

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

RIV  
[REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is RIV [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1969. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in the Southern General Hospital, Glasgow and at that time we stayed in Castlemilk with my Gran. My dad had lost the family house in Govan and they had been forced to move in with her. I don't remember it, but I think there was fourteen of us in my Gran's house. My parents tried to get us a house in Castlemilk but they wouldn't give us one. The most local to there that they could give us was in Easterhouse, so when I was eleven months old, we moved there.
3. I have six brothers and two sisters. The oldest is [REDACTED] who is sixty-eight years old, [REDACTED] is sixty-six, [REDACTED] is sixty-four, [REDACTED] is sixty-two, [REDACTED] is sixty, [REDACTED] is fifty-nine, [REDACTED] is fifty-seven and then it is me and my twin brother [REDACTED], and we are fifty-five.
4. The reason I was sent to Fornethy was because my mum had a nervous breakdown due to financial and home circumstances and was admitted to Gartloch Hospital.
5. My dad was a good man, but sadly he was not a very good provider. There were nine children so that was eleven of us in the house. Although I was young, I could see there was something wrong with my mum.

6. She had always been a great mum who was all about her nine children. She never went out to the bingo or anywhere else, everything was just for us.
7. My oldest sister got married in the [REDACTED] and my mum was mentally unwell on the day of the wedding. She had lost a lot of weight, and she just wasn't my mum.
8. She suffered this breakdown that was going undetected. I think my dad and some of the family were maybe in denial but when the family G.P. came out he wasn't, and that was when she was admitted to the hospital. This was in the [REDACTED] just after my sister had been married in the [REDACTED]. She was given E.C.T. electroconvulsive therapy treatment.
9. While my mum was in the hospital the rest of the children, apart from [REDACTED], were still living in the house. I just remember my dad couldn't cope without my mum being there. He didn't even know how to make a slice of toast as my mum had done everything. He was good at the manly things like painting and decorating or he could make a table.
10. I remember my mum being in hospital for about six weeks and I just kept thinking she was never coming home.
11. Things weren't good in the house and there was a total family breakdown at the time. I remember that dad said it was Mrs McCrossan who was our headmistress at Wellhouse primary who had recommended for the three youngest of us to go to a residential school.
12. There was never any social work involvement. I was never involved in any of the discussions between my dad and the headmistress. My dad just told us that Mrs McCrossan thought it would be good for us to go to a 'Ressie.' He said it would be a wee break and a wee holiday for us because mum wasn't well and there was no sign of her getting out the hospital because she had suffered a really bad breakdown. He told us it was like a holiday camp; it had this and that and we would be able to do this and that. It was all lies.

13. I think at the time, my dad thought it was the best way forward for us and I believe he thought he was doing us a favour, but he wasn't.
14. I had never been away from my family, or my parents and I didn't want to go, but I didn't have a choice. I had a feeling that I wouldn't like it but then I remember thinking '*Well, it is a holiday*', and I might as well make the most of it and look forward to it. The main thing was going to be missing my mum and my siblings because I always had a good family where we showed a lot of love. We were always close, we never had a lot of material things or money, we were very poor, but we always had that love.
15. Before I went to Fornethy, I had a medical in Glasgow. I don't know exactly where it was as I had barely left Easterhouse before that and wasn't familiar with the town. At the time I wondered why I was there, and why was I having to come into town. The doctor doing the medical told me that it was Dr McBain, our family doctor, who had sent me there. My dad did say at some point that Dr McBain had wanted me to get a check-up before I went.
16. They did an eye test, a hearing test, sounded my chest and they asked a few questions which was maybe a literacy test. I don't think they did blood tests or anything like that. I can't remember anything else.
17. I had just turned seven years old in [REDACTED], before I went to Fornethy in [REDACTED] 1976. I know it was [REDACTED] as it was coming up to [REDACTED] and when I first got to Fornethy things were centred around [REDACTED] and a lot of [REDACTED] stuff.
18. My brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] got sent to Seafeld Children's Home. My other brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] also got sent away to Galloway House.
19. The day I went to Fornethy, my sister [REDACTED] took me on a corporation bus to Buchanan Street Bus Station to get another bus to Fornethy. I don't think my dad was there.
20. On the bus to Fornethy, there were two male adults on the bus looking after us, but I don't know who they were. I didn't know if they were auxiliaries or teachers. I just

thought they were there watching us as we were children, but they were probably there just to make sure we sat and behaved. I never had any interaction with them at all.

21. There were a few other girls my age, some older, that were maybe ten to twelve years old, hitting puberty age. The two girls next to me were sisters and I remember feeling a wee bit excited as we were all talking about what our names were, what ages we were and where we stayed. I was just on my own, thinking this is all very different and I'm going on this wee adventure like I'd been told.
22. The feelings of excitement and adventure changed the minute we got to Fornethy.

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

23. I was seven when I went to Fornethy House. It felt like it was out in the wilderness, in the middle of nowhere. There were no houses, no shops, there was absolutely nothing. I just remember there being loads of trees and loads of grass. It was very different for me coming from a housing scheme in Easterhouse, which was one of the roughest places in Europe. It felt desolate and that we were hundreds of miles from anywhere.
24. Fornethy House was a massive, dirty white, eerie, isolated, horrible house. There was nothing welcoming about it, nothing that gave the impression that it was a holiday camp or that there was anything for children to enjoy.
25. The area where the bus parked was gravel and I remember falling on it a couple of times. Apart from that everywhere else was grass and trees. There was a roundabout and there was a swing near to where the bus dropped us. I don't remember seeing any cars or other transport. I don't remember any proper pathways other than maybe round the edges of the building where you could walk to get to another part of the house. There was an outbuilding, but I don't know what it was for.
26. I'm not sure I can really describe the layout of the main house, but I remember going in and it was dark, dull, eerie, and I felt it was a very damp building.

27. I know there was at least two floors because I remember we had to go up a winding staircase to our dorms. One of the classrooms, the one that I eventually went to, was situated at the end of an alleyway that was off another main staircase. It seemed like an extra part or an annexe that had been built onto the main house.
28. There were other classrooms on the ground floor. There was also a washroom where we got bathed, a laundry and linen room, a dining room and kitchen on the ground floor. I can't remember seeing rooms for staff, but I do remember seeing doors with private signs on them.
29. There was an auxiliary room and that was where you would go and see the auxiliary if you cut yourself or something like that. I remember an auxiliary putting plasters on my knees when I fell on the gravel.

#### *Staff*

30. The only two members of staff whose names I can remember are my class teacher, Miss Robertson and Miss Fletcher who was the headmistress.
31. The only other staff that I had any interaction with were, the dinner ladies, the auxiliary and other teachers who I saw picking on other children or telling them off.

