

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EVP [REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes.

1. My name is EVP [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1959. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in a house in [REDACTED] Maryhill, Glasgow. My dad was [REDACTED] and my mum was [REDACTED]. Mum had been married before and had four children called [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My full siblings are [REDACTED] who was born in 1957 and [REDACTED] who was born in 1960. After [REDACTED] was born my mum had another child who was still-born.
3. When mum got married to dad [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] came to stay with us though I was a teenager before I realised that they weren't my full siblings. Her daughter [REDACTED] was older and was engaged while [REDACTED] stayed with his dad, though why that was I don't know.
4. My first memories are of when I was in school because I think my life was quite traumatic when I was young. We had moved to [REDACTED] in Yoker and my childhood was good because we had a lot of nice neighbours. The local children all played together and the mothers would even come out and play ropes with us.
5. However, my Dad was an alcoholic and used to stand at the kitchen window watching us in case anybody touched us or hit us. He was quite strict, which I didn't like, though

probably more with my brother [REDACTED] than with me. I never understood why. He used to hit [REDACTED] all the time. It was the same with [REDACTED] and it was as if they were beneath him.

6. There was one time he asked [REDACTED] to turn over the telly and when she tutted he pushed her and she went through the window. Luckily for her she got caught in the curtains. That's the way it was with him, if you didn't do as you were told you got battered.
7. I was once in a neighbour's house when he came to the door for me. I told them to tell him I wasn't there but a short while later I was out in the back courts when he called me in. He grabbed me by the hair then battered lumps out of me. When my mother came home he said I had fallen.
8. There was another occasion when I was swinging on the bedroom door when my sister [REDACTED] pushed me off and I hurt my leg. [REDACTED] was always dad's favourite. When he came over I told him what [REDACTED] had done but it was me who got battered as I shouldn't have been swinging about in the first place.
9. On another night I was watching TV when mum called me. We had to stay in the bedroom because my dad was ill. I was watching the Osmonds and said "Wait a minute". I then heard a bang and realised dad had shot me in the arm with a pellet gun. Because dad had a heart condition mum was more concerned about him than me. At the time he wasn't drinking as much because of his heart condition.
10. He had a big scar on his chest that was from an operation he had had but he always told us that he had got it from a war wound. Mum had to have two jobs because dad couldn't work so we were always getting looked after by dad.
11. The only time I recall being in hospital was when I broke my collar bone after fighting with my sister. While there the doctor said I had been in the hospital before but I didn't remember that. I would like to get my medical records to see why I had been there the first time.

12. My mum and dad were always fighting and I used to go outside to get away from it. One night my dad was fighting one of his friends in the living room and my mum said she would call the police but I don't think she did. One day my mum got fed up with it all and she got in contact with the cruelty people, I suppose they were early social workers, because of the beatings he was giving her. There was no improvement after they left. Sometimes my dad was over protective and other times just cruel to us.
13. I started school in Yoker Primary in 1964. I recall that the teacher wasn't in the class and I started drawing on the blackboard. The teacher, Miss [REDACTED], came in and caught me and slapped me in the face. In the same class two boys were poking me in the back and I got so sick of it I started to walk out of the school. Two teachers came after me and had to drag me away from holding onto the railings. The gates were locked. After school we always had to go straight home as my dad wouldn't let us stay and play in the school playground.
14. Dad was taken to hospital in 1966 or 67 after drinking when he wasn't supposed to. This caused his health to deteriorate. When that happened mum said us children were going away for a holiday and took us to a building near the Kingsway Flats in Knightswood where we got a medical.
15. After that she got some clothes and things ready for me and [REDACTED] and then we were put on a bus that took us miles out into the country. My brother [REDACTED] had gone to Seafield and my brother [REDACTED] might have gone there as well. I was kind of looking forward to it as I thought we would be getting a break from my dad.
16. As it turned out it was Fornethy that myself and [REDACTED] went to. I actually went there twice and there were only a few weeks or months between each occasion. The second time I went it was my sister [REDACTED] that went with me. There was very little difference about being there between the first and second time that I was in Fornethy. I was about eight when I went there.

