

Thursday, 30 April 2026

1

2 (10.00 am)

3 LADY SMITH: Good morning, and welcome back to Phase 10 of
4 our case study hearings in which we're looking into the
5 provision of residential care for children at
6 establishments run by or used by local authorities to
7 fulfil their responsibilities.

8 Now, we turn this morning to, I think this is our
9 last Red House witness, is that correct?

10 MR SHELDON: That's correct, my Lady. Our witness this
11 morning is Alastair Knowles, who's the representative of
12 the Red House Home Trust.

13 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much.

14 Alastair Knowles (sworn)

15 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much for coming along to assist
16 us this morning in relation to Red House in Musselburgh.
17 I hope my first question is really easy: how would you
18 like me to address you? I'm happy to use your second
19 name or your first name, whichever you're most
20 comfortable with.

21 A. First name will be fine.

22 LADY SMITH: Is that all right?

23 A. Thank you, yes.

24 LADY SMITH: Well thank you, Alastair, for that.

25 We have already from you, in respect of the

1 Red House Trust, the written answers to all the
2 questions that we sent and those are in the red folder
3 in front of you.

4 A. Mm-hmm, yeah.

5 LADY SMITH: We refer to them as our Section 21 A to D
6 notices, but -- so if we mention that, that's what we're
7 talking about. So those are available for you to use if
8 you find that helpful.

9 A. Thank you.

10 LADY SMITH: But we'll also bring them up on screen as we
11 look at particular parts of them. We are not going to
12 go through every question in turn, don't worry, but
13 there are some specific aspects that we'd like to
14 discuss with you if that's okay.

15 I don't expect that your evidence should take too
16 long, but if you want a break at any time, just say,
17 Alastair, that's not a problem. Or if you've got any
18 questions, do speak up, that's not a problem either.
19 Hopefully we can work together to get whatever evidence
20 you can assist us with as clearly as possible.

21 If you're ready, I'll hand over to Mr Sheldon and
22 he'll take matters from there, is that okay?

23 A. Thank you, yes.

24 LADY SMITH: Thank you, Alastair.

25 Mr Sheldon.

1 Questions from Mr Sheldon

2 MR SHELDON: Thank you, my Lady.

3 Well, good morning, Alastair.

4 As Lady Smith has said this morning, the purpose is
5 really just to look through the A to D response --

6 A. Mm-hmm.

7 MR SHELDON: -- as we call it, and I'll come to that just in
8 a moment.

9 But you also very helpfully provided us with a CV
10 and I think that should be in front of you as well.

11 And I don't need your date of birth, but I think you
12 were born in 1946, is that right?

13 A. That's correct, yes.

14 Q. And put short, you were educated in Musselburgh,
15 Musselburgh Grammar, and went to college in Edinburgh
16 and you were employed principally as an architectural
17 technician, is that right?

18 A. That's correct, yes.

19 Q. And later as a branch's building surveyor with Scottish
20 and Newcastle.

21 Passing on to the next section of your CV, there's
22 a section on voluntary service and, if I may say, that's
23 quite an impressive resume, with service in the Boys'
24 Brigade and as a musician playing the bugle and I think
25 the drums, is that right?

1 A. Drums, yes. Highland drumming.

2 Q. Indeed. Was that with the Boys' Brigade pipe band?

3 A. Initially I left -- I joined a local colliery band in
4 Midlothian. We elevated ourselves to Grade 1 in the
5 RSPBA rankings. I got to the stage that my summer was
6 being taken up by the pipe band and my winters by the
7 Boys' Brigade, and by that time I had a wife and one
8 child and there was a crunch moment where I -- one had
9 to choose whether we followed the pipe band route or go
10 back into the Boys' Brigade. And my original roots
11 being in the Boys' Brigade, I chose the Boys' Brigade.

12 Q. I really --

13 A. Immediately thereafter to be called in by the massed
14 band's pipe major to take over their drum corps. So
15 a lot less commitment, but nevertheless to keep that
16 side of things going.

17 Q. And I think you remained involved with the Boys' Brigade
18 until really quite recently?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. It was about 2014, is that right?

21 A. That's right, uh-huh.

22 Q. You've also been involved with the church and I think in
23 your parish church you served as session clerk on
24 a number of occasions?

25 A. For five years, yeah.

1 Q. That being a role in which there's a fair bit of
2 administrative responsibility, is that right?

3 A. Unfortunately. Yes.

4 Q. Oh, right. And you note under the heading 'Community'
5 that you're a fervent supporter of all things
6 Musselburgh, history, heritage and institutions, and you
7 have a particularly striking memory, you say, of the
8 celebration of the Riding of the Marches in Musselburgh
9 as a 10-year-old in 1956?

10 A. Absolutely, yes.

11 Q. And that I think is a pretty significant element of
12 Musselburgh life, the Musselburgh year?

13 A. It is, aye. Although the Riding of the Marches, that
14 only happens once every 21 years, roughly.

15 Q. All right.

16 A. But in between there is a festival.

17 (Noise disturbance)

18 (Pause)

19 (10.12 am)

20 (A short break)

21 (10.17 am)

22 LADY SMITH: Alastair, we think we've identified the source
23 of the problem and we think we've now ensured that it
24 has stopped, so long as we're in hearings. I'm so sorry
25 about that.

1 Mr Sheldon.

2 MR SHELDON: Alastair, before we were forced to break, we
3 were looking at your CV and in particular the section
4 about your activities in the community. We talked about
5 the Riding of the Marches and I think also we see that
6 you've been a member of the Musselburgh Rotary Club in
7 the 1990s and, indeed, awarded the British Empire Medal
8 in 2018 for services to the community.

9 A. Yeah. I think that was mainly due to my chairmanship of
10 the organising team for the 2016 Riding of the Marches.
11 I was chairman of the directors of the charitable
12 company that ran the operation in 2016.

13 Q. I see, thank you.

14 And you then go on to tell us about your involvement
15 with the Red House Home Trust of which you are now the
16 chair.

17 You tell us you were invited onto the board of
18 governors in March 2004. How did that come about,
19 Alastair?

20 A. My -- the minister of my church, which is North Esk,
21 Musselburgh North Esk, was already a board member and he
22 asked me at that time, with my background with the youth
23 in the Boys' Brigade and various other things, if
24 I wouldn't mind joining the board, which I agreed to,
25 and he and I served until he retired a few years ago.

1 Q. But of course at that point, the home itself had closed
2 and the trust was just a grant-giving -- purely
3 a grant-giving body, is that right?

4 A. That's correct, yeah.

5 Q. And you note that in addition to general board
6 responsibilities, in April 2017 you volunteered to
7 assist the incumbent chair in research and compilation
8 of the trust's response to this Inquiry's Section 21
9 notice?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. The order to provide information?

12 A. That's right. The chairman at the time was
13 Dr Robbie George, and he and I did the initial
14 interrogation of what records we had in an attempt to
15 answer the A to D questionnaire.

16 Q. Am I right in thinking that Dr George had also been both
17 on the board of the trust but also the medical officer
18 for the home?

19 A. He was until 1986. I'm not -- he was a local GP in
20 Musselburgh and acted as a medical officer and was the
21 last living link between the present board of governors
22 and the home when it was residential.

23 Q. Right. Was it the practice then that the medical
24 officer would always be on the board of the trust?

25 A. I believe so. I think he was obviously a key member of,

1 not the staff, but -- and the board were always
2 volunteers, unpaid. But the medical officer was a key
3 element of that and obviously for the welfare of the
4 boys.

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. And latterly the girls.

7 Q. Yes. Now, we know, I think, that boys from the
8 Red House Home went to schools in Musselburgh?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. For example, Musselburgh Grammar?

11 A. Mm-hmm.

12 Q. Were you aware of them and their presence in the
13 community during your time in Musselburgh? You've been
14 a long-term resident -- a long-time resident of
15 Musselburgh?

16 A. Yeah, I think the residents of my generation were fully
17 aware of the work of the Red House and there was
18 generally, I think, quite a harmonious cohabitation
19 between the population of the town and the boys. And
20 I think there was a certain amount of sympathy for the
21 boys and admiration for the work that the Red House did
22 in looking after them.

23 Q. Were members of Red House Home staff also involved in
24 community matters, do you recall?

25 A. I've not really had -- no, I can't say that I had any

1 personal involvement with either the superintendent or
2 the matron or any of the members of staff, domestic
3 staff or whatever. I can only assume that the place was
4 well staffed.

5 Q. I might ask you a little bit about that in a moment or
6 two, but in general terms, and if you can answer this,
7 in general terms, what was the reputation of the home in
8 Musselburgh as a community?

9 A. I would say it was held in reasonably high regard as an
10 essential, or a service to the orphaned and destitute
11 boys, and had been for almost 100 years at that time,
12 you know, looking back. And there certainly was
13 a degree of respect for the home and its existence and
14 I would say that there was certainly no kind of conflict
15 of any kind between either the boys from the home or
16 their colleagues in school, you know, their
17 contemporaries in school.

18 There was friction, but no more than you would
19 expect between pupils in a class, if you know what
20 I mean. I think the relationship generally with peer
21 group and all that sort of thing was usually pretty
22 harmonious.

23 Q. All right. Did that ever change at some point, for
24 example in the 1980s?

25 A. Not to my personal knowledge, no.

1 Q. All right. Okay. No, that's fine. Thank you.

2 We also know that the head of Loretto School was, at
3 times anyway, on the board, ex officio of the trust.

4 A. Mm-hmm.

5 Q. Can you tell us anything about that link, how that link
6 came about and what, as it were, the effects of the link
7 were?