#### *Children*

32. There were about twenty or thirty girls at Fornethy at the same time as me. The oldest girls were about twelve or thirteen years and the youngest when I was there was maybe five or six years. All the girls got treated the same way, which led to there always being a lot of wailing and crying.
33. I can't remember the names of any of the girls. I didn't befriend anyone. I never had any friends, and that sounds terrible, but I was always too frightened to speak or interact with the other girls as you weren't allowed. It was always silence and don't

Speak or you would be punished. It was the most silent place I have ever been in my life.

*First day*

34. When we arrived, there were teachers outside at the arched door and all these girls were lined up in single file. As we were getting off the bus, that was when it all changed. I think the terror hit me. It was silent and when there are children and people you expect noise. I had come from a noisy house and then all of a sudden it struck me it was so quiet. I remember a girl trying to speak and instantly they were told "Silence. Be quiet." That was before we were even through the doors. As we were going in there were other girls coming out and going on the bus to go home. That must have been the way they worked; we were going in and they were going out.
35. When we went inside, Miss Fletcher and other teachers were there. We were told by Miss Fletcher from the minute we got there that we had to stay silent, obey and do what were told. We always had to stand in line, and it was regimental. When I looked back as I got older, I felt it was an institution, like an army for children. We were told you don't speak to anyone unless it is a teacher or an adult. Only speak when you are spoken to and that was the way it was.
36. It was a shame because when I look back, I think, did some of the girls have behavioural issues or were they just defiant, which was understandable because they didn't listen. They were then battered or dragged away, and I was watching this and thinking, I'm not saying anything because I was terrified.
37. We got our cases taken off of us and we were taken into the bathing area, and we were told to strip. I thought this was strange. I came from a big family and my dad was really strict and you were covered up with a housecoat or long night dresses. My brothers and sisters were always very discreet as we were brought up that way.

38. When we were made to strip there were girls in there that were reaching puberty age, and seeing these girls naked was something I had never seen before. We were put into bath together that were much bigger than the baths you get in a house.
39. The ladies washed us and actually scrubbed us with a handheld scrubbing brush as if we were smelly and dirty. They put a nit cream into my hair and then put a metal nit comb through it. I did actually know what this was as my mum had done that with my sisters and me. I never actually had nits before I went to Fornethy or whilst I was there.
40. I had a long fringe, and my hair was always going in my eyes. One of the teachers told the woman that was bathing us to cut my hair. It was horrendous and I was crying when they were doing it, as I didn't want my hair cut. They cut my fringe right up my forehead and trimmed it all at the back. I was the only one that day that got my hair cut. Others got their hair cut later but never to the extent mine had been done. Looking back, the way I looked, you would have thought I was something out of an asylum. Even when I got back home all these weeks later, my dad asked what had happened to my hair. He wasn't happy that they had cut it off.
41. When I was in the bath with these older girls, some of them were also crying. I was wondering what they were doing with us and thinking this was an absolute nightmare.
42. I remember I had used my sisters bath water after them but never before had I had to strip off in front of my siblings and get in a bath with them. All of a sudden, I was sharing a bath with these girls and some of them were menstruating. That was the first time I had ever seen anything like that and remember thinking this was absolutely horrendous.
43. We were then shown to our dorms. My one was called Ailsa and there were roughly ten of us of mixed ages in it. The girl next to me was maybe eleven or twelve years old. She had a younger sibling there at the same time, but she was in a different dormitory.

44. There were a few sisters there at the same time and they split them up into different dormitories. I remember seeing older sisters stepping in, when their younger sisters were getting in trouble and saying, "Leave my sister alone."
45. Some of the older girls were really nice and kind to me when they saw me upset or they saw things that they didn't like. They would sometimes come over to my bed at night and ask if I was okay.

*Clothing / uniform*

46. I had taken a wee case packed with all my own underwear, night dresses and clothes. We each had a wee locker where our beds were, and it has always stuck in my mind, but I don't remember ever wearing any of my own clothes from the minute I got there. They gave me a pile of clothes as if it had come from laundry, but none of it was my own. My case was taken from me, and I never saw it or the contents again until I was leaving, and they gave me it back.
47. The clothes they gave us were trousers and horrible jaggy wool jumpers. We were all made to wear pinnies, like an apron, a floral one like old women would wear years before. Everything they gave me was far too big or too small for me. It was all horrible material, and everything was jaggy. There was no girly stuff like ribbons to put in our hair or anything. I remember things like that had been packed in my case for me.
48. I was there in the wintertime, so we also got a horrible jaggy hat and gloves because we were always out walking. The wellies they gave me must have been about three sizes too big. I complained about them because they were causing me problems in my legs. However, they never did anything about it, and I learnt that you just didn't complain about anything as you then paid for it by being punished for complaining.
49. I never asked the other girls if they were getting to wear their own clothes, but it looked like everybody was wearing similar clothes to what I had been given.

### *Daily Routine*

50. I think one of the staff came into our dorms and woke us up about 7:30 or 8:00 am. We used to get washed at the sinks, brush our teeth, put on our clothes and our pinnies and then went down to the dining room for breakfast.

### *Washing / Bathing*

51. There was the bathroom where I had that bath the first day. There were several big baths in there and we probably got bathed a few times a week. Every bath that I had, after that first day, was also a shared bath with another three girls of different ages and at different stages of development. I always remember the bigger girls trying to cover and hide themselves. The staff always washed us, sometimes with scrubbing brushes but not all the time. I used to feel that the staff would scrub us with brushes when they were being watched by Fletcher or other teachers who used to sometimes come in to supervise.
52. They also had a shower room. It wasn't separate showers; it was a big communal shower. The only time I ever got a shower was first thing in the morning and that was only because I had wet the bed.

### *Mealtimes / Food*

53. I absolutely hated mealtimes because there were always issues.
54. You always sat in the same seat. You weren't allowed to just sit where you wanted. At my first mealtime I was told, that is your seat, and it will be for the duration of your stay.
55. I hated the food. It would mainly be porridge or toast at breakfast time. I usually had toast unless they really pushed me to eat porridge which they sometimes did. I hated porridge.

56. There was no choice of food or alternative if you didn't like it. If you didn't eat what they served, you didn't get anything else, that was it, so you starved, and they would make that clear. If you didn't eat it, then nine times out of ten you wouldn't get the milk and biscuit in the evening. I didn't bother about that as I hated that as well.
57. They were always trying to force feed me and make sure that I would eat it. It wasn't just me that was getting force fed; it was happening to other girls as well because there were always things that girls didn't like or couldn't eat. I would say that this was happening to someone nearly every mealtime.