Fornethy Children's Home, Perth

17. There was a full bus load of us, maybe about thirty girls. The only adult I remember being on the bus was the driver. I was okay as I had [REDACTED] with me but lots of the other kids were on their own. We arrived at this big house where loads of other kids were. Fornethy was scary looking and sat amid a lot of trees. It was in the middle of nowhere and I immediately thought that this was not going to be a holiday. We were lined up and they then took all our suitcases from us.
18. After that we were lined up and put in an old fashioned bath which was in the middle of a big room. A woman washed each of us with a scrubbing brush and carbolic soap. I was put in the bath by myself but it was like a conveyor belt and the water wasn't changed between each child getting in.
19. After the bath we then put on a flowery pinnie and were taken up to a dorm. The dorm I was put in was called Reeky Lyn and there were twelve of us in the dorm. They left a blue light on in the dorm at night. I don't know where [REDACTED] was sent to but she went to a different dorm.
20. We found out that Miss ^{LBD}[REDACTED] was ^{SNR}[REDACTED] of the home. She had grey hair and wore tweed, country style jackets. I don't think she was married and she was a nasty woman. Other members of staff I remember were Miss Fletcher who was my teacher the first time and was quite tall, thin with big teeth, Miss ^{LAT}[REDACTED] whose class I was in the second time, Miss Robertson who was wee, fat with black hair and an Irish woman whose name I don't recall but who bathed us.

Routine at Fornethy Children's Home, Perth

21. We got up about 7:00 am when somebody put the big light on. We then got washed and dressed then stood beside our beds before being taken down to breakfast by Miss ^{LBD}[REDACTED] and another woman. After breakfast we went to class and after that Miss Fletcher, my teacher, would take us for long walks through the trees. She loved going for long walks.

22. We would go to the cloakroom and get our outdoor clothes on though most of us wore our own shoes. We went on the walks every day though at different times. School was only until a certain time but I don't recall exactly when it finished.

Mealtimes/Food

23. At mealtimes you all had to say thank you to Miss LBD and the other staff who sat at a long table. If you didn't you got put outside and went without. We would get porridge or cornflakes for breakfast. Like my dad they made you finish everything. In Fornethy, if I didn't like something, I would pass it to [REDACTED]
24. Some of the girls weren't so lucky and were force fed by Miss LBD who was the only member of staff I recall seeing do that. One wee girl in particular that I remember was force fed macaroni cheese. Sometimes a girl being force fed would be sick and Miss LBD would make her eat that as well. Other times they would continually put down at the next meal what you hadn't eaten and would keep doing that till it was eaten.

Washing/bathing

25. An Irish woman whose name I don't know bathed us. She was tall, thin and had brown curly hair. I'm not sure how often we got a bath but I think it was each night before we went to bed. We all had to line up naked including my sister [REDACTED] who was a lot older than me, thirteen or fourteen.
26. The bath water wasn't changed between each of us getting in. The woman used a hard brush and carbolic soap. She also put Lorexane shampoo in our hair and put a steel comb through it. A lot of the wee lassies were crying because they were embarrassed but they were either told to shut up or were ignored. None of us were used to having baths in front of strangers and it was a dreadful feeling.

Clothing/uniform

27. The staff took our suitcases from us as soon as we arrived at Fornethy and, instead of wearing the clothes that our mum's had given us, we were given flowery pinnies that they supplied and never saw our own clothes again until we left.

Leisure time

28. Other than going on walks every day we would play on the swings or play in the play room. Sometimes in that room we would polish all the shoes while singing songs. An Irish woman who used to bathe us would sit and watch us and I think she lived on the grounds.

Trips and holidays

29. We didn't go on any trips and the only outings we got were the walks through the woods.

Schooling

30. The day after we arrived we were separated by year of birth and sent to different classes based on that. For some reason I ended up in [REDACTED]'s class even though she was a few years older than me which meant that the schoolwork was way ahead of what I was capable of. My teacher was called Miss Fletcher and she called me out to do sums or something like that. I couldn't do it and she battered me a several times on my bare legs and I wet myself. I then got battered for doing that and was put out of the class. I hated being in Fletcher's class.
31. The second time I was there my teacher was Miss ^{LAT}[REDACTED] but she just seemed to sit on the window sill and knit all day.