8 A. I can't really answer that question. The constitution
9 of '31, which was the first time that the home was
10 formalised as a trust, the reference to the headmaster
11 and the chaplain of Loretto School being ex officio is
12 contained in that version of the constitution and that
13 has been perpetrated ever since.

14 So, but why the school should have been linked to
15 the home prior to 1931, I have no idea.

16 Q. All right. So that's, as it were, lost in the mists of
17 time?

18 A. Lost in the mists of time.

19 Q. Well if we can turn, please, to the A to D response.

20 That's at RHH.001.001.0001.

21 LADY SMITH: Just while that's coming up, Alastair, just
22 a couple of questions.

23 You were at school in Musselburgh, obviously?

24 A. Yes.

25 LADY SMITH: Yes. We have heard some evidence that there

1 were some issues between the Red House children and
2 other children -- this would be your era, from a witness
3 from your era -- because other children seemed to expect
4 the Red House children to be tough and tougher, because
5 they were 'home' children. Do you remember anything
6 like that?

7 A. Yes, I would agree that -- to say 'stigmatised' would be
8 wrong, but as children of that age, anybody that was
9 deemed to be different were treated to a certain extent
10 differently. But I never had any personal knowledge of
11 particular animosity, either from the boys from the home
12 or the boys in the school.

13 LADY SMITH: Okay. But you would know who the Red House
14 children were, is that it?

15 A. Yes, they were dressed slightly different because the --
16 I think their clothing was donated or what have you, and
17 they would not have a major budget to clothe the boys,
18 as they would coming from a normal working home or
19 whatever. So there was a bit of a visual distinction.

20 LADY SMITH: Mm-hmm. Do you remember any particular
21 hand-knitted jumpers that they wore?

22 A. I do, and --

23 LADY SMITH: What do you remember about them?

24 A. Well, would it be Fair Isle, Fair Isle pattern or
25 something like that?

1 LADY SMITH: Yes.

2 A. But having said that, because -- the parents at that
3 time and mothers in particular were great knitters.

4 LADY SMITH: Of course.

5 A. And I may well have had a Fair Isle jersey myself at one
6 point.

7 LADY SMITH: One other thing, and this is mining your memory
8 again, I've heard some evidence about the Red House
9 boys, it would probably be a couple of them each
10 Saturday, were sent to a bakery in Musselburgh because
11 the bakery donated a tray of cakes, probably their
12 reject cakes, maybe the icing had gone wrong or
13 something, to the house, to Red House each week. Which
14 bakery do you think that would have been?

15 A. At that time in Musselburgh there was quite a few, so it
16 could either have been Ford's, Cossar's, or one of maybe
17 four or five. Cossar's Bakery in Musselburgh was the
18 closest to the home.

19 LADY SMITH: Ah right.

20 A. They were down in that part of the town.

21 LADY SMITH: But that would fit with, as you say, the
22 Red House being well-known in the town and people doing
23 what they could to show respect.

24 A. Yeah, mm-hmm, to help out, yeah.

25 LADY SMITH: To help out.

1 A. And that was before the date of sell-by and best before.

2 LADY SMITH: Oh, of course. Thank you.

3 Mr Sheldon.

4 MR SHELDON: Thank you, my Lady.

5 So I think the A to D response should be on the
6 screen in front of you. Can you see that all right?

7 A. Mm-hmm.

8 Q. Page 1 just gives some of the basic history. We see at
9 the top there that the home was founded originally in
10 1874, the Red House Home Trust constituted under a trust
11 deed in 1931. I think we know actually it was
12 a statutory scheme, does that sound familiar?

13 A. Yes, I think that's so. Mm-hmm.

14 Q. And about halfway down the page, (vii), we see that
15 Red House Home ceased operating in 1986 due to the
16 change in social work department management of
17 children's care from institutional care to fostering.
18 So there was a move towards accommodating children more
19 in the community than in homes; does that sound right?

20 A. Yeah. That's absolutely right. And a wee codicil to
21 that answer would be that by 19 -- by the 1980s and
22 thereabouts, most of the referrals were actually coming
23 via local authorities.

24 Q. Well, I was just about to --

25 A. And not just Musselburgh. The admissions book shows

1 referrals from other authorities as far afield as
2 Glasgow and other bits of the Lothians, but not
3 necessarily local.

4 Q. If we look at page 2, just following on from that point,
5 at heading 1.2 and (i), it's noted there, yes, initially
6 the home was funded by endowments, dividends and so on,
7 parental contributions, but in later times children were
8 funded by their referring local authority. So that's
9 really just emphasising what you've just told us?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. I think originally the home was, under the 1931 scheme,
12 the home was for, I'm quoting, 'destitute boys', is that
13 right?

14 A. Yeah, orphaned and destitute boys. And one of the ethos
15 of the school was to educate them and encourage them to
16 move into apprenticeships. Some of the older boys
17 obviously being able to do that, they then contributed
18 to the funds of the home with a portion of their wages.

19 Q. Yes. But at some stage, I think we know it's 1960, the
20 word 'destitute' is dropped from the scheme, the
21 constitution?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. So it's just a home for boys?

24 A. Home for boys.

25 Q. And references can come from local authorities in that

1 way.

2 If we look, please, at page 6, just at the top of
3 the page there's the question: how many children did the
4 organisation accommodate at a time? And the answer is
5 up to around 60 children in the establishment?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Where did that information come from, Alastair?

8 A. Erm, I'm not entirely sure where that information came
9 from, but -- it must have just been the search of the
10 admissions log.

11 Q. All right.

12 A. I mean, it's a fairly substantial building. It's over
13 four storeys.

14 LADY SMITH: It sounds like an awful lot.

15 A. It actually does.

16 LADY SMITH: We have been told --

17 A. I don't think we ever had 60 -- I don't think there were
18 ever 60 boys.

19 LADY SMITH: And we heard from one piece of evidence that
20 the top floor wasn't occupied really until some girls
21 came along?

22 A. That may well be the case, but I have no kind of direct
23 knowledge of that.

24 MR SHELDON: We'll look in a moment or two at one of the
25 annual reports, Alastair, which gives perhaps a little

1 bit more of an idea about numbers, but I'll come to
2 that.

3 At (iii) we're told how many children in total were
4 accommodated and, according to the admissions register,
5 1,053 children between 1974 and 1986?

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. And that was taken from the admissions register?

8 A. Direct from the admissions register.

9 Q. All right. Does that figure seem a bit low?

10 A. Considering --

11 Q. If it's covering that whole period?

12 A. -- that the capacity was supposed -- was nominally 60,
13 it does seem a bit low.

14 Q. Well, as I say, we'll look at numbers a little bit more
15 in a moment or two.

16 Page 8, please. Heading 1.8(a)(ii):

17 'How many people were employed by the organisation
18 at any one time who had some responsibility for
19 residential care services?'

20 It's said the house matron, superintendent and
21 domestic staff, number not known.

22 A. That's correct. Unfortunately, any record of staff
23 employed disappeared. There must have been National
24 Insurance numbers and all that sort of thing recorded
25 somewhere, but unfortunately we were not able to find

1 any record of domestic staff.

2 Q. Yes. And if we look further down that page, in the
3 past, it's really towards the bottom, (x):

4 'How many involved in the provision of care?'

5 And the answer is two, house matron and
6 superintendent.

7 And (xii):

8 'What was the childcare worker-child numbers ratio?'

9 '2 to 30-50.'

10 Alastair, if that is right, if that is right, does
11 that seem like a reasonable staff-to-resident ratio?

12 A. I would personally say not really, but in the absence of
13 records of other members of staff, whether they were
14 domestic, the cook -- there must have been cooks -- and
15 the maids, although I think perhaps the boys were
16 expected to lend a hand with the day-to-day running of
17 various things, they would have delegated duties,
18 I would imagine. But I'm afraid that's how we used to
19 run BB camps, you know, if we applied the same ethos.

20 But I think there must have been more permanent
21 staff, records of which have disappeared unfortunately.

22 Q. Yes. We have certainly heard evidence there was a cook.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Certainly at some points in the history of the home.

25 And possibly other domestic staff, but not many domestic

1 staff?

2 A. No idea. Can't really answer that question.

3 Q. If we look at page 9, please, under the heading of
4 'Governance', we see that the trust was managed by board
5 of governors and trustees and that these, (ii), were
6 recruited locally by board as required. Ex officio
7 members, as you told us, were the headmaster of
8 Loretto School and its chaplain.

9 And it's then said:

10 'What qualifications/training, if any, did the
11 members require to have in relation to the provision of
12 residential care services for children?'

13 And the answer is: 'None'?

14 A. I think that could be -- 'none recorded' may be more
15 accurate.

16 Q. Perhaps we can just look then at one of the annual
17 reports. It's at RHH-000000044.

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. And if we scroll down, I think we see that that's the
20 annual report for 1943?

21 A. '3.

22 Q. And on page 2, we've got a note of the governing body
23 with the various members of the board and the trustees.
24 So we've got the master of Loretto School, we've got
25 a JP, we've got a solicitor, we've got, I think,

1 a doctor, someone who's recorded as having an OBE and so
2 on.

3 So on the face of it, it doesn't appear that these
4 are people with particular qualifications in residential
5 childcare?

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. And if we look, please -- bear with me -- at another
8 document, SGV-001037910. And does that appear to be
9 a letter from the Red House Home to the Scottish
10 Education Department?