### *Schooling*

58. The day after arriving, I was told I was getting Miss Robertson as my teacher. I only remember that one classroom. It was very dark up there. I don't really remember getting taught adding and subtracting or other proper education like I got at Wellhouse Primary School. What she did would be things like she would draw a house on the blackboard, and we had to copy it and to be honest, I liked doing that. She would write stuff on the blackboard and then we had to write what she was telling us. Whatever she told us, we had to write it down whether it was true or not.
59. We weren't in the class for very long. It wasn't like a usual school day of nine until three or four. I'd say we were half the day in the classroom and the other half was out walking. My memory is that it was classroom in the morning and then we went to the dining room for lunch. After lunch they would send us down to an area where our coats and hats hung, to get ready and then they would take us out on long walks for the whole afternoon.
60. All twenty to thirty of the girls would go out walking at the same time, unless somebody wasn't well or held back for some other reason. I would say there were three members of staff out with us. I can't remember any specific places we walked to other than down to a stream, which was nearby, or to church on a Sunday.

61. I just remember always walking for miles and miles and crying because my legs were sore from walking and the wellies were cutting into my legs. They were absolutely massive and were up above my knee. Trying to walk in them on long walks was difficult and you were slow because they didn't fit me. It was like walking with big boats on your feet. Other girls also had sore legs because they also had wellies that didn't fit them.
62. My legs had cuts, welches, and blisters from where the wellies had rubbed against them. They were absolute agony, and I hated and dreaded putting them on every single day. I was too scared to say anything or ask for a smaller size.
63. When I look back, I feel like I was mute for that seven and a half weeks because I don't remember talking, asking anything or even putting my hand up. I remember crying though. It was nothing like school or anything I had ever experienced. I just remember not speaking and we just used to all look at each other. We suffered in silence and that was the way they had you bullied.
64. The weather was always bad. It snowed while we were there, but we still had to go out and walk in it every day.
65. The place was horrific because there were always dead animals lying everywhere. There were dead rabbits hanging from farm gates, dead squirrels and dead crows. I had never before seen so many dead animals in my life. It was just horrible.
66. When we saw them, if somebody gasped or made a remark, the teachers would tell us to face the front, keep walking straight ahead and I just remember that there was silence. We were always walking in silence, unless you got the odd girl that misbehaved or tried to say she wasn't doing what they were telling her to do. She would be walloped or hit across the head by the teachers. It was just about always the same girl, and I remember thinking at the time, that for her own sake, I wish she wouldn't be bad.

67. I was always quite good because I always thought I didn't want hit. The teachers pushed me a lot because I was walking too slow but that was because my wellies didn't fit.
68. After we came back from the walk, I would go to the bathroom, get washed and get ready for supper, which we would eat in the dining room.

*Leisure time*

69. I don't remember ever doing any activities and I don't remember ever doing anything enjoyable or fun. I remember sometimes we would sing; I don't know what, but we would all be singing together. I don't remember playing monopoly or scrabble or chess or any other games. There were books to read but I never read them. I couldn't concentrate enough because I was always in panic mode.
70. In the evenings we would maybe be in the TV room. We would get a wee plastic cup of milk and an Abernethy biscuit. I hated the milk and always have since. I think Fornethy caused that because the milk was always hot. Milk's not meant to be hot but it was ready to turn and it was disgusting.

*Bedtime / Bedwetting*

71. After the milk and biscuit, we would go to our beds, and I had terrible nightmares at bedtime because from the first night I wasn't liked by Fletcher and another couple of the teachers. My bed was right at the window and the curtains were always shaking with the draughts coming in. There was nobody on one side of me but there was an older girl on the other side.
72. From the first night, I was really frightened and because of that I peed the bed and had a bad nosebleed. I don't remember having a nosebleed to that extent as a child before that.

73. I was pulled out my bed that first night and it just continued because I peed the bed nearly every night. I didn't know if it was being away from my family, in a strange place that caused it but when I look back, it was the terror in me that was causing me to pee the bed. I was frightened to go to the toilet. It was because I was causing the staff an inconvenience by wetting the bed that I wasn't liked by them.
74. I wasn't the only girl that peed the bed, it was something that was very common.
75. When I went home, I was still wetting the bed, and my dad asked me when I had started peeing the bed. Years later, when I checked with my parents if I had wet the bed before I went there, they said no. They told me I had been toilet trained very quickly and had been so smart as a child.

#### *Healthcare*

76. There was no nurse or doctor at Fornethy, and I can't remember any doctor, nurse or ambulance having to be called for anybody to be treated. I don't remember getting my teeth checked. The only thing I got checked was my hair. They still put that stuff on my head on a weekly basis, it wasn't just a one off that first day. I did get my nails cut as well.
77. If you had anything wrong with you, I think you would maybe go to the auxiliary woman. I remember going a couple of times because I had fallen and cut my knees. They would clean them, put disinfectant on and a plaster. Even that was an issue as they would be saying "You keep falling, you need to watch where you're going." Everything was a drama and none of the staff were nice.

#### *Religious instruction*

78. All the girls had to go to church every Sunday. We just wore the clothes we were given, there was no special Sunday clothes.

*Trips and holidays*

79. I don't remember ever leaving Fornethy to go anywhere other than to go out walking or going to church.

*Work / chores*

80. The only work I can remember doing at Fornethy, was having to brush the floors a couple of times. We never got any money for this. The only money people got was money sent in by their parents.

*Visitors*

81. I remember seeing some cars in the gravel driveway. I don't know what they were there for. Looking back now, I don't know if they were maybe delivering food.
82. I saw other people come to Fornethy, but I didn't know who they were. There was a man who used to work about the gardens, trim hedges and cut flowers. I don't know if he was a handyman, or someone employed for the grounds or building. I never spoke to him, and he never spoke to me. As far as I remember there was no other male staff other than this handyman.
83. There were strangers, men who I didn't know that came to Fornethy. I don't know if any of the staff had accommodation in the grounds, but I used to think that the teachers must stay somewhere near there and I wondered at the time, whether these men were teachers' husbands. They were always smartly dressed, whereas the guy that did the gardens would be dressed like a workman.
84. I never saw these men upstairs, but I did hear, mainly from the older girls that they had been. Whilst I was earwiggling into their conversations, I would hear the girls say things like "He came up last night" or "He was up the stairs last night." I never heard anything that had actually happened, but I did used to think something had happened.

There was something not right. It was an all-girls' place, and I didn't think there should be men in there.

#### *Family contact*

85. I never had any family visits, and I wasn't aware of any of the other girls having any. It was never even mentioned to me.
86. I never had any form of contact with my dad or any of my family whilst I was there. I think other girls maybe got letters from home, but I didn't. They would get us to write things when we were in the classroom like we are having a great time, or the weather is sunny but whether they sent that anywhere, I don't know.

#### *Discipline and punishment*

87. I don't ever remember being told what the punishment would be if we broke the rules that we had been told on that first day. I don't think Miss Fletcher ever had to say the words of what she would do because she just did these things, and we could see what would happen.
88. There were forms of physical discipline used and I saw a girl getting belted with a man's belt. They would also hit, slap and push us if we didn't walk fast enough when we were out on a walk.