Letters Home

32. We had to write letters home but had to copy what had been written on the blackboard which was all about how nice it was for us to be in Fornethy. If we wrote anything other than that we would get a slap. I saw other girls getting slapped for this so I was too scared to write anything other than what was on the blackboard. Since I couldn't tell my mum what was really happening I felt trapped.

Healthcare

33. I don't remember healthcare as such though the Irish woman who bathed us would patch up any scratches or bruises that we got from maybe falling off the swings or see-saws.

Religious instruction

34. We walked to Church every Sunday but I don't recall us saying any prayers while in Fornethy itself. Boys from a nearby residential boy's school went to the same Church but I don't know what the school was called. We didn't do religious instruction in school.

Work

35. The only work we were ever given was to polish all the shoes at times in the play room. I don't have any recollection of the older girls being given any work to do.

Birthdays and Christmas

36. I wasn't in Fornethy for either my birthday or at Christmas time but I don't recall ever seeing a girl having her birthday celebrated.

Personal possessions

37. I don't remember having anything of my own while in Fornethy and, as I said, they took our suitcases from us as soon as we arrived.

Bed Wetting

38. I never had a problem with bed wetting but those that did got battered and didn't get breakfast. I don't recall ever stripping my bed but I think those that did had to strip theirs. Certainly I remember that if somebody wet their bed everybody in the dorm knew they had. During the night if it was found somebody had wet the bed then they had to stand out in the corridor in their underwear. We sometimes were given sixpence pocket money but some children weren't given it if they had wet the bed or wet their pants.

External Inspections

39. I didn't see anybody coming to Fornethy to inspect it and the only person I remember coming in was the local minister who would sometimes come in for dinner. I don't know his name and he never spoke to any of us.

Family contact

40. Nobody came to see us though sometimes my mum would send comics and some money but we never saw the money and only got sixpence to spend in the tuck shop. I still remember the sweet minty smell of the tuck shop.

Discipline

41. Miss LBD and Miss Fletcher were the worst two for discipline. In Fornethy you did as you were told or you got a slap and it could be for any daft wee thing. If you stepped out of line you got battered and it could be for something as silly as talking while in

line. I think the girls generally stayed in line and did as they were told because they were too scared to do otherwise.

Running away

42. I never ran away because I was too scared to and the place was in the middle of nowhere. I know of one girl who shared the dorm with my sister [REDACTED] who did runaway and who got battered for having done so. I didn't see this but heard about it from others.

Abuse at Fornethy Children's Home, Perth

43. I remember on my first morning I was sitting having my breakfast and I wasn't holding my cutlery properly and Miss LBD [REDACTED] punched me in the back. It immediately took me back to being at home and I just thought "Here we go again". After that I always tried to make myself invisible and wouldn't even cry so as not to bring attention to myself.
44. Not long after I arrived the buckle on my shoe broke and I was given a pair of big tackety boots. Everybody was laughing at me and I found the boots heavy going as we went through the woods. I once had to wear them when going to Church and boys that were there were laughing at me. I was mortified. I got these boots early on in my time in Fornethy and had to wear them for the rest of my time there.
45. When we went on the long walks every day with Miss Fletcher we would go through the woods and a field. There was a big bull in the field and I was terrified of it. Miss Fletcher would be walking way ahead of us and didn't seem to care how scared some of us were of the bull. I was terrified of it charging us. I was from the city, not the country side, and I simply wasn't used to such things.
46. On one occasion Miss Fletcher woke us up at about 2:00 am and told us we were going for a walk. It was pitch black outside but, after being taken back to bed after the

walk, we still had to get up at the usual time the next morning. I was used to seeing my dad drunk and I suspected that Miss Fletcher had been drinking that night.