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 Q. And it is certainly date-stamped 25 October 1960, you
13 see that?

14 A. I see that, yes.

15 Q. And the first paragraph indicates in the second line:

16 'I have to confirm that my governors agree to the
17 deletion of the word "destitute" in the description of
18 the home and the substitution of "children's" ...'

19 So that's what we were talking about earlier on,
20 about the entrants to the home being widened?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. No doubt to allow local authorities to place children?

23 A. Mm-hm.

24 Q. And in the second paragraph we are told:

25 'I have also to inform you that the governors,

1 having reconsidered the suggestion that the governing
2 body should include a co-opted member who is also
3 a member of the local authority children's committee,
4 have decided that the present board of nine members is
5 not only fairly representative but is functioning
6 adequately and successfully for the good of the boys in
7 the home. They do not see what useful purpose could be
8 served by the inclusion of a member from a local
9 authority children's committee and they therefore feel
10 that it is unnecessary to cover this point in any
11 amending scheme.'

12 So does it seem, Alastair, that it's been proposed
13 that someone from the children's home should sit --

14 A. Yes, they certainly -- I've never seen this document
15 before and I wasn't aware when the word 'destitute' was
16 removed from the constitution.

17 Q. So it seems that there was, as it were, the opportunity
18 to have --

19 A. Absolutely.

20 Q. -- someone who is a little more au fait with matters
21 relating to children, but that the board turned that
22 opportunity down?

23 A. I would say, looking at the list of the board members in
24 the previous slide, that I don't think many or any of
25 them had direct contact with the boys on a regular

1 basis. I think they were more of an overseeing
2 management committee responsible for maintaining
3 funding. And I know that they had inspections. I think
4 other reports mention inspections by the board of
5 governors, but they were -- they didn't go en bloc,
6 I think they kind of shared the inspections down the
7 list of governors on a kind of monthly basis or thereby.

8 LADY SMITH: But it also doesn't look as though any of them
9 had a background in --

10 A. No, I think they were looking at the names, and my
11 knowledge of the names, they are reasonably prominent
12 Musselburgh gentlemen and I think --

13 LADY SMITH: The only one there that has the experience of
14 responsibility for children, children who are not your
15 own children, seems to be the headmaster of Loretto --

16 A. Yes.

17 LADY SMITH: -- from what I can see. There was mention of
18 the chaplain also being a trustee ex officio and he may
19 be one of the others, I suppose. Maybe the Reverend
20 Simmers.

21 A. He may have been the chaplain --

22 LADY SMITH: Chaplain of Loretto.

23 A. -- to Loretto.

24 LADY SMITH: And a local minister perhaps. No?

25 A. I don't think so. We've always had a local minister, as

1 far as I can tell, on the board.

2 LADY SMITH: And Loretto had its own -- has its own chapel.

3 A. Yeah. For instance, when I joined the board in 2014, or
4 2004, the chaplain and the Reverend Ron Brown were both
5 on the board. So it doesn't follow that Charles Simmers
6 was --

7 LADY SMITH: No, of course.

8 A. He'd more likely have been a local minister.

9 LADY SMITH: Okay, but it does seem, going back to the
10 letter, that what lay behind the second paragraph
11 was the governors --

12 A. They could do with somebody.

13 LADY SMITH: -- having perhaps being firmly urged to think
14 seriously about taking on somebody from the local --

15 A. Local authority.

16 LADY SMITH: -- authority children's committee, and you
17 really couldn't have got a clearer or firmer pushback.

18 A. Absolutely.

19 LADY SMITH: 'Get your tanks off our lawn', effectively.
20 Yes.

21 A. I cannae really answer the question.

22 LADY SMITH: No. But it does look like that, doesn't it?

23 A. It does. It does.

24 LADY SMITH: Mr Sheldon.

25 MR SHELDON: Thank you, my Lady.

1 A. But --

2 Q. If we can just go back to the previous document, that's
3 the report, RHH-000000044, just to look a little bit at
4 that, just to get a flavour of it.

5 We see the -- on page 2, the second column, there is
6 a report for the year ending 31 December 1943. Close of
7 the year, first paragraph, there were in the home
8 29 boys of whom four were apprentices.

9 Second paragraph:

10 'Apart from one boy who ran away to his mother, who
11 kept him, after he had been in the home only a few days,
12 the admissions include eight boys whose parents were
13 separated, homes broken ...'

14 And so on.

15 'The ten boys who left the home during the year,
16 seven found homes with relatives whose circumstances had
17 improved.' And we're told, for example: 'Of the
18 remaining three boys, one went to the navy, one mentally
19 backward, was removed by the Poor Law authority, and one
20 ran away to his mother as stated.'

21 There's then a section about the finances of the
22 home and over the page, about halfway down, there's
23 a note that:

24 'Boys of school age attend the local school at
25 Fisherrow.'

1 And the headmaster there reports upon their conduct
2 as follows, and he says:

3 'The conduct of the boys at school has again, on the
4 session, on the whole, been quite good.'

5 And second sentence:

6 'There is the usual good standard of neatness and
7 cleanliness. In respect of the clothing, boots and
8 general nourishment the home boys are well cared for in
9 these difficult times.'

10 Of course, this would be war time:

11 'This is reflected in their attendance at school
12 which again reflects their standard of health and
13 freedom from illness ...'

14 And so on.

15 Just towards the bottom:

16 'A pleasing feature worthy of report is the
17 increasing number of former inmates of the home who come
18 back on a visit to the school to see their old
19 teachers.'

20 Interesting, the use of the word 'inmates' in that
21 context, isn't it?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. It suggests that Red House Home may be viewed as a sort
24 of prison?

25 A. I think it's an unfortunate -- I try to avoid using the

1 term 'inmates' and sometimes it's difficult to get other
2 words to cover.

3 Q. In the second column of that page there's another
4 section about the boys and the maintenance of the home,
5 the fabric of the home. And we then have a section at
6 the bottom with regard to the health of the boys during
7 the year:

8 'Dr Aitchison, one of the medical officers ...'

9 And I think we assume that's one of the medical
10 officers of the home?

11 A. Oh yes, aye, to be sure.

12 Q. '... reports that the general health of the boys and
13 apprentices for the year ending ... is very
14 satisfactory.'

15 And there's a note also from the dentist.

16 If the medical officer of the home is also on the
17 board, does that not raise potentially an issue of, as
18 it were, marking your own homework?

19 A. I would say probably, yes, but I think it was important
20 to have medical attention for the boys. And I think
21 that was recognised almost from the concept, the outset,
22 that a local doctor would be engaged fairly closely with
23 the home.

24 Q. I don't think anyone disputes that. It's really just
25 the idea of the medical officer also being on the board.

1 A. Mm-hmm.

2 Q. But I'll leave that point there.

3 If we could -- and I'm sorry, just to look briefly
4 at page 4, the first column, and there's a note that:
5 'Although owing to continued war conditions, the
6 idea of a summer holiday camp had again to be abandoned,
7 games and outings were arranged ...'

8 So summer camp's off, at least at this point,
9 unfortunately.

10 I just want to look very briefly at another report.
11 It's really mainly to get an idea of numbers, Alastair.
12 If we look at RHH-000000045, please.

13 We see this is a report for 1947 this time.

14 A. Yes, mm-hmm.

15 Q. And on page 2 there's the familiar note of the members
16 of the governing body, and then page 3, this is again
17 the report on the state of the home and if we look at
18 the bottom of that column:
19 'As at December 1946, there were 41 boys in the
20 home.'

21 So numbers up substantially on the previous report.
22 I suppose that -- might that have been as a result of
23 the war?

24 A. It could well have been, I would imagine, yes, that
25 they're casualties.

1 Q. Yes. But in all events, the numbers are creeping up
2 towards the kind of figures that are mentioned in the
3 A to D?

4 A. Yeah, mm-hmm.

5 Q. Now, if we can go back, please, to the A to D, and
6 looking, please, at page 10, this is a section about
7 culture, and at -- the first question is answered:
8 'What was the nature of the culture within the
9 establishment?'

10 'Support of children in need.'

11 And skipping to answer (iii):
12 'How can that be demonstrated?'

13 And it is said:
14 'This can be demonstrated in the annual reports.'

15 I just want to ask you a little bit about that,
16 Alastair. We're told that the culture is the 'support
17 of children in need'?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. And the A to D is using the annual reports to support
20 that idea, that answer. I just wonder to what extent we
21 can really tell very much at all about the culture of
22 the home from the annual reports?

23 A. The reports were written by the home. It kind of harks
24 back to the trustees marking their own homework, because
25 they would be responsible for writing the reports,

1 presumably.

2 I personally can only rely on the contents of the
3 report under this distance and time, and considering how
4 things have changed from -- culture and ethos from then
5 until now. We assume, I assume, that they were honest
6 men and the home was run on a reasonable basis and for
7 the benefit of the people in the home.

8 Q. Yes. It's just that in relation to some other
9 establishments, not all, in fairness, but some other
10 establishments, we have seen much more detailed records
11 of the day-to-day running of the home, staff's comments
12 on children and events that have taken place and so on;
13 whereas the annual report, it's a very general overview,
14 is it not?