#### *Running away*

89. I never tried to run away, and I was never aware of any other girls trying to run away. I do remember some of the older ones trying to run out of the dorms and then you wouldn't see them for the rest of the night. I don't know if they were kept downstairs or if they were put into a room because they were trying to get out.
90. There was always a lot of creeping about at night by staff. You could always hear footsteps and creaking floorboards. You would know there would be people outside

your room or peeping in the room. Again, I never said or passed remark on anything. Maybe I was selfish, but I was just interested in me. I felt sorry for the other girls, and I think they felt sorry for me, and we were all upset but none of us would speak up.

### **Abuse at Fornethy House**

91. That first night at Fornethy when I wet the bed and had a nosebleed, I was pulled out of the bed and put on a chair at the end of my bed. I had been wearing a nightdress which was soaking. I was left sitting damp and cold. They made me sit at the end of the bed and then made me stand. I was left standing there all night, at least seven or eight hours in my wet night clothes. This traumatised me. It was horrific. I was exhausted and nearly falling on my feet.
92. In the morning two women came into the dorm and took me into a shower room, told me to take my nightdress and pants off and put me under a cold shower. I remember I was literally screaming.
93. I had nightmares from then on. I hated bedtime, I dreaded it. I was so worried throughout the day thinking about nighttime coming.
94. There were other times they put me out in the corridor in my wet nightdress but sometimes they would take off my nightdress and they would leave me standing in just my pants. I remember it was really cold as Fornethy was a really cold place. I was always cold there and could never heat up.
95. This went on most nights and the teachers just didn't like me because of it. I was a problem child; I think that was what they addressed me as.
96. I can't remember who it was that pulled me out of bed because they are teachers that I cannot remember. I look back and wonder whether they were dinner ladies but then I think why would dinner ladies be there at nighttime. I then wondered if it was auxiliary ladies.

97. It was a different team of staff who worked there at nighttime and there were always people creeping about. It was an old building, and you could always hear them in the corridors. I always knew I was getting caught because they would come in and check my bed to see if it, or my nightclothes, were wet.
98. One of the nights, the older girl who was next to me, tried to help me. She said to me to get up quickly before they came in so they could see if they could find any dry things to put on.
99. The staff would come in and say, "Aw she's done it again." I would get pulled out of bed and it would be the same scenario of putting me on a chair, standing at the end of my bed or out in the corridor. In the morning, I would be put in the shower which nine times out of ten was freezing cold. This happened at least a dozen times whilst I was in Fornethy.
100. Fletcher was always about in the mornings to make sure that I was being showered.
101. One time when I wet the bed, they made me eat carbolic soap. Three of the staff took me and put me into the cold shower. I was trying to wash myself with the carbolic soap which had a very strong smell. One of the teachers said to me I was to take a bite of it. I bit a corner of this square carbolic soap. I don't know what the reason was for making me eat carbolic soap. It was just control. They wanted you to do what they wanted. I couldn't swallow it and there were bubbles coming out my mouth and because of that, all of my life I have hated carbolic soap.
102. They used to tell me that I was dirty, I was disgusting and that I was too old to be wetting the bed. They said that they didn't tolerate "bedwetters", it was not acceptable. They were just evil.
103. It wasn't just me it happened to. It happened to lots of others as well. I could be out in the corridor on my own and another girl would be brought out and put in another corner in the corridor. We couldn't even look at each other. We were told "Don't even as much as look at each other" so we wouldn't speak.

104. All the other girls that wet the bed got the same treatment of being made to stand and suffer the derogatory comments. I saw some getting worse than me. I saw other girls getting skelped, slapped and their hair pulled.
105. There would be other ones, older girls that were taken out their beds but they wouldn't be put in the corridor, they would be taken downstairs, some of them kicking and screaming, some of them hysterical and trying to hold onto the banister to try and stop them being pulled down. I used to always just think they had been naughty and not done what they're told, or they had wet the bed.
106. It was teachers and staff that I saw dragging these girls down the stairs in the night. I never saw any of the men that visited the place doing this.
107. When we were out on walks, I was always getting hit on the back of my head or slapped or pushed because I was walking too slow because of the wellies. I know that might not sound harsh, but when you are a wee girl and you have an adult pushing or slapping you on that back of the head, it is absolute bullying. I can't remember having any visible marks or injuries from this. This wasn't just happening to me it was happening to the other girls as well.
108. I was leathered by Miss Fletcher with a ruler. That was my worst experience, and it happened because I hated the food there. I hated the porridge, I hated the milk, I hated the fish, things that I ate at home. They were always trying to force feed me and make sure that I would eat it. They were not always successful because I just wouldn't do it. I wouldn't open my mouth; I would keep it closed. They would take the fork or spoon, try and pull my mouth open with their hands and physically try and put the food in my mouth. One of the things they used to force me to eat was stew. I used to eat stew before I went there but the stew at Fornethy was really chewy. I was on my nerves all the time when I was there and when they made me eat it, I couldn't swallow it. I was always choking on it.
109. The teachers all ate in the dining room with us, and they knew where I sat. There were set nights for set meals and on the night we got stew I would pretend I was eating it

but I was actually taking it out my mouth, putting it in a bit of toilet roll and throwing it under the table. I had done this for a couple of weeks and then one day Fletcher got up, came over and was pacing up and down the table I was sitting at. Basically, her words were "We all know that there is somebody at this table who has not been eating their meat and throwing it under the table. The dinner ladies have got to clean it up and this is good food going to waste".

110. She then said, "We know who the culprit is." She came up and stood behind my chair. I was terrified. She put her hands on my shoulders and said, "It's you RIV, isn't it" and I felt as if everybody was looking at me. She pulled me out the chair and said, "You will never waste good food again." She dragged me by the nape of my neck and took me out of the dining room and made one of the auxiliaries or dinner ladies come with her. She took me along to another room and got out this ruler, not like the one I had at school but like a long metre stick. She kept shouting and bawling at me that nobody liked me, that my family didn't want me, that the staff were fed up with me, that I wasn't obeying the rules and because I was wasting good food all the time, I wouldn't be getting fed.
111. She told me to put my hands out and she leathered into the palms of my hands with that wooden ruler. She hit me that many times that I couldn't have counted but it was at least five or six. She just lost it, like a mad woman, absolutely lost it. Whilst she was hitting me, she was shouting and bawling at me and was like a woman possessed. I thought she was going to just start hitting me anywhere with the ruler. She didn't but just continued hitting me on the hands. My hands were red and stinging. They weren't cut but they were all marked and welches. When I was in my bed that night they were still stinging and that sore, that I couldn't sleep.
112. After she had finished hitting me with the ruler, she told the woman that was with her to open the cupboard and hand her a brown bottle with castor oil in it. Fletcher prised my mouth open and just kept spooning it in and spooning it in until I was sick. I was hysterical and I vomited, there were slabbers coming out my mouth. She grabbed me, took me out and sent me up to my bed. When I went to my bed I was vomiting and

had really bad diarrhoea, so I dirtied the bed. They left me lying in the dirt and vomit all night. It must have been the castor oil that did that to me.