47. One day I was in the play room when me and another wee girl, whose name I don't recall, were sent to the library. Myself and the girl were talking and laughing when Miss Robertson, another member of staff, came in to the library, slapped us on the face and told us to go back to the play room and to stay quiet.
48. One night, during my second time there, I was in my bed when I heard one of the younger girls making a clicking noise. I heard Miss Robertson come into the dorm and I thought she was going to punish the girl. Instead she pulled my blankets off me, pulled down my pyjamas and slapped me on the backside. She kept hitting me telling me to stop making noises.
49. At night time you had to put your underwear on the end of your bed so they could check if you had wet them or soiled them. If you had then you got a slap.
50. On the second occasion that I was in Fornethy I was in Miss LAT's class and one day it was hot and she took the class outside and told us to take all our clothes off and run around. My sister asked what we were doing and I told her Miss LAT had told us to strip off naked. I think back now and wonder why that was done. Were there people in the woods with cameras?
51. When my sister went to Fornethy with me Miss LBD seemed to take a shine to her. In my opinion they were both evil and I think that's why they got along so well. was only a year older than me but she was made captain of the dorm. If anything happened in the middle of the night would make a girl stand in the middle of the dorm until a teacher came in to deal with the matter.
52. So one night she put me and another wee girl in the middle of the dorm. I was petrified and told her she better let us back into our beds. She wouldn't let us back in to our beds so we sat there and I told her I would be telling our mother about it when we got home. So she let me back into my bed but the other wee lassie was still sitting there.

I told her she couldn't leave that wee girl there either so she let her back to her bed and just then one of the teachers came into the dorm.

53. Nothing happened but that was the way it was in Fornethy. They left it to the slightly older girls to do their work and look after the younger ones. The older kids would then report the younger girls for whatever they had done and they would get battered for it.
54. Also during the second time I was there I was put in charge of a smaller and younger girl. In the middle of the night I realised she wasn't in her bed and I found her in the toilets crying and cleaning her pants. The poor wee girl had soiled her pants and had somehow managed to hide them but was now terrified in case she got caught. I sent her to her bed and cleaned her pants for her but it was that sort of fear that Fornethy put into the girls.
55. In Fornethy the children were rarely allowed to talk to each other. It was as if we were there but not there and it was a case of children being seen but not heard. I found it strange when I recently saw an advert from an old newspaper. The advert was Fornethy looking for staff and is said that any applicants must have military experience. I cannot understand what military experience would have to do with looking after children.

Leaving Fornethy Children's Home, Perth

56. On the first occasion I was in Fornethy with my sister [REDACTED] we were due to go home after six weeks but on the day we were due to leave we had to go see the Irish woman. She told us that our dad was in hospital and that we would be staying at Fornethy for another two weeks. I was devastated watching the bus with the other girls pull away.
57. The second time I left was with my sister [REDACTED] and this time we were able to leave after we had been there for six weeks. On both occasions I spoke to my mum when we went home and told her how bad the place had been but she wouldn't believe me

and when I told her I didn't want to go back the second time it made no difference. I have absolutely no good memories of my time in Fornethy.

58. Back at home my mum was working two jobs because my dad was in hospital and since he was back in hospital we knew that we would be getting sent away again. She was working in the bakers in the morning, in a café in the afternoon then would be going up to the hospital to see my dad at night. It was only a few weeks or months later and this time we got sent to Southpark in Rothesay and, like Fornethy, I ended up there twice.
59. Again there was only a few weeks between each time I was there and I was eight or nine both times. The first time was with [REDACTED] and the second time was with [REDACTED]. To get to Rothesay we must have taken a boat but I have no recollection of ever being on a boat at that time.