15 A. It is, uh-huh.

16 Q. And very difficult to get a feel for what actually being
17 in the home may have been like; would you agree?

18 A. I agree. I would agree with that. Not knowing the
19 people who either compiled the reports or -- with the
20 lack of day-to-day reports, you know, if there were
21 instances or incidents, I would have thought that there
22 would have been some kind of record held within the
23 premises, which, if they existed, would give us
24 a clearer picture of exactly what the relationship
25 between the boys, peer groups, and the staff and the

1 employees was, but unfortunately, all that we've really
2 got to go on is what was written in the reports.

3 Now, I'm not in any way saying that they were
4 sanitised, but I think at this stage we have to take
5 them on face value.

6 LADY SMITH: Would you think it's reasonable to have
7 expected at the very least for there to have been daily
8 logs, as you've already mentioned, punishment books and
9 files for individual children?

10 A. I would have thought probably, yes, but we certainly
11 have never had sight of any such detail. The only
12 records that are available to us are these published
13 reports, some minute books, which seem to have not
14 existed after 1986. I think there's one or two where
15 the run-up to the closure of the hall -- the home, there
16 are some minute books from the governors, but again
17 these minutes don't go into kind of day-to-day
18 happenings in the home. It's more to do with the
19 management and, you know, what the future holds for the
20 trust.

21 MR SHELDON: And in fairness to you, Alastair, there are
22 more detailed reports or minutes in those minute books
23 and we'll look at least at a couple of examples of those
24 later on.

25 But as I think you've really made clear, I was going

1 to ask you about this later, but just to get the point
2 now, really there are no, as far as you're aware, no
3 logs or punishment books or anything like that; is that
4 right?

5 A. That's correct, yeah.

6 Q. We do have the admissions and discharges register.

7 A. Mm-hm.

8 Q. And indeed some of the information in the A to D came
9 from that. I just wonder, and you may not be able to
10 answer this, but I just wonder how it could have been or
11 why it should have been that the admissions and
12 discharges register survived, but nothing else did?

13 A. I really can't answer that question. And I wouldn't
14 like to conjecture why that should be.

15 Q. I mean, I suppose the two alternatives are that the
16 records did exist and are simply lost or destroyed?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Or that the records were never kept in the first place?

19 A. That's the two alternatives, that's correct.

20 Q. And either way that's not a helpful position for the
21 trust to be in, or, indeed, for this Inquiry to be in?

22 A. I agree.

23 Q. There were legal requirements for such records to be
24 kept, so if they weren't being kept, then that would
25 have been a breach of those requirements; is that right?

1 A. I assume so, yes.

2 Q. Again, you may not be able to answer this, but do you
3 know, are you aware whether, when the home closed, the
4 trust took any advice about appropriate steps, for
5 example for preservation of records?

6 A. No idea at all.

7 Q. Moving on then, still on page 10, if we scroll down to
8 (vi), we see that there's a question about changes in
9 the culture and it said: '1979 changed to admit girls',
10 and: '1986 closed due to change in social attitudes'.

11 I understood, Alastair, that there was a change to
12 the constitution to the trust scheme in 1980, which
13 would have allowed girls to be admitted?

14 A. That's correct.

15 Q. Does that sound familiar?

16 A. Yeah, I thought it was 1979 that the constitution was
17 changed. I think that came about from social works
18 departments wishing to not separate siblings.

19 Q. And I suppose if numbers were falling, then it would
20 assist the home to some extent --

21 A. It would, that's right.

22 Q. -- by keeping levels of grant --

23 A. They could take other referrals, that's correct.

24 Q. But I just want to, and again you may not be able to
25 answer, but is it that in practice girls were admitted

1 from 1979, or is it just that perhaps a change was voted
2 on by the board in 1979 for a change that came into
3 effect in 1980?

4 A. I think the change was emanated from without the trust.
5 I think there was obviously a communication from local
6 authorities or whomever to suggest that they should
7 become co-ed, and it was agreed and eventually the
8 constitution allowed for girls to be admitted.

9 Q. Sure. Page 11, please, briefly. Just to note that at
10 the top of that page there's a list of the matrons and
11 superintendents of the home and it's perhaps striking,
12 Alastair, that there actually seems to have been
13 remarkably few of them?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And the Cairns stayed for a long time, 1946 to 1971?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. And the Duncans, 1971 to 1986?

18 A. That's right. I would say, my personal memories of the
19 Cairns were they were quite well known in the town as
20 the superintendent and the matron of the home and they
21 generally, I would say generally speaking, were well
22 respected, and they did serve the home for a good number
23 of years.

24 Q. Yes. Did you know them personally?

25 A. I did not know them personally but I knew of them, who

1 they were. And they had a big dog as well that
2 I remembered, which is irrelevant to the question,
3 but -- yeah, they were well known, they were out and
4 about in the town and, yeah.

5 Q. But I suppose the flip side of that is that if there was
6 any problem with the running of the home then, or,
7 indeed, in the conduct of any of the staff, particularly
8 the Cairns, then that's a long period of time for things
9 to carry on without changing the staff in charge?

10 A. I think -- I can't -- I've no intimate knowledge
11 obviously of the performance of the matron and the
12 superintendent, but I can only assume that the board of
13 governors were perfectly satisfied with the standard of
14 care and their work that the pair, the couple, were
15 doing. And they were perfectly satisfied to allow them
16 to carry on for nearly 30 years.

17 Q. But do we know, Alastair, how the board satisfied
18 themselves of that?

19 A. Not really.

20 Q. If we look at --

21 A. Well, I think -- well, I say that, but the matron and
22 the superintendent, I think, and I may be mistaken, but
23 I think they did attend the monthly meetings of the
24 board of governors. So they were in frequent contact.
25 And as I say, in rotation, the governors visited the

1 home on regular basis. So they were under fairly close
2 supervision by the board of governors.

3 Q. Well, I wonder if that's right, Alastair. I think you
4 suggested earlier on that visits might have been
5 monthly. Does that --

6 A. I think so. I seem to -- I remember coming across some
7 piece of information somewhere in my research about the
8 whole thing.

9 Q. Yes. So it's a monthly snapshot perhaps at best?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Do we know if the governors, the trustees, spoke to any
12 of the children?

13 A. I can't really answer that, not being around at the time
14 or not being involved in visits, you know. I came on
15 very much later on.

16 Q. I appreciate it's difficult, Alastair, and does it come
17 back to the difficulty that there's no records of what
18 the visits were like?

19 A. Yeah, absolutely.

20 Q. And if we can just look, to finish off that point, at
21 the foot of that page in relation to external oversight,
22 there's a note that there was oversight, this is 2.6,
23 (i):

24 'What were the arrangements for external oversight?'

25 '[SED], social works department.'

1 And they were at least supposed to visit the home
2 for the assessment of running of the home.

3 'How often did this occur?'

4 '[It's] not recorded.'

5 'What did these visits involve in practice?'

6 '[It's] not recorded.'

7 Just to be clear, Alastair, does that -- do those
8 answers mean that there is a record of the visits, but
9 what they amounted to isn't recorded, or that there is
10 just no record?

11 A. There's just no record. All I would say on that, it was
12 1933 that the Scottish Education Department, or the home
13 came within the bailiwick of the Scottish Education
14 Department and they would be subject to departmental
15 visitations, and presumably the same applies to the
16 social works department.

17 Interrogation of these two department records may
18 well reveal more information, but certainly there is
19 nothing that the home itself had.

20 I would have thought that the reports would have
21 been compiled by these departments and sent to the home,
22 but if that's the case, they've disappeared.

23 Q. At page 13, please, and this is another section of the
24 A to D on acknowledgements and admissions or potentially
25 so, and the first question at 3.1(i) is:

1 'Does the organisation/establishment accept that
2 between 1930 and 2014 some children cared for at the
3 establishment were abused?'

4 And the answer is: 'No'.

5 What was the basis for that, Alastair?

6 A. Purely because there are no records. There's no written
7 record, dated or that we have, that record any
8 allegations or establishment of abuse. So we really
9 couldn't answer that question in any other way, you
10 know.

11 Q. Have you had an opportunity to follow any of the
12 evidence that we've heard in the last few days,
13 Alastair?

14 A. Evidence, which evidence is that?

15 Q. Evidence about Red House Home.

16 A. I'm not aware of anything that's come up.

17 LADY SMITH: Mr Sheldon's referring to evidence we heard
18 from people, adults now, who were boys at Red House
19 Home.

20 A. I'm not aware of that.

21 LADY SMITH: Ah, right.

22 MR SHELDON: It's just, Alastair, that we have had a number
23 of reports from witnesses who appeared in person and who
24 have given witness statements to the Inquiry reporting
25 abuse of various sorts at Red House, from the 1960s

1 right through to the 1980s; sexual abuse, physical
2 abuse, what we would call emotional abuse.

3 LADY SMITH: And in the case of one of them, beginning in
4 the 1950s.

5 MR SHELDON: Yes.

6 LADY SMITH: Yes.

7 MR SHELDON: So the evidence that we have, Alastair,
8 suggests real problems for a very long period of time
9 with abuse in Red House Home and if that's right, if
10 that evidence is to be accepted, then the answer here
11 should be 'yes', shouldn't it?

12 A. Mm-hmm. Certainly when we were interrogating the
13 records that we did have, we had no evidence to go on.
14 That's all I can say.

15 Q. All right.

16 A. Other than the two incidents that have -- that are noted
17 there.

18 Q. Yes. And there's then a question about systemic
19 failures:

20 'Does the organisation accept that its systems
21 failed to protect children?'

22 And you note, as there are only two allegations of
23 abuse -- this was one, I think, you mentioned made by
24 Robert Black, the serial killer, and a complaint that
25 was received in 2016 -- you say:

1 'There are only two allegations of abuse, therefore
2 we would not draw any conclusions regarding system
3 failure.'

