention of my lawyers I got a very snotty phone call from a female detective, Emma Lorento, only a few weeks ago, who abruptly told me yet again that the matter had been referred to the procurator fiscal. I asked her if any of these people were still alive and she told me that she couldn't say and instead I should 'Google' it myself to find out. That is the only contact I have had from the police since I reported it.

## **Records**

90. In my medical records the examination I got after I got back from Fornethy is recorded there. It says I was seen by Doctor Emile Glasser, our family doctor, on [REDACTED] 1966 who noted I had an injury to my right earlobe, haematomas under my fingernails, impetigo and other injuries. The next record in my file is 31 January 1968 so at least one page of my notes, possibly more has gone missing. Apparently Dr Glasser was really angry and he had said he was going to report the matter. I don't know if he did.

## **Lessons to be learned / Hopes for the Inquiry**

91. I don't understand how people can behave the way they did at Fornethy, especially women. In a way I got off lightly compared to a lot of the other girls but the impact on my life has been massive.
92. I believe that the police and the Scottish government know what went on in Fornethy and other places and aren't doing anything about it. Local and central government, and the police should be held accountable for their handling of these cases because they just don't take it seriously. I know the people in position now are not responsible for what has happened over the years, but they are responsible and accountable for what is going on right now. They cannot deny it ever happened and continue to hide records.
93. I would like to see more inspections carried out on places like Fornethy. Inspections be carried out by an independent body on a regular basis. These should be 'spot checks' at random and not prearranged. During or after their stays children should be gently and appropriately spoken to in order to see if anything was making them unhappy. There should be more thorough background checks carried out on the staff working at these places.
94. I hope that all the findings are published in full. It is time that everyone bites the bullet and starts being honest about what has gone on in the past. We should look at what

has gone wrong, start afresh, fix the problems and find ways to stop things from going wrong again.

### **Other information**

95. My mum told me quite recently that when she was at college as a mature student she was telling other young students that she was going to send me to Fornethy. One of the young students, indicated that it might not be a good idea and asked her if she was sure that was the right thing to do. My mum said she should have seen the alarm bells and kicked herself because that student obviously knew something. It could have been that she had been there as a student teacher but she certainly knew something.
96. I joined the Fornethy [REDACTED] group and I remember talking to the others about the letters we were made to write. Some of the women still had the letters and I showed one of them to my mum who had been a teacher. She said that a seven year old would never write a letter like that. It was obvious there was coercion and all the letters were copied from the blackboard.
97. One time I was with other women in the group and were heading through to Edinburgh. [REDACTED] who was [REDACTED], sat beside me and asked me if I remembered the milk and the biscuits. She told me that the milk was drugged to make us sleep. I was never a good sleeper when I was a child. It took me ages to get to sleep and I often lay in my bed making up stories or singing. I just entertained myself. I had never really thought about it before but at Fornethy I went out like a light. I don't know if there is any truth in it or not it but it does makes sense. Some of the other women in the group said the same thing.
98. 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.

PGS

Signed.....



Dated.....

20/9/22