113. That was my worst experience, and I just thought I was never getting out of there. They never gave me anything else to eat that night, they never let me down the stairs, I was in that dorm on my own and I was terrified. Nobody came to check on me all night. They knew I had been sick and they had given me a metal bowl to be sick in. The stomach cramps were horrendous, and I thought I was dying. I couldn't sleep all night. Nobody was to go near me, and I was to be left alone. In the morning, they came and put me in the cold shower again. It was barbaric what they did and they were meant to be teachers.
114. I think this incident happened in about the third week I was there. The reason I think this is because I believe they were watching what I did with the stew for the first two weeks. After that I hardly ate a thing. No matter if they forced me or tried to force me, I couldn't do it. I felt as if I couldn't swallow. It had done something to me that I just felt that I couldn't eat.
115. There was a tuck shop, and the parents used to send postal orders so that you could buy sweets. For whatever reason, the first few weeks I was there I never got sent anything. I had been there about three weeks, and I went down to see if there was a postal order for me but there wasn't. I just thought it was because my dad was poor, and he wouldn't pay the extra for a postal order.
116. One teacher whose name I can't remember said to me, "Your family don't care about you, they're not sending you anything and they are not missing you." I believed her and I thought I wasn't ever getting home.
117. One time Mrs Robertson told me there was a parcel for me. It was a box with my name on it and I recognised the writing as my dad's because he was a beautiful writer and had fancy handwriting. When I opened it, there was a wee box of Maltesers. That was the only time I remember getting anything. I was so happy and so excited about getting a sweetie, but I was happier that my family had actually sent me something.

118. Two of the teachers came over, told me I could have two of the sweets and then took the rest from me saying I wasn't getting any more because I was naughty, was a 'pee the bed' and didn't deserve them. They took them away and I didn't get them back. I remember thinking they were evil, and how could they do that.
119. Over the years, when I mentioned certain things to my parents and I asked why they hadn't sent me much, my dad said that wasn't true and that he had sent a couple of parcels. I definitely only got the one package with the Maltesers.
120. The other girls weren't allowed to share. Some of them would try and slip me something knowing I didn't get anything, but they would get stopped and into trouble for doing so. They were told you are not allowed to share.
121. I would say the older girls suffered more. I just felt that because they were older, they thought they were wiser, and they could maltreat them more. They were always on their backs. They were always getting called out the room, the TV room or the dining room. They were always treated worse, and I used to think it was because they were big girls. They were always getting taken away from us.
122. I saw an older girl who was maybe about twelve or thirteen years old getting belted with an actual man's belt. She was belted about three times, and this happened on about three different occasions. She was belted on her backside over the top of her dress. I remember her screaming when this happened. She used to scream a lot. She was one of the ones that used to run out the dorm at night. She was a bit mouthy and wasn't accepting of everything that was going on. She was rebelling whereas most girls didn't. Most of us just did what we were told and accepted it because really, we were fighting for our lives. We just wanted to get it over and done with and get home.

### **Leaving Fornethy**

123. I had been told I was going to Fornethy for six weeks but ended up staying for about seven and a half.

124. At assembly the day before we were scheduled to go home, we were told we weren't getting to go, because the snow was horrendous, and the buses couldn't get up to us. I was devastated, it was horrific, and I remember thinking that I was never getting home. They told us it would depend on the weather, but we would be there at least another week.
125. That following week they told us that we would all be going home that week. I remember thinking 'oh my god' and couldn't believe that I was getting back home.
126. The next day I was given my case back and we went out to get on the bus to go back to Glasgow. As we were going out there were a new lot of girls going in, just as had happened when we had arrived. I remember clear as day looking at these wee girls going in and thinking, you don't know what you are going into.

#### **Life after being in care at Fornethy**

127. I got to Buchanan Street bus station, and I sat on the bus for another forty-five minutes after it arrived. I was crying because nobody had come for me, and we didn't have a phone at home. A neighbour Mrs Sheerin had one, but I didn't know her number. There were two men who had been on the bus to take us back and they weren't happy they were having to wait.
128. After the forty-five minutes, my sister turned up. My dad had sent my sister to pick me up and when she came on to the bus she had a shoe bag. She said "Hi, how are you" and gave me a cuddle. She then apologised for being late and said she had been in Dylan's Shoe Shop buying shoes. I was hysterical and thinking how could you have done that.
129. When I got back to the house, I wouldn't say I was shy, but I wasn't happy. I was resentful, disappointed and I was angry. I immediately made it be known that she had been late for picking me up and I'd had to wait on the bus.

130. My mum was home, and she was so pleased to see me. Out of all the family, I was closest to my mum. She was heartbroken I had been sent away. She wasn't happy about it and just kept saying she was sorry. I always told her it wasn't her fault.
131. My brothers were there as they had come home before me because the weather hadn't been as bad in Ayrshire as it had been at Fornethy.
132. The [REDACTED] was up, my dad had wallpapered the wall, and the house looked lovely. Before I had gone, mum hadn't been there and things weren't getting done but I noticed there were new lamps at the side of the fireplace.
133. Everything looked lovely but I was crying, and I remember thinking I hated them all. I hated all my family and for the first time in my life I resented them. I was thinking how could you, as my big sister at twenty years, or my big brother at eighteen, let me go there.
134. I never spoke to them then about what Fornethy had been like and what had happened to me. My dad went on and on about my hair and how they had not done a good job of cutting it. I did tell him it had been much shorter and that I hadn't wanted it cut.
135. It took me years and years before I did speak to my parents about what happened. The first time was when I was pregnant with my daughter [REDACTED]. I was sitting in the dining room with my mum and my brother [REDACTED]. Something came up about lifebuoy soap and [REDACTED] then mentioned carbolic soap. I became hysterical and couldn't talk.
136. They both asked me what was wrong, and I just said Fornethy. My mum asked what about it, what happened, and I told her it was horrific and that I had suffered abuse. My brother stood up and asked if they had sexually abused me and that was my mother's concern as well. I told them they hadn't but every other type of abuse they did. I said, "I was only seven and you all let it happen." I told them that I had never really forgiven them for it and how could they have done that to me. [REDACTED] said, "You can't blame us." I said to him "Where were you when I was away there for nearly eight weeks, away from my family, my parents, my house, my school, with no contact?"

