

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

ABO

Support person present: No

1. My name is ABO I have a confirmation name which I do not use. If I was to be referred to by my confirmation name I would be known as ABO ABO My date of birth is 50. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I lived with my mother, my father and my four brothers in Clydebank. We were a catholic family. My mother died when my two youngest brothers were just babies. One had just been born. My two youngest brothers went to stay with my paternal aunt. My paternal aunt had six kids of her own. Obviously, because of that, she couldn't take everyone. My youngest brother my older brother and I ended up going into care.
3. One of the other reasons we went into care was because the factory where my father worked got closed down. He ended up having to go down to Liverpool for a job. I think he moved down to Liverpool about the time we ended up in Bellevue. In those days there were no social services as such. If it was today, our father might have been able to keep us and get help from the state. Back then that didn't exist. If you were in the situation that my father was in you had to go to the parish for help and then they would find you somewhere to stay. That's what happened in our case. I know that is how we ended up in Bellevue.



4.

5.

6.

### **Bellevue, Rutherglen**

7. Bellevue was run by the Sisters of Charity. I've since learnt that the Order is now called the Daughters of Charity. There were boys and girls in Bellevue but we were all kept separate. There was a separate house for the girls. There were children there from infant age to about fifteen. All the children left when they were fifteen.
8. From what I remember, most of the kids in Bellevue came from broken homes. They would have been nervous before they went in there. One day you were in your home with mum or your dad and the next you were in the home. You were left wondering how you got there. Children accept things but there's a toll. There's a price to pay.
9. Bellevue looked like the old Victoria Infirmary in Glasgow. It was a big black building with metal fire escapes on the outside. The main building had a laundry and a

furnace in the basement. It had a dining room we called the refectory on the ground floor. The first floor had the girls accommodation. At the very top of the building were classrooms. The whole building was about five or six stories high.

### *Groups at Bellevue*

10. They youngest group of boys was the infant group. The age range there was infants to three or four. Then there was a group from about three or four to seven or eight. I think that group was called St Mary's. There were between ten and twenty boys in St Mary's. The infant group and St Mary's stayed in the main building.
11. The oldest group was called St Joseph's. It had children aged between seven or eight and fifteen. There must have been about twenty or thirty boys in St Joseph's. St Joseph's stayed in a building apart from the main building in the grounds. It was like a manse. It had a glass veranda. It had various extensions attached to it.
12. When I went to Bellevue my younger brother went to the infant group. He ultimately went into St Mary's. We all left before he was old enough to go into St Joseph's. I went straight into St Mary's. I spent between a year to a year and a half there before going St Joseph's. My older brother went straight to St Joseph's. He spent his whole time at Bellevue in St Joseph's.

### *Siblings*

13. I don't recall getting to see my brothers when we were in the separate groups. We only saw each other when our dad came to visit. I don't recall seeing my brothers playing in the grounds when we were in separate groups. We were in different bits of Bellevue. The areas all seemed a long way away from one another. There were hedges and bushes in-between each area. I never tried to get to the other bits. It wasn't easy to get to the other parts. I didn't see my brothers at mealtimes because I think we all ate at different times.

14. When I went up to St Joseph's I still didn't really see my older brother. I would see him at dinner time and playtimes, however, I tended to just stay with my own age group or the boys in my dorm.

*Numbers*

15. I seem to recall that everybody was given a number when they went into the groups. I think my numbers were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Those were the numbers that were written into your clothes.

*Staff in St Mary's*

16. St Mary's was run by a nun who was either called Sister Mary or Sister Anne. You very rarely saw her. She ran it with a civilian called Miss Jeanie. Miss Jeanie was tiny. She was about four feet tall. She had had rickets. She was very kind and gentle. She was the one who really looked after us.
17. Miss Jeanie occasionally got assistance from the older girls who were resident at Bellevue. Those girls would have been maybe thirteen or fourteen. They would supervise us doing certain things. I don't remember any domestic helpers.

*Staff in St Joseph's*

18. Sister BAF was in charge of St Joseph's. She was a [REDACTED] lady with a [REDACTED] face. She was a big woman. [REDACTED] She was the boss. She was southern Irish. I couldn't understand a word she said. There was another nun who used to come and go who helped out too. I can't remember her name.
19. Below Sister BAF was AGC [REDACTED]. We called her Miss AGC. All the boys would call her "that miss". She was the civilian in charge of St Joseph's. The best way I can describe it is that she was the Prison Warden if Sister BAF was the Governor. She was the day to day person. Miss AGC was the one who really ran St Joseph's. [REDACTED] She was quite a

fearsome looking woman. She could have been in her thirties. She had a collie dog. It had a lead. The lead had a metal bit with a long leather strap that came off it. She would disconnect the lead from the dog and use that to hit you.

20. There was a guy who helped out in St Joseph's called **AHB** don't remember his surname. He was a civilian who helped out. He was an [REDACTED] [REDACTED] He was ok. He was obviously primed to dish out punishments in a subtle sort of way though. He only came in on Mondays. He would just turn up after dinner. I doubt he was even paid to help out. I think he was just a volunteer. I remember him getting guys in to help out to fix things and do maintenance.
21. There were no domestics or janitors in St Joseph's. There was nobody like that.

### **Routine at Bellevue**

#### *First day*

22. I'm sure I went to Bellevue in [REDACTED] 1956. I don't know whether I went there straight after the place in Dundonald. I remember getting a bus from Clydebank into Glasgow with my dad and my younger and older brother. The bus took us