4 Again, Alastair, I just wonder if we can think about
5 that, because for one thing, there are now no records
6 from which we can judge the system's performance, and it
7 may be, it may be, that records simply weren't kept.
8 And if that is right, then that would be a systemic
9 failure, wouldn't it?

10 A. Yes, I agree.

11 Q. And certainly on the basis of the A to D, if there are
12 only two members of staff principally responsible for
13 caring for, for example, 30 or 40 children, then that
14 also might be regarded as a systemic failure; is that
15 right?

16 A. I would agree.

17 Q. And indeed -- and again, we're hamstrung by the lack of
18 records, but if the oversight of the running of the home
19 consisted of a visit by, if I can put it this way,
20 a non-expert member of the board to the home each month,
21 then that doesn't seem like adequate scrutiny or
22 oversight, does it?

23 A. I can't answer that question.

24 Q. But again, it's at least arguable that that would be
25 another systemic failure?

1 A. It would certainly point to that.

2 Q. I just want to look, I hope fairly briefly, at some of
3 the records that we do have, mainly from the 1980s.

4 So if we can look first of all at RHH-000000013,
5 please. And this, we see, is the minutes of meetings of
6 governors held at the home, November 1980, and there's
7 a note of the attendees. And there's then material
8 about financial position, admissions and discharges,
9 staff. We see that a Miss Campbell and a Mrs Glynn had
10 accepted offers made to them. So certainly by that
11 stage there were at least two female members of staff
12 working at Red Home; does that seem to be right?

13 A. Mm-hmm.

14 Q. And certainly, and in fairness to you, this is at least
15 some more detail about how the place was being run at
16 this time.

17 And if we look at page 7, this is a further minute
18 from June 1980 and there's quite a long passage there in
19 relation to financial position and dealing with the
20 amounts due by Lothian Region.

21 So funding is coming to Red House from Lothian
22 Region, presumably the social work department at that
23 stage; would that be right?

24 A. I wouldn't -- I've no knowledge of the arrangements at
25 that time.

1 Q. Sure. And there's also some smaller donations from,
2 among others, Loretto School and the Musselburgh Fair
3 Day Association.

4 If we can look at RHH-000000014, please. This is
5 a minute from 1985 and if we look at the section on
6 staff, there's a note that Mr McNeil, who -- would he
7 have been the chair at that stage?

8 A. Mm-hmm.

9 Q. -- had a meeting at short notice with himself,
10 Dr George, Mr Urquhart regarding staffing levels. And
11 it's noted that Mr Urquhart had reported that a Mrs Cox,
12 who had a CQSW qualification and had formerly worked at
13 Tynepark, had been appointed and hoped to start 15 July.

14 So again, it certainly seems by that stage that at
15 least one member of staff at Red House had
16 a qualification of some sort.

17 A. A qualification, mm-hmm.

18 Q. But this is, I suppose, as late as 1985 and the home is
19 shut by 1986.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. If we look at page 11, please. And there's a section
22 with the heading 'Houseparents' Report':

23 'The houseparents reported on the general problems
24 being experienced by the home and the very disturbed
25 teenagers with which they were now having to deal. The

1 problems were fully appreciated by the governors, but
2 while other avenues of operating the home were
3 considered, it was felt that there was no option at
4 present but to continue to deal with the very severely
5 disturbed and difficult teenagers presently being
6 admitted.'

7 And we can all appreciate that children at some
8 points may behave in challenging ways?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. But does that perhaps emphasise the need for qualified
11 and experienced staff to deal with children who are
12 liable to act out, I suppose, in ways like that?

13 A. I would agree, yes.

14 Q. And page 14, please, there's a note about occupancy
15 level:

16 'The present occupancy level was nine but was likely
17 to reduce --'

18 LADY SMITH: Sorry, which year was this? We're now back to
19 1984. The previous one was 1985, wasn't it.

20 MR SHELDON: Yes, I'm sorry, my Lady, I should have taken
21 the heading:

22 'Present occupancy level was nine but likely to
23 reduce to eight in the course of the next few days. In
24 all the circumstances and bearing in mind the very high
25 occupancy level pertaining throughout the year to date,

1 was still a satisfactory level.'

2 So it certainly appears that numbers have gone
3 down --

4 A. Fallen off, yes.

5 Q. -- fairly significantly, but that is still regarded as
6 a high occupancy level?

7 A. Mm-hm.

8 Q. Page 28, please. There is a note, again the
9 houseparents' report, and this is 1983, I should have
10 taken that, sorry. It was page 27, minutes of
11 a meeting, October 1983.

12 And over the page, the houseparents' report:

13 'One of the older boys had assaulted a younger boy
14 last week and the matter reported to both boys' social
15 workers.'

16 So I suppose if one were to quibble, Alastair, that
17 would appear to be an example of --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- abuse taking place within the home?

20 A. Absolutely, yes.

21 Q. And in the next paragraph we're told that on
22 a particular occasion a resident attacked zEWW
23 and Mrs RGA and charges were pressed.

24 First of all, do we know who zEWW is or was?

25 A. No knowledge of zEWW or Mrs RGA .

1 Q. All right. I think we know that Mrs RGA was a member
2 of staff, but perhaps less certain about zEWW .
3 And we are told the boy appeared in the District Court
4 and was given a deferred sentence.
5 I suppose the question that arises there is, this
6 boy's done something really quite --
7 A. Serious, aye.
8 Q. -- quite serious. There doesn't seem to be any
9 indication that the governors or the board were asking
10 themselves why?
11 A. Again, not being party or privileged to have been a part
12 of the board at that time, it's something that
13 I personally cannot answer.
14 Q. Can we look at another document, please, RHH-000000019.
15 LADY SMITH: zEWW , Mr Sheldon, if EWW , whose
16 identity is protected and not to be disclosed outside
17 this room, married somebody called zEWW , it might be
18 her.
19 MR SHELDON: That was my immediate thought, my Lady, yes.
20 I just want to close then, Alastair, by asking you
21 about the Redress Scheme. Am I right in thinking that
22 Red House Home Trust is not a member of the Redress
23 Scheme?
24 A. That's correct.
25 Q. Was there ever consideration of joining the scheme?

1 A. Yes. We went through the process once the Redress
2 Scheme had been set up and we had a meeting with two of
3 the Scottish Government officials, of which we have
4 a record.

5 Eventually, once we got the offer to cover us, or
6 for us to join the scheme, although there was a limit of
7 £500,000 on a cap, I assume on claims, we also had the
8 information from the Redress Scheme that our annual
9 contribution would amount to £10,000 a year.

10 We have a limited -- our only source of income is
11 returns and income from investments, and they normally
12 amount to no more than £20,000 a year. We endeavour to
13 leave the capital sums invested to mature and provide
14 that income.

15 LADY SMITH: What's the current value of your capital,
16 approximately?

17 A. About £5.5000 -- £550,000. Roughly.

18 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

19 A. It fluctuates obviously with the market value of shares
20 and all that sort of thing.

21 LADY SMITH: Of course.

22 A. But the thing is that our target is to aim to have
23 an income from the share dividends et cetera of
24 somewhere between £18,000 and £22,000 annually, and the
25 administration costs of the trust amount to about

1 £8,000, so that leaves us somewhere between £8,000 and
2 £12,000 for dispensing and grants.

3 If we had then to pay the premium of £10,000 a year,
4 we would not have been able to -- nobody would have
5 benefited from the trust. And I would hazard a guess
6 that we would probably have to wind the trust up,
7 because we would not have the income to administer the
8 trust and to carry out the work required by the trust's
9 constitution.

10 MR SHELDON: What are grants -- can you give us examples of
11 the sort of things that grants are given by the trust?

12 A. Well, the constitution is, the grants for the education
13 of young people who are -- I've got something somewhere
14 here, bear with me.

15 To quote the constitution:

16 'The promotion of the education and training of
17 young persons under the age of 22, who are in need of
18 care or are living in deprived circumstances or
19 otherwise required assistance to adjust to independent
20 lives.'

21 And the typical grants, we've got two categories of
22 grant: individual and organisation. Individual grants
23 are -- have been awarded to people, young people
24 developing their education by taking a year out and
25 going on the -- some of the -- through charitable

1 organisations, teaching in Venezuela or these things.

2 More recently, we've been -- other individual grants
3 will be granted to cover transport costs to college,
4 equipment required for college education. And as far as
5 the organisations are concerned, we have supported
6 school trips quite regularly.

7 And what happens with the organisations is that we
8 ask if a school, for instance, is taking a whole year to
9 Flanders, if there are specific cases within that year
10 group who require assistance, we ask for these numbers
11 to be given to us and we award a grant to cover these
12 specific children.

13 Other things; we also give grants to kindred
14 organisations, like the Bridges Project, which have very
15 similar aims to our own. Now, the Bridges Project may
16 come up with a particular project within their bailiwick
17 that is requiring a bit of assistance from us, and we
18 have in the past given them assistance by way of grants.