137. It was cruelty, I just think that was absolute cruelty what happened to me. My mum was distraught.
138. She was a great mum and she did absolutely everything for us. She'd had a very sad life. Her mum had died when she was six months old, and her dad had died at Dunkirk when she was four years old. She was fostered out and then met my dad and I think that was an escape to get away. She got married and because she had been on her own, she always wanted a big family. We were her life, and she was a super mum. She had another nervous breakdown in 1982 that was ten times worse. She made a full recovery, but she had been through so much in her life and couldn't cope with her mental state. It didn't define her because she was such a strong woman with what she had come through in her life. So, because of that I never really went into detail of exactly what had happened to me.
139. I think it was last year that I decided to mention to my brothers what had happened.

#### **Impact / Treatment / Support**

140. I was quite a clever child at school. In primary seven I was ████████ of Wellhouse Primary, which was something they never really did in primaries. My teacher loved me but one thing that was always in my report cards was that I never had faith in my own ability and that I had no confidence.
141. That has been the case throughout my whole life. I have always just felt inadequate. My self-esteem has always been low. I don't have good vibes about me, really anything I do is not for me. I've always been for my family. They are everything to me.
142. I have had two great jobs. I worked for British Telecom when I left school as a telephone operator and then up until ten years ago I worked for the Bank of Scotland, I had a great job, I got promoted and everything but because of the things that had happened in my life, I couldn't cope with the stress and pressures of the job.

143. I don't know if this was me being touchy but there was one member of staff who I would say was a bully. There was a lot of bullying went on in the bank and I just felt I was an adult, and I was a mum, and I wasn't going to be bullied by her. I had been bullied all my life with certain things, Fornethy being the main place with the bullying and abuse, so I thought I don't need to take this rubbish.
144. The manager I had at the time was fantastic and I got on great with her. I was losing weight again; I was stressed, and she said to me that they were going to offer me a package that wouldn't be offered again, so I took it. I don't ever regret it, but it was because I had been promoted, and it was all just too much for me.
145. I sometimes look back and think why did I not stick in and why did I not do anything. Anybody else would have loved the position I was in with the bank, but I know why I didn't and that was just because I didn't have any belief in me and belief that I could do it. I didn't trust me to be able to do that job and yet I was doing it. I always felt undermined, and I wasn't strong enough. I didn't think I could do it, then I would start panicking, it was causing anxiety and panic attacks.
146. I blame that all on Fornethy. The bullying, the intimidation, the psychological abuse I was subjected to there has definitely had a big impact on my adult life.
147. The eating problems I have had my whole life are down to Fornethy. What happened when I was force fed and so badly punished for throwing the stew under the table gave me an issue throughout my adolescence. I went through stages of almost having anorexia, attending doctors and having issues with food because at Fornethy they had been trying to force me and making me sick. I didn't have a good relationship with food for most of my teenage years and even into my early twenties.
148. When I started working, I was always lying about food. I would tell my mum I had eaten at work, and I hadn't. I didn't eat all day and when I was at work colleagues would say to me that I hadn't eaten, and I would say it was because I had a big breakfast that morning. I was so, so thin. I thought then, that it was down to what had happened at

Fornethy. Even now, although I am at the heaviest I have been, I continue to have food issues and know it is down to how I suffered at Fornethy.

149. I asked my mum if I had eating issues before I went to Fornethy. She said that I hadn't and that I had been a good eater before I went there.
150. You are meant to go to these places to thrive and I failed so much. I totally failed. When I came home, my mum was so worried about me because I had lost so much weight.
151. Ever since I left Fornethy I have always had flashbacks and memories of Fletcher. I used to play tennis with my best friend, who actually became my sister-in-law, when we were about ten or eleven years old. I remember going up to her house and watching tennis on the TV. Martina Navratilova came on and I remember thinking, oh my god she is the double of Fletcher, and I couldn't watch it. All my life, when I heard her name or when she came on the TV, I couldn't look at it. It was the white hair and the prominent teeth, which was just like Fletcher. I hated her as a tennis player and always wanted her to get beat. This was a shame looking back, but it was just a reaction as she reminded me of Fletcher.
152. I have had nightmares and flashbacks about my time at Fornethy. There are certain things that always trigger bad memories.
153. I always remember ██████'s seventh birthday. We had a birthday party in the house for her and it was a great day. When all her friends went away, I was sitting on my own and I became hysterical. I was thinking that I was the same age as ██████ when I went to Fornethy. I thought how could anybody treat and do that to a child, who was the same age as my baby, as she was just a wee girl? How could they have done that to me?
154. ██████ never knew what happened to me at Fornethy until New Year a few years ago when we were at a party and the song 'Another Brick in the Wall' was played. When the line 'Teacher leave those kids alone came on.' I became hysterical and lost the

plot because it triggered off what the head teacher at Fornethy had done to me. I have never liked that song for that reason. [REDACTED] was embarrassed about my reaction so the next day I explained to her what had happened to me at Fornethy.

155. I know my brother says it wasn't sexual abuse. It is not all about sexual abuse. It is the mental, physical and psychological abuse and that was a bad point for me. When [REDACTED] turned seven, I used to look at her all the time and think back to when I was that age. How can a girl at that age go to a place like that, how is that possible.
156. There are some nights that certain things come into my head, and I think was that a bad dream, why was that allowed to happen. What was that all for. Why did they treat us so badly.
157. There are loads of things that remind me of there. Castor oil was a major thing, another thing is carbolic soap because they made me eat that in the showers. Stew, porridge, milk and custard, which was another thing they forced me to eat, are things I can't take now because I associate them with Fornethy.
158. For the last couple of years, I have been attending hospital because my anxiety is so bad, and I am on really strong medication.
159. I have been diagnosed with chronic anxiety. In October 2022, I had been under stress again, some of it to do with Fornethy and things that were going on as part of the support group. On the 11 October 2022, at 6:00 am, I went to get out my bed to go to my work and couldn't get out my bed until the third attempt. The room was spinning, I couldn't stand, and I thought I was having a stroke. I was holding on to my bedside cabinet and had to try and get myself together. I had to bump myself down the stairs because I couldn't walk. I got down to the living room, tried to be normal, as I didn't want to disturb [REDACTED] and frighten her. I didn't say anything, I took my thyroxine for my under active thyroid and went off to my work.
160. At that time, I was working for my twin brother, [REDACTED], who has his own business, but I never said anything to him. He asked me if I was okay, so I told him I wasn't feeling

great. He asked me to go and do something, and as I went out, I felt as if I was going to fall. He asked me again what was wrong, and I told him I thought there was something wrong with me. I told him everything was spinning and that I felt weak. He told me one side of my face had dropped at my eye. I thought it was maybe Bell's Palsy but when I went to the doctors, I saw a GP that I didn't know, who told me I had vertigo, that I needed complete rest, and I was a bit dehydrated.