Southpark Children's Home, Rosyth

60. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
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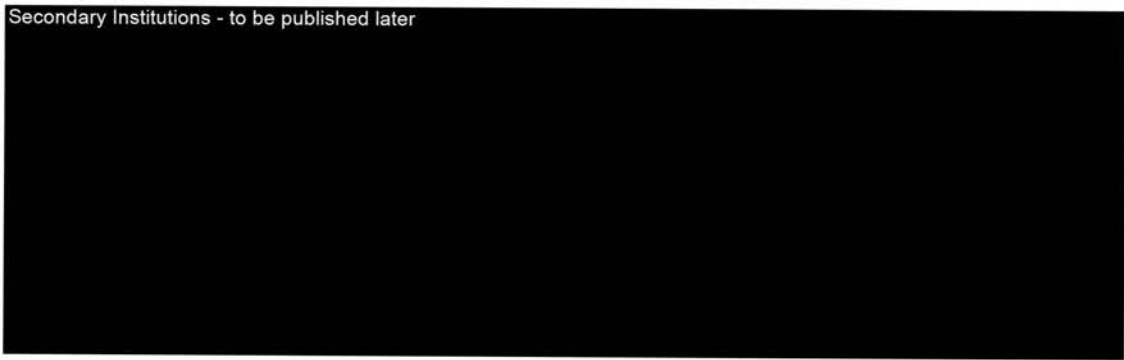
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Secondary Institutions - to be published later



Leaving Southpark Children's Home, Rothesay

69. I don't remember the journeys back from Southpark but after leaving Southpark the second time and going home me and some of my siblings were fostered out for a short period to different homes. [REDACTED] went to Dunblane, [REDACTED] went to Troon while I went to either Stirling or Dunblane. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] stayed at home.

Foster care to unnamed family in either Stirling or Dunblane

70. I was about nine years old when I was sent to a foster home. I know it was in Stirling or Dunblane but I don't recall which and I don't remember the name of the family. I remember the man and woman had two daughters and they lived in a big house. I think one of the daughters was my age and the other was a wee bit older.
71. They at first put me in a massive bedroom on my own that had a four-poster bed in it. I was terrified and cried each night but then the older daughter said that I could sleep in her bed and she would take the big bedroom. Both the daughters were really nice to me and would take me to play with their friends or visit their granny.
72. I don't really recall much of my time in foster care and was only there for a few weeks. I do remember that the woman was very cold towards me. On the very first morning I couldn't find one of my socks and the mother said that if I didn't get a move on I wouldn't be getting any breakfast. The dad worked but she didn't and while I didn't go

to school I know the girls did as I remember the uniforms they wore with their hats, green jackets and tartan skirts.

73. I would get up about 8:00 am then get washed, dressed and have breakfast before playing in the playroom. I remember wondering if the family fostered other children, not that I saw or heard about any such thing, but the playroom was massive and had way too many toys, books and things for just two children.
74. I don't recall getting lunch but the dad was always home for dinner. I don't have any bad memories about the food I got there. I don't remember religion being a thing there nor do I remember getting any health checks or going on any trips. I didn't get any visitors or see or hear from any of my other siblings who had also been fostered out. I remember when we eventually got home my siblings told me how nice the places were that they went to.
75. I didn't run away from the foster home and bed wetting was never a problem for me. There was no discipline as such and the only trouble I remember getting into was when the mother accused me of taking sweets from a jar and gave me a row. One of the daughters was also there but I got all the blame. I didn't suffer any abuse in the foster home other than that, as I said, I found the mother to be a very cold person that didn't show any love towards me. She just didn't seem to be the type of person who should have fostered children.
76. When I left foster care the mother took me home. I remember sitting in the car and her insisting that I wave goodbye to the father. I had to sit there waving for a few minutes until she drove off.

Life after being in care

77. After I left foster care, after only a few weeks, I was no longer involved with social care. Our dad died in 1970 and life seemed to get better after that as we seemed to have

more freedom. I don't know how he died and I'm trying to get hold of his death certificate.