19 We are fairly limited, obviously, in the amounts
20 that we can dispense.

21 MR SHELDON: I have nothing further, my Lady.

22 LADY SMITH: Alastair, thank you so much. It's been really
23 helpful hearing from you in person and I'm very
24 conscious of the fact that we've been having to ask you
25 about matters which date back to before your time as

1 being a trustee of the Red House Trust. But
2 I'm grateful to you for bearing with us and doing your
3 best to answer as fully as you can.
4 Now, do feel free to go and I hope you have
5 a relaxing day for the rest of today.
6 A. Thanks very much.
7 LADY SMITH: Thank you.
8 (The witness withdrew)
9 LADY SMITH: So before I rise for a break, names again.
10 I mentioned all of these yesterday: FSE-FSK ,
11 EWC-EWD , and now EWV who may also be
12 zEWV . None of these people are to be identified
13 as referred to in our evidence outside this room. The
14 names can be used here, but not beyond there if it's
15 in -- by reference to our evidence.
16 Now, Mr Sheldon, the plan now is for you to hand
17 over after the break for Ponton House.
18 MR SHELDON: I will hand the baton to Mr Peoples.
19 LADY SMITH: Yes.
20 MR SHELDON: And that is to start at 2 o'clock, my Lady,
21 I think.
22 LADY SMITH: 2 o'clock, yes. Very well.
23 Well, I'll rise now until 2 o'clock. Thank you very
24 much.
25 (11.32 am)

1 (The luncheon adjournment)

2 (2.00 pm)

3 LADY SMITH: Good afternoon. Now, still within Phase 10,
4 I think we're going to turn to Ponton House and we're
5 going to start with reading in evidence, so let me turn
6 to Ms MacLeod and she'll kick us off, thank you.

7 MS MACLEOD: My Lady, yes. This afternoon, I plan to read
8 in the statements of three applicants and that's
9 evidence which relates to Ponton House.

10 The first statement can be found at WIT-1-000005562.
11 That is the statement of an applicant who will use the
12 pseudonym 'George'.

13 'George' (read in)

14 MS MACLEOD: 'My name is ['George']. I was born in 1949.
15 I am the second youngest of eight children. My mother
16 fell pregnant again soon after I was born. I had
17 a number of brothers and sisters. We all lived in
18 a two-bedroomed ground-floor tenement flat in Edinburgh.
19 My parents essentially had a room and a kitchen. My
20 father worked as a labourer and my mother had cleaning
21 jobs. We were known to the welfare department of
22 Edinburgh City Council.'

23 I'll now move on to paragraph 131, my Lady, where
24 the witness speaks specifically about his time at
25 Ponton House.

1 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

2 MS MACLEOD: Now, I can advise my Lady that from records
3 recovered by the Inquiry, it appears that this applicant
4 went into Ponton House in [REDACTED] 1965, when he would
5 have been aged 15, and that he left in [REDACTED] 1967, when he
6 would have been aged 17.

7 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

8 MS MACLEOD: 'I arrived at Ponton House at 14 years old in
9 1964. The home was run by the Edinburgh Corporation in
10 Magdala Crescent in the Haymarket area of Edinburgh.
11 They had two townhouses, numbers 6 and 7, which were
12 joined together internally. They were designed to house
13 and support children of my age up to the age of 19. It
14 was an institute for young working boys.

15 'Being a Victorian type of townhouse, they had quite
16 large rooms. They had television rooms and had games
17 rooms. There were shared bedrooms. There might have
18 been six or seven beds in each room. There was a whole
19 series of rooms in the loft space that we used for
20 games.

21 'I was given a ticket from the superintendent to go
22 and get some clothes from a local retailer. I was given
23 donkey jackets, overalls, trousers and a change of
24 underwear. In fact, I recall it was the first pair of
25 long trousers I had ever owned. I didn't really know

1 what a donkey jacket was and what I would do with the
2 overalls. They were given to me for this coming job
3 I was going to be getting.

4 'I was introduced to the BBC in Queen Street in
5 Edinburgh. I was given the post of internal mail boy.
6 I later discovered that this was an arrangement that the
7 Edinburgh Corporation had with the BBC to provide young
8 children, particularly boys, coming out of care
9 institutes to go to these apprenticeships in the BBC.

10 'Ponton House has become for me what I call, as in
11 Winston Churchill's statement goes, a "black dog" in my
12 life. I don't recall any of the rules and regulations.
13 They did have their own minibus and we would go away on
14 canoeing trips to Callander and down to the River Forth,
15 so we had activities.

16 'I can't recall anything about curfews or controls.
17 I have no knowledge of how the place was run or what
18 control the council had in it. I have very little
19 knowledge of Ponton House, nor have I sought any
20 information on the place. I never took any interest in
21 the management of Ponton House.

22 'I was allowed to stay at Ponton House until I was
23 19. I kind of --'

24 LADY SMITH: But you said that is probably overstated,
25 isn't it.

1 MS MACLEOD: According to the records he left before that,
2 my Lady:
3 'I kind of accepted that and just fell into that.
4 However, two things happened. My job at the BBC didn't
5 last more than nine months. I made a change to that.
6 I went out and sought an apprenticeship that I wanted in
7 the motor trade. Secondly, I made a move out of
8 Ponton House on my own initiative and my own desire to
9 get away from the place.'
10 So perhaps, my Lady, that reflects that he did leave
11 earlier than he could have:
12 'I found my own digs. It allowed me to move away
13 from Ponton House and to close the door behind me.
14 'I made my own mind up that I was leaving. I had my
15 own job that I had found. I was starting to become
16 independent.
17 'I might well have left there at 15. I do recall
18 finding my own digs at a very young age.
19 'I don't remember any link with the council or my
20 parents in terms of changing my guardianship status.
21 I don't recall any social work involvement after I left
22 Ponton House. I had no reason to contact the social
23 work. The social work certainly didn't contact me.
24 I don't remember any approach to my employer. I think
25 my employer would have come and mentioned it to me.

1 'One evening in Ponton House, three other boys who
2 were older than me came to me and dragged me into
3 a darkened cupboard. They sexually assaulted me.
4 I don't know the names of the boys. They were also
5 residents. They were probably a couple of years older
6 than me and were certainly a lot bigger and heavier than
7 me. There was a scuffle and shouting and I was
8 stripped. I was penetrated by one of the boys. I don't
9 know which one.

10 'When I came out of the cupboard, I was thoroughly
11 ashamed about what had happened. I was confused,
12 embarrassed and upset by the whole incident.

13 'I decided that I wanted to leave Ponton House and
14 separate myself from this sort of behaviour. By this
15 time, I had found my own job and I didn't want to go to
16 anybody for support or tell anybody about it. I just
17 closed the door on Ponton House and left.

18 'I later discovered that the house superintendent
19 seemed to know about what had happened to me. One day
20 when I was working at a garage, he came to visit me
21 unexpectedly. He told me that he knew all about my
22 sexual experience at the home. I got the impression
23 that this was a veiled threat to warn me off reporting
24 it.

25 'He was called Bryce Stewart. He was the man that

1 ran the place and he had a small family area in it for
2 his family. He was in his 40s and was heavily built.

3 'I think there must have been other abuse going on
4 there. There was a lot of taunting going on between the
5 boys and verbal bullying about being caught in
6 a situation and sexual abuse. So I knew that it was
7 going on.

8 'The difficulty is that I don't know if
9 Bryce Stewart knew it was going on. The visitation
10 I had with him was quite unexpected and the way that he
11 spoke to me makes me think that he must have had some
12 knowledge. There is no doubt in my mind that he had
13 some knowledge of what happened to me and what was going
14 on in the home.

15 'I think the abuse and sexual activity was endemic.
16 I formed the impression having lived amongst the
17 personalities involved.

18 'I left Ponton House and got an apprenticeship as
19 a motor mechanic in a garage. I used to cycle to work.
20 I also went to night school to learn about my
21 apprenticeship. I think I started at the garage when
22 I was about 15.'

23 And I think, as I've indicated, my Lady, the records
24 suggest he was a bit older than that:

25 'By the time I was 19, I was selling cars.

1 'I stayed at the garage for quite a long time and by
2 the time I left, I was in quite a senior position with
3 them. I was running quite a large operation and had
4 become successful within the company.

5 'I had found my own digs and employment without any
6 assistance from anybody.

7 'I had the impetus to carve out a career for myself.
8 It has caused me to be self-assured about where I was
9 going to be going and how I was going to achieve it.'

10 The witness then describes in the next section some
11 information and evidence about the impact his time in
12 care has had on his life, and I will go to paragraph 176
13 of the statement where the witness clarifies that he has
14 never reported anything to the police, and I will then
15 go to the end of the statement where the witness states
16 at paragraph 183:

17 'I have no objection to my witness statement being
18 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
19 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
20 true.'

21 'George' signed the statement on 14 May 2018.

22 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

23 Trevor Swistchew (read in)

24 MS MACLEOD: The next statement, my Lady, is of an applicant
25 who is not anonymous. His statement is

1 Trevor Swistchew. The statement can be found at
2 WIT.001.002.5172:

3 'My name is Trevor Swistchew. My date of birth is
4 in 1950. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

5 'I was born in the Western General Hospital in
6 Edinburgh and lived with my mother and father.

7 'My mother had difficulty in getting a home for us
8 and started squatting at an address in Newhaven. After
9 about six months, staff from Edinburgh Corporation
10 caught her living there illegally. Initially, they
11 threatened to evict her, but she came to an agreement
12 that she would pay rent for the house and was permitted
13 to stay.

14 'In about 1954 my father went missing. I think it
15 was when he was working on ships crossing from the UK to
16 America, but I'm not sure.