161. I stayed off work for three days, but it went on intermittently for a while. I tried to get an appointment but couldn't get one. This went on into the next year. I was still working but I was still feeling dreadful. I started panicking as if I was going to fall. A couple of times I fell in the shower and then I fell in the supermarket.
162. On the 28 June I eventually got an appointment at the doctors and saw my own GP who I hadn't seen since before Covid. She seemed shocked when she saw me and asked what was wrong with me. I told her I didn't know, and she did all these tests. She told me I was going straight to hospital, and I needed to get a bag packed. She said she didn't know if I had MS or if I had suffered some sort of stroke.
163. I was in hospital for two weeks. They did loads of tests, PoTS postural tachycardia syndrome was one of them, Addison's and other things but it ended up they said I had BPPV benign paroxysmal positional vertigo which is very common with vertigo.
164. Whilst I was getting all these tests I kept fainting. I have very low blood pressure and an underactive thyroid and, because both of them were low they, had been hitting off each other. They said that because I was feeling faint, I was panicking because I was trying to preserve myself. That was an automatic thing and that was affecting my balance. They then discovered that I had, had a virus in my middle ear, the crystals had dispersed, and the crystals dispersing had caused the imbalance, but the crystals don't ever rectify themselves again.
165. I got referred to a vestibular physio who I went to for nine months and she was brilliant. She diagnosed that I had chronic PPPD Persistent Postural-Perceptual Dizziness which is also known as 3PD. This is a condition that affects my vestibular system and

causes my balance to go. It is the weirdest thing ever. In her opinion she thinks it is irreversible. I broke down one day and I happened to mention Fornethy. She asked if I had spoken to my doctor about it.

166. I had tried to speak to another doctor, about Fornethy about three years ago. She said that wasn't what I was there for, and she'd deal with that at another date. I tried to bring it up at other times and never once would she discuss or listen to me. She kept saying that wasn't what I was there for and that she thought I had more to concern myself with just now. I said to her how did she know that, and how did she know that what happened at Fornethy had nothing to do what was going on. I told her I thought that was what was making me ill and that it was all connected. She signed me off work. I was a single mum with a mortgage and that was a major concern for me.
167. I then got sent to Mental Health Services because my doctor said that I was very depressed, very anxious and thought I was declining. She sent me to [REDACTED] which is the Mental Health Unit in [REDACTED]. They referred me on to two others and I have just finished a counselling course there which was great for my anxiety alone. I have had a psychologist dealing with me and I just finished that treatment on 9th January this year.
168. I was with Mr Bashir, the psychologist at Northeast in Parkhead, Glasgow, who did a lot of work and that did help me as my anxiety had been so bad. Doctor Keaney, from my own surgery put me on to 20mg of Fluoxetine and then in May last year they put me on 40mg a day which is the highest dose. I am still on that and even although I feel it spaces me out, I have stuck with it.
169. They have also put me on Propanalol which slows me down for my anxiety. They took me off it a few weeks ago as the doctor thought it was detrimental to me because of my blood pressure. They have now permitted me to take half or one a day, because I feel I can't cope with my anxiety without them.
170. I have now been referred to GAMH Glasgow Association for Mental Health. I will be with them for six months.

171. So, from having a good job, I am now in a situation where I no longer go out on my own. My daughter does loads for me, and I have a close friend who does loads for me. Everything has just changed for me; I am not me anymore and I don't recognise myself.
172. When I look back, I think was I ever really able to cope, or was I putting on a front and going through the motions.
173. I have been involved with the Fornethy [REDACTED] Group for three years. I think bringing back all the Fornethy stuff into my life to the extent I have has been detrimental to me. I can't help that it happened to me. It was real, I was there, so I can't say move away from that. It's not that easy to do, because I can't just move away from it.
174. Something I miss is walking. I used to walk everywhere. I could go to Drumpellier and walk four miles round there in under an hour. I could do that every day. Now I don't want to go out. Now I can't go out and do that. I can't go out on my own and I can't walk round a shopping centre without a trolley. Anywhere I go I am fainting.
175. The last time I met the Fornethy girls was last July. I made the journey on my own on the train to Queen Street and walked to Central Station. When I got to Central, I saw the girls and one of them asked if I was alright because I was chalk white. I just fainted and there was no rhyme or reason. It was a bad faint and when I came round, I just thought no more Fornethy, so I have kind of backed off from the group a bit. I've not been to any meetings and not been bothering with it. I don't know if it is good for me or making me worse. I don't listen to anybody else's stories, and I know that sounds selfish, but I can hardly cope with my own.
176. When I look back, I think the biggest effect being at Fornethy has had on me is my lack of self-esteem and confidence. Even when the girl that was bullying me at the bank was doing so, it wasn't just me she was doing it to. The others were strong and stood up to her, whereas I was weak. Again. I felt I was back at school getting bullied, but it was worse than getting bullied at school. I told the doctor that I felt like I wasn't

coping because I was being bullied. I then think was all that just in my head, was I really being bullied or is it just me because in my mind I am going back to Fornethy. There have always been things in my mind which are all because of Fornethy and me going back to that.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

177. I reported what happened to me at Fornethy to the police at Easterhouse Police Station in October 2022.
178. It was a Saturday afternoon, and I had finally plucked up the courage to go. I told the officer behind the desk that I wanted to report stuff that happened to me when I was a wee girl. He had to radio an officer to come back in to take the report but told me I would have to wait an hour or so. I was fine with that as I had waited all this time to report it and as I had finally plucked up the courage, I wanted to speak to somebody.
179. About an hour and a half or two hours later, two officers came in and one of them asked me what it was about. I told them and the other officer who gave me his name as PC David Craig, said he would make a note of everything I was telling them. I think he did that digitally as I don't remember him writing anything. I didn't go into detail about everything, but it was all the basics about when I went to Fornethy and the stuff that happened.
180. PC Craig said he would be back in contact with me, but I never heard anything. I phoned up in February 2023 and said I hadn't heard back from them. They said they would get the officer to contact me which he did. He told me he had filed the report so somebody should be in contact with me. In January 2024 I was talking with my daughter in the kitchen and said I found it strange that I had still never heard anything. I questioned is this what happens to people that report abuse. Do they not believe you or think you're crazy.

181. My daughter decided she was going to phone them. She spoke to a guy who was lovely and very helpful. He said all he could do was apologise and according to him it was never filed. He said he would file it then. I think it had been filed under a crime number, but we had been given an incident number on a bit of paper or the other way round and that was why it hadn't been processed. I didn't really understand.
182. Within a month a detective Laurie Preston from the police in Tayside phoned me, and she was lovely. She also apologised and told me that I had slipped through the net. I heard from her a few weeks ago and she told me there is a pending court case against Miss Robertson who was my teacher. She asked me to confirm that Miss Robertson had never abused me and I did.