78. My sister [REDACTED] had two kids and had moved to Cumbernauld and we were allowed to visit her and stay at weekends and Christmas which is something that wouldn't have happened if my dad was still alive. [REDACTED] suggested that we should all move to Cumbernauld so my mum moved there from Yoker to be nearer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] started seeing a guy from Glasgow and moved there with him. [REDACTED] got married so it was just [REDACTED] me and [REDACTED] living with mum.
79. Before we left Yoker I was getting bullied in school so from that point of view it was probably better for me that we moved to Cumbernauld. I wasn't very good at Maths but I enjoyed school there and made quite a few pals. When I left school I went to work in a place called Muirhead but didn't enjoy it. I then worked in Clydeside Sheet Metal making fluorescent lights but hated that as well. My sister [REDACTED] worked in Foresthall Hospital in Glasgow and got me a job there working in the geriatric unit and I worked there for four years.
80. After I left there I met the dad of my oldest son, [REDACTED] but we split up when [REDACTED] was seven months old. For fifteen years thereafter I went through hell with the family as [REDACTED]'s dad's mother thought I wasn't good enough to look after [REDACTED] and thought that she was better off looking after him. So I went through years of her trying to use things against me in court. I started taking panic attacks because I thought they wanted to take [REDACTED] off me for good but I was refusing to let him go.
81. The mother used to spy on me and go to the lawyer and say that I wasn't well enough to look after [REDACTED] because I was taking the attacks. I actually had tunnel vision at the time and thought I was dying. Because of the court proceedings we were going through I had no choice but to allow [REDACTED] to go to her's at the weekend. I would buy him new clothes so as they couldn't say anything but they would take off the clothes that I had bought him and put their own on him.

82. She used to ask my brother if I had a boyfriend and whether or not I had food in the kitchen. I had social workers and child protection officers sent to my door. I would tell them I knew who had sent them and they would say there had been no reason to get them involved.
83. On one occasion, my son [REDACTED] would have been five, [REDACTED] had an accident on his bike and I had to take him to hospital. I also took [REDACTED] to show him that hospitals weren't necessarily places to be scared of. [REDACTED]'s dad showed up and outside [REDACTED] nearly ran out in front of an ambulance until I grabbed him and gave him a smack. [REDACTED]'s dad accused me of being an abusive parent and took [REDACTED] away. It took a call from my lawyer to get him back.

Impact

84. After being in care our family seemed to drift apart and we all spent a lot of time arguing with each other. My mother was always getting caught up in the middle of it as she would come back from work and we would be fighting. I don't speak to my sister [REDACTED] anymore. My sister [REDACTED] and I spoke about Fornethy quite a lot but we didn't even know where it was. Nor could we find much about it on the internet until I joined the Fornethy [REDACTED] Group.
85. I am very protective of my children and feel my children didn't get the freedom that they perhaps should have. Where I went, they went. Sometimes the kids would accuse me of ruining their lives. I wouldn't let them go to friend's houses, especially my younger son [REDACTED]. My older son [REDACTED] had his dad's to go to but [REDACTED] only had me. If the kids started hanging about with kids who I thought were untrustworthy then I moved house. If things got too much for me I would run away when I probably shouldn't have. I must have moved house fifty times.
86. I don't have a lot of trust in people and sometimes I just look at people and distrust them.

Treatment/support

87. I've never had counselling. I've always believed it's all in the past and that I have to live life in the now. I have been in contact with Future Pathways but haven't gone for counselling.

Reporting of Abuse

88. A while ago I joined the Fornethy [REDACTED] group and they said I should report the matter to the police. I contacted the police and in September 2021 two officers came to my house and took a statement. They were really nice guys who put me at my ease and took me through my time at Fornethy and specifically asked me if there was any sexual abuse. I told them that that was not the case as far as I was concerned. I haven't heard back from them other than to say they've sent a report to the Fiscal's Office though I don't know who it concerned.

Records

89. I have been trying to get my records to find out exactly when I was in Fornethy and Southpark but they claim they don't have any of my records. I've been told the records do exist in a cage somewhere and that they are deliberately not releasing them. I got told this by somebody from Glasgow District Council who spoke to us when we had a demonstration outside their offices.

Lessons to be Learned

90. I certainly wouldn't send my kids to a place like Fornethy or Southpark. I don't care how low I ever get, I wouldn't send them away. It would be better to give the parents the assistance they need rather than take their kids away from them.

Hopes for The Inquiry

91. I hope that what happened in the past is recognised and that it's not covered up, not hidden away. People have to know that such places existed and that places like Fornethy were a reality and they have to know what they were like.
92. 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 ^{EVP} 

Dated... 14/2/22