17 'Mum continued to work different jobs from early in
18 the morning all the way to early evening, just to keep
19 a roof over our head. One of the jobs she worked at was
20 with the British Sailors' Society in Leith in Edinburgh
21 where [she] ran a restaurant/hotel for seafaring men.
22 The British Sailors' Society was a Christian-based
23 organisation which looked after the children of men who
24 worked at sea. Lagarie House was run by the BSS until
25 1972 when it closed. Because she worked for them and my

1 father had been in the British Navy, that allowed me to
2 be placed at Lagarie. My mother's health was
3 deteriorating. When she was about 31, she visited the
4 doctor, and [care was recommended] to give her some
5 respite.'

6 In the next section of his statement, the witness
7 speaks about a period he spent in Lagarie in 1956, and
8 I'll now go to paragraph 27 of the statement.

9 Here the witness describes that after what he refers
10 to as a respite period in Lagarie, he was taken back
11 home. By that time, his mother was with his [REDACTED]
12 and they were in a new house, and the witness describes
13 suffering physical abuse [REDACTED].

14 In the next few paragraphs he described, for example
15 in paragraph 31, that his mother lived in constant fear
16 of the [REDACTED].

17 And I will now go to paragraph 35 of the statement
18 when the witness speaks about moving to Ponton House.

19 It appears from records recovered by the Inquiry
20 that the witness was in Ponton House for a period in
21 1966, from early [REDACTED] 1966 to the end of [REDACTED] of that
22 year, so a period of just under three months, when he
23 would have been around 15-and-a-half:

24 'I was taken to Ponton House Lads' Residence,
25 6-7 Magdala Crescent, Edinburgh, by two social workers,

1 without being able to pack any clothes. I found
2 Ponton House was two three-bedroomed houses converted
3 into one. I think there were about 20 boys staying
4 there. There were two members of staff, MVC, SNR
5 SNR, and his SNR, LHB. One of
6 them stayed in the house overnight to look after the
7 residents. There might have been a part-time cook as
8 well just for the meals. The house was run by the
9 Ponton Trust and they had an office near Tollcross.

10 'When I arrived, I was taken to the office and met
11 by MVC and LHB. As soon as I was in the
12 office, MVC locked the door. LHB said
13 I should sit on his lap and as I sat there, he put his
14 hands down the back of my trousers and then moved his
15 hands round to the front. I jumped up and fell onto the
16 floor. MVC made LHB open the door saying that they
17 had to be careful, "he" might tell the police.

18 'I ran out of the room straight into the snooker
19 room where one of the other kids, who was about [to
20 turn] 16, was playing pool. He saw that I was really
21 scared and he seemed to know what had happened. He told
22 me not to worry as it happens to everyone in the office
23 when they arrive. He went on to tell me that if
24 I allowed that sort of thing to take place, I would be
25 given some money and allowed to go to their parties at

1 Polwarth or Bruntsfield where I would get more cash,
2 sweets, cigarettes and drink.

3 'The normal routine at Ponton House was: we were
4 taken by either MVC or LHB, whoever was on duty during
5 the night, we would get washed and down for breakfast
6 and off to school or, if older, perhaps work. We had to
7 make our beds and if they were not made, MVC would
8 make you go back and do it properly. Sometimes this
9 made us late for breakfast and on some occasions late
10 for school. While there, I still took the bus to high
11 school. If we were late for school we would be given
12 the strap on our hands by the teachers. No allowances
13 were given in school for boys and girls the school knew
14 were in care.

15 'The staff must have been given a grant for
16 clothing, but LHB or MVC went to the shops and you
17 were made to wear whatever they brought back. At the
18 weekends, we were given some pocket money and would be
19 allowed to walk to the pictures. Generally at night we
20 were not allowed out and either watched television or
21 played pool or snooker in the games room. I was never
22 visited by family or social work while I stayed there.
23 My mother was in England with [REDACTED].

24 'I had been warned by [two boys] that LHB [REDACTED]
25 would often come into the bedrooms at night. LHB [REDACTED]

1 would place his hands under the covers and abuse the
2 boys sleeping there. I remember being awake one night
3 when either MVC or LHB came into the room. He seemed
4 to be just prowling around our room, but luckily he did
5 not come near me on that occasion.

6 'Later during my stay there, LHB approached
7 me a couple of times and asked if I was interested in
8 going to a party. I was told by some others in
9 Ponton House who had been at the parties that if I was
10 to allow older men there to abuse me, that I would be
11 paid by them. They told me about money they had been
12 given.

13 '[A particular boy] at Ponton House could not cope
14 with all the abuse that was taking place there and when
15 he was about 16, he committed suicide. He had avoided
16 going to the parties and would not tolerate grooming.

17 'During the day, I would still attend Ainslie Park
18 High School. From the school records I later saw, my
19 address was shown as Ponton House. I remember being
20 sent to SNR room at school as one of the
21 teachers accused me of being disruptive in the class.
22 I was punished within SNR room. He made me
23 lower my trousers and was caned six times over my
24 underwear. Teachers did not know that coming from the
25 life I had known, I could not help but to be "disruptive

1 in class".

2 'After taking part in PE, we would have showers,
3 which were open to all with no privacy. When we were in
4 the shower rooms, one of the teachers, ██████ Grant, would
5 come and walk around the shower area and touch us all
6 up. I remember one of the times I was in the showers
7 and ██████ Grant touched [me up] again. It wasn't just
8 a pat on the body as he passed, it was an aggressive
9 fondle. This happened to us on many occasions.
10 Hundreds of assaults on children, no convictions ever.

11 'This happened to a local tough lad who had told
12 about the abuse. His brother was in a gang at the time.
13 Together the brother and some of his mates waited for
14 ██████ Grant. After school, he was beaten badly and he
15 ended up in hospital for about three weeks. He was
16 sacked and I was told [he left Scotland] and got another
17 post. I found [this] out later.

18 'There was another teacher, Mr McLaughlin, who was
19 a good guy. He was aware of what ██████ Grant was up to
20 and reported him to SNR ██████, but I don't think
21 ██████ Grant ever went to court. The police were also
22 involved and were given statements by some of the
23 pupils.

24 'Ponton House was eventually shut down after
25 an inquiry and both LHB ██████ and MVC ██████ were taken away in

1 handcuffs. I'm not sure how the police got involved,
2 but somebody must have reported things to them. Along
3 with the other residents, we were spoken to by the CID.
4 I told them about the boys being groomed and the offer
5 of money and the parties. In the end, I was told by
6 a friend of mine that LHB was sentenced to six years
7 and MVC was given two to three years. I do not know
8 dates or where these men served their time.

9 'Social work must have arranged some sort of cover
10 as we were not moved out for a short time. Along with
11 two police officers, two social workers transferred me
12 and another guy to the YMCA at Manor Place. I was only
13 there for a couple of weeks and shared a room there with
14 [another] guy.'

15 In paragraphs 49 to 70 of his statement, the witness
16 speaks about his time at Wellington Farm in Penicuik.

17 I will now move to paragraph 71 of the statement,
18 where the witness speaks about his time after care.
19 And, indeed, there he tells us that he was 16 when he
20 left Wellington Farm and wasn't given any notice about
21 leaving.

22 I will move to paragraph 81, where the witness
23 speaks about the impact that his time in care has had on
24 him and that's from paragraph 81:

25 'The abuse I suffered affected how I performed at

1 school. I did not leave with many certificates but
2 later in life I found another interest in educating
3 myself. I managed to obtain a diploma, with a lot of
4 credit being due to my ex-wife who encouraged me to
5 study. I now hold an HNC/HND in communication and a few
6 SCOTVEC qualifications.

7 'I was married for about 22 years but I spent a lot
8 of my time reacting to and talking about the abuse
9 I suffered. This affected my marriage and eventually my
10 wife left me. When I look back, she was right at the
11 time. I was angry and I reacted too harshly to her good
12 advice. On every level of life, child abuse
13 infiltrates, and I know it is definitely the root of
14 much of the suffering I had experienced and caused for
15 other people through my frustration and aggression.
16 I cannot forget those I offended and I regret that
17 deeply.'

18 At paragraph 84, the witness says:

19 'From all the abuse I suffered, I could never again
20 trust anyone in authority. Anyone who would be in
21 a position to tell me what to do at a job, I would
22 eventually end up shouting and arguing with them. This
23 meant I was never able to hold down a job for long and
24 had more than 40 jobs during my life. I have even
25 walked out of a job because someone gave me a row.'

1 At paragraph 87, the witness says:

2 'Because I was always isolated from my family,
3 I still feel isolated from them and have the same
4 problem with some of my friends. I still suffer from
5 alienation and trust of anyone in authority. When you
6 have been beaten and bullied growing up, it becomes
7 natural not to trust anyone.'

8 At paragraph 89, he says:

9 'My first official contact with anyone who offered
10 assistance with my problems was with the National
11 Confidential Forum via CELCIS. After reading through
12 their leaflets, I ended up sending them a brief
13 statement. I did not talk to anyone officially about my
14 life until I started talking to CELCIS.'

15 At 91, the witness says:

16 'If I had been given the correct support and
17 upbringing when I was young, I know I could have been
18 someone and achieved something worthwhile in my life.
19 Instead, I just see myself as a product of my
20 existence.'

21 At paragraph 94, the witness speaks about records
22 and says this:

23 'I have tried through Birthlink at Dundas Street and
24 1st Contact to trace some of my records and at this time
25 there seems to be no trace of anything that can assist

1 me. I have received communication from the Ponton Trust
2 that a large number of records were relocated to
3 a storage area near an old swimming pool and there had
4 been a flood which destroyed the records stored there.'