### **Records**

183. I have tried to get a hold of my medical records from my time at Fornethy, but I think I have been told lies and there is a cover up.
184. When I first joined the Fornethy [REDACTED] Group nobody seemed to have anything in their medical records about their time there.
185. None of them seemed to have been with the same doctor all their lives but I had, so I phoned them up and said I was looking for my medical records from 1974 to 1978.
186. The reason I think there is a cover up is because of what happened when I spoke to the practice manager. She has dealt with both my parents and a lot of my family. She initially said there was no problem in getting these records.
187. She later phoned me back and asked if there was something in particular I was looking for. I didn't really want to go into it, but I told her I had gone to a residential school when I was a young girl and was looking for some proof that I was there. When I told her I had been at Fornethy and asked her whether she had heard of it she told me she

had and believed some other girls had been in the practice a while ago looking for the same thing.

188. I told her I was there in 1976 and that was the real period I wanted to know about. She phoned me back the next Tuesday and said she had my records and said I could pick them up from the front desk. I couldn't get there at that time as I was at work, but said I would get them later that week.
189. On the Thursday she phoned me again and told me that she had looked through them but there was nothing from 1976 relating to Fornethy. I told her it was Dr McBain who had been the doctor at the time and had sent me for the medical but there was still nothing. She did say however that she had seen an entry around that time in my record that was in Latin writing. It said something like Aciffee 1.5 or 0.5. She told me that she had googled it and found a link relating it to institutions and residential schools. I told her I would pick the records up the next day. She said she was off but wished me good luck with it.
190. I thought this was weird, so later that night I started googling it and it did come up with that link. I felt this reference in Latin was something to do with me being in care and I found that disturbing. I would have been there for nights and nights researching it though as there was loads of paragraphs about it.
191. First thing on the Friday, before I had picked up the records, I got a call from the practice manager. She said she would really appreciate it if I did not mention it to or tell anybody else what she had told me she had seen in my records. I told her I didn't understand and asked why. She told me she had been telling one of the Doctor's that she had spoken to me about the Latin entry and what she had said she thought it referred to. He was not happy and said that the Latin referred to a bad chest infection and that I had and been given actified linctus which we did get when we were younger. He had told her she was to have no further discussion with me on it.
192. When I said to her that I thought she was meant to be off that day, she was meant to be, but she had got a call to come in because of it. She said she would rather I dropped

the subject, that it was really serious and could be detrimental to her job. Again, I told her I didn't understand and asked her what she had done wrong. All she said was that she really had to go and that she couldn't discuss it any further. She has never even looked at me when I have been at the surgery since. I thought this was very weird and freaked me out.

193. When I got the medical records, I looked at that entry, but the writing is deplorable. I could make out the 'a' and the 'c' and there is 0.5. I think it is saying that it is actified linctus and that I was to get 0.5mg dosage.
194. However, what was all that about that she and I both googled and why did she get in trouble. It could be that it was just because she shouldn't have been reading the records.
195. It all seemed very strange as does the fact there is no record of me having had a medical examination or me being sent by Dr McBain before I went to Fornethy. When I went for that medical Dr McBain's name was mentioned and my memory was that he had sent me to them for the medical.
196. The main thing is there is nothing on my record about being at Fornethy and it is the same for all the girls in the [REDACTED] group, and I wonder why. I think that they, whether it is the GP surgery, Glasgow Council or Glasgow Corporation, are trying to cover up that we were all there and most of us were abused. There is something about the whole Fornethy thing that does not add up.
197. I just have this feeling that there is a cover up. All the girls that went to Fornethy were all sent to Fornethy by them, or whatever Glasgow Council was called then. We have asked Glasgow City Council, and they say they don't have any records or proof of us being there. Seemingly the papers that they had, got burned and we have been told that was procedure. Personally, there is just something that I think does not add up.

### **Lessons to be learned**

198. I would say that all staff that are working at any residential establishments now or in the future must be seriously vetted. You see things in the media now when things happen saying that the person had been vetted. If that is Disclosure Scotland, that is not proper vetting.
199. People working in care need to have proper qualifications and proof of them.
200. Things need to be looked at more closely, as there are far too many abusers that slip through the net. It was not just Fornethy, there was Quarriers, Smyllum, it was everywhere, and it is probably still going on.
201. I blame the government and the authorities for allowing children to be left in the care of these people. I know there is always going to be one that slips through the net but not a whole bunch of teachers or women. Vetting and Disclosure Scotland need to change.
202. In my opinion there should have been doctors, medical staff and dentists at Fornethy. There were no professionals like social workers or inspectors coming in to check the place or who was being employed there.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

203. I want to know if the staff at Fornethy were actually qualified or registered teachers. There is nothing on record stating they were or weren't. We never got taught any real subject work like maths or languages and anything we were taught at school at Fornethy was so basic, It was that basic I could have taught it as an adult.
204. I believe that the Inquiry are backing us, the survivors of Fornethy, by bringing our cases forward to the forefront. I want Glasgow City Council to admit that they were wrong and that it shouldn't have been allowed.

205. I would also love to ask them what were their statistics that said all the girls came from poor backgrounds. There was no social work involvement with my family. I never came from an abusive family; they were a loving family. We had our problems, family breakdowns, a lot of poverty but no abuse and none of us would have laid a finger on each other.
206. I want an apology and for the council to admit that we were there. That really annoys me that they say there is no proof. I am telling the Inquiry my story but how do you know I am not lying, because there is nothing to prove that I or all these other women that went there over years, did actually go there. Why should they turn round to me and ask do you have proof that you were there?
207. They were wrong to send us there. We should never have been sent there and abused by people that they trusted to look after us. Okay, my dad agreed to me going but I don't think he agreed to it, knowing what I was going to suffer. He would never have allowed that.
208. They just need to admit that everything they did with it was wrong. I don't see anything that was right. I would love to meet somebody who says Fornethy was great for me or that they had really benefitted from it.
209. I've heard other girls in the group say in the media and in the media itself that the Coates family gifted the house to the council for them to send malnourished and impoverished girls and what they called delinquents there to have them looked after. I was never any of these before I went there. After being there though, I was malnourished because I couldn't eat and I was sick that much. They made me suffer but I had never suffered before it.
210. I also know that the Coates family gifted Glasgow Corporation the house on the understanding that they would never sell it for profit. I know that they have since sold it and made a profit. What happened to that money?

211. I don't want it ever happening to anybody else again but it probably will in a different era, in a different light, and a different setting. Somewhere, some abusers will slip through and there will be abuse. In this day and age, with all the computers and systems that can be checked, there is no need for it.

212. I know that Margaret Pearl Fletcher, my abuser was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee medal. I think it is terrible that a woman who abused me and so many other girls has an award from the Queen and I would like her award to be taken from her even although she is now dead.

**Other information**

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

Signed... <sup>RIV</sup> [Redacted Signature] .....

Dated... 27-5-2025: .....