5 Moving on to the final section of the statement,
6 from paragraph 96 now, when the witness sets out some
7 lessons he considers could be learnt:

8 'Whenever children are being placed in care, I would
9 like signage in place showing contact numbers and
10 addresses for kids to go to where they can report abuse.
11 I would like to see some sort of law enactment, that if
12 a person witnessing abuse and not reporting same should
13 be guilty of a criminal offence with a punishable
14 sentence of up to five years in prison. Staff should
15 have to sign a legally binding document that they will
16 not cover up or collude when abuse occurs. If a child
17 is between the ages of 6 and 9, they should have
18 an electronic panic button which should be linked to
19 police for immediate attendance and worn on the child's
20 wrists, not to be taken off unless for practical
21 reasons.

22 'I don't think you can stop all child abuse, but the
23 more that is put in place to prevent it will certainly
24 reduce the chance of abuse taking place.

25 'I have laid a lot of my anger on the police,

1 government, councils, church and other organisations,
2 all with the aim to seek some sort of retribution for
3 what the system did to me. I now channel this in other
4 ways. I have started writing a book about my life in
5 care, the things I have seen in my life. I cannot say
6 the information I have given is 100 per cent accurate.
7 It is from memories and how my life has been impacted
8 from the age of 6 until now. I apologise to anyone in
9 my life whom I have offended. You may appreciate the
10 difficulty of trying to recall events from the past.

11 'I am writing my story in a book, which gives
12 a great deal more information than this written
13 testimony.

14 'I have no objection to my witness statement being
15 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.
16 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
17 true.'

18 And Trevor Swistchew signed the statement on
19 12 April 2019.

20 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

21 'Tom' (read in)

22 MS MACLEOD: And the third statement, my Lady, can be found
23 at WIT-1-000001336. That is the statement of
24 an applicant who will use the pseudonym 'Tom':

25 'My name is 'Tom'. I was born in 1963. My contact

1 details are known to the Inquiry.

2 'I was born in Edinburgh. My parents were
3 immigrants from Mauritius. They decided to come over
4 here for education.

5 'All of them had come over here to study medicine.
6 My grandfather on my mum's side was a doctor. My father
7 always wanted to be a doctor, but he never quite made
8 the grades. The next best thing was dentistry. He got
9 a place in Edinburgh, hence we were born there. He did
10 very well through his course in dentistry. My mum gave
11 up her studies in medicine as children came along. They
12 ended up with six children.'

13 At paragraph 5, the witness explains that:

14 '[My elder brother] and I briefly went to
15 Corstorphine Hill Primary School, not for long, maybe
16 a year, and then we went to Clifton Hall private school.
17 I was somewhere between 5-and-a-half and 6 years old
18 when I went to Clifton Hall. My mum and dad moved to
19 Aberdeen around 1978. I went into a home for a year and
20 went up the year after. My father got a practice up
21 there. I was in a home until I was 16 until they could
22 legally release me. I had become a ward of the social
23 work and went to Ponton House. I think it was in
24 Magdala Crescent in the West End of Edinburgh.'

25 My Lady, between paragraphs 8 and 51 of his

1 statement, the witness provides evidence in relation to
2 his time at Clifton Hall School in Newbridge **Secondary Ins**
3 **Secondary Institutions - to**.

4 Between paragraphs 52 and 80 of his statement, the
5 witness speaks about his time at Fettes College in
6 Edinburgh, where he describes suffering physical and
7 sexual abuse by Iain Wares, which began when the witness
8 was aged 9 or 10 years old. The witness describes
9 reporting this abuse to the headteacher and that nothing
10 was done about it.

11 I will read from paragraph 81, when the witness is
12 describing what happened when he left Fettes College:

13 'After I was pulled out of Fettes, I was meant to
14 attend a state school, Craigmount High School. I didn't
15 go because of what Iain Wares did to me, specifically
16 because of that. Because I didn't go, social services
17 got involved and that's why I was taken away from the
18 parental home at 14-and-a-half or 15 years of age.

19 'I went to Craigmount on the odd days here and
20 there. After coming out of Fettes, I found the
21 education system abhorrent. I found it extremely hard
22 to be around teachers and just being in that
23 environment. I think the school must have contacted the
24 social services because I was bunking off a lot and as
25 a result, they got involved. Social services were

1 concerned with getting me out of the family home as
2 I was regarded as extremely vulnerable. They put me in
3 Ponton House Children's Home.

4 'Mr Tripney was the social worker. I don't remember
5 speaking to him a lot. I might have mentioned abuse to
6 him but I don't recall it. He would have come round to
7 the house, taken me away for a coffee and chat about the
8 home situation. I remember being very tearful at the
9 time. I guess what he saw was what he based his actions
10 on. So I was very weepy and he thought it would be best
11 for me to reside in Ponton House and to go to school
12 from there. The idea was that I would still attend
13 Craigmount from there, but I didn't for that whole year
14 and there was nobody at Ponton House to make me go.

15 'Going to Ponton House didn't work. It didn't serve
16 me well. It was quite a rough place. I think I got
17 about a week's notice before I went there. It was very
18 quick. I was made a ward of the state, so the social
19 work had control over my welfare. My parents were
20 horrified. They must have had their own opinions of how
21 this happened.

22 'My mum was drinking a lot at the time. They were
23 in a bad place. My father had closed his surgeries in
24 Edinburgh and they were in transition. My father pretty
25 much lost everything and that's how they ended up in

1 Aberdeen.

2 'Ponton House was the home for some unfortunate
3 boys. Some quite vulnerable boys and some that were
4 just bad, stealing cars, joyriding, breaking into
5 houses, things like that. I was asked to go along, but
6 said it wasn't my cup of tea. It was all boys aged
7 between 13 and 18. There were about 20 there in total.
8 The food was minimal there, but enough to survive.

9 'The staff there were young men, social work staff.
10 They were lovely guys. I remember while I was there
11 they got a new guy in. His name was John. He was in
12 his early 20s, tall and slim. He said to me, "What the
13 hell are you doing in a place like this? This place
14 isn't for you". I remember his comments and wondered,
15 how did I end up in there. It stuck out to me. They
16 really didn't have much to offer in terms of support.
17 I think the basis of it was preparing you for adulthood
18 and independent living, but a lot of the guys weren't
19 job hunting, they were doing other things.

20 'I had to fight a bit to survive there. There was
21 one boy in there, he was a bit smaller than me, and when
22 I was playing pool one day, I drew my cue back and it
23 went close to his face but it didn't hit him. He kicked
24 [his] legs away from me, then hit me over the back with
25 a pool cue. I told him I was sorry, but he started

1 picking on me a bit after that. He called me
2 a "nigger". I can't remember his name. He came at me
3 another couple of times and on one occasion I managed to
4 get him in a strangle hold and I kept hold of him until
5 he realised he had to give up. Other people saw this
6 and they left me alone. You had to stand your ground
7 otherwise you would get knocked over. I find it
8 confusing as to the purpose of the place. It seemed to
9 me that you were putting a group of young guys together
10 to teach each other how to do bad things.

11 'I didn't really go to school at all while I was
12 there. I just wandered about town to pass the time
13 until my 16th birthday. It was a year of nothingness in
14 my life really. The year at Ponton House marked the
15 period of my life in Edinburgh. I couldn't wait to get
16 out and on my 16th birthday, I left there. My mum and
17 dad came down from Aberdeen and picked me up.'

18 In the next few paragraphs, the witness speaks about
19 his life after leaving Ponton House, describes moving to
20 Aberdeen and that his parents were there, and in some
21 ways that it was a new start for him.

22 LADY SMITH: And so far as dates for Ponton House are
23 concerned, am I right in thinking our estimate,
24 1978/1979, might fit?

25 MS MACLEOD: I think that would fit, my Lady. I'm just

1 doublechecking. We don't have specific dates but

2 I think that would fit for this witness, my Lady.

3 LADY SMITH: Thank you.

4 MS MACLEOD: So in the next section, between paragraphs 90
5 and 101, the witness speaks about his life into
6 adulthood. And between paragraphs 102 to 116, he speaks
7 about the impact of the things that happened to him in
8 his childhood and the impact that's had on him. And
9 those paragraphs, 102 to 117, are very much focused on
10 the impact that his time in Fettes and the abuse he
11 suffered there has had on him. And these are there,
12 of course, for the Inquiry to consider, my Lady, in that
13 context.

14 LADY SMITH: Yes.

15 MS MACLEOD: I will move to paragraph 117, which is the
16 final paragraph in the statement, where the witness
17 says:

18 'I have no objection to my witness statement being
19 published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry.

20 I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are
21 true.'

22 'Tom' signed the statement on 16 October 2023.

23 LADY SMITH: Thank you very much indeed.

24 Does that complete what we're reading in this
25 afternoon?

1 MS MACLEOD: That completes what we're reading in this
2 afternoon and there is a witness scheduled for tomorrow
3 morning and tomorrow afternoon, and my understanding is
4 that it's an 11 o'clock start tomorrow morning.

5 LADY SMITH: Yes, that's right. Thank you very much.

6 Now, before I rise, a couple of names we've used
7 this afternoon of people whose identities are protected
8 by my General Restriction Order. They're not to be
9 referred to as mentioned in our evidence outside this
10 room, and that was LHB and MVC, but
11 I think those were the only ones.

12 Thank you very much indeed. Thank you.

13 Good. Thank you.

14 (2.37 pm)

15 (The Inquiry adjourned until 11.00 am
16 on Friday, 1 May 2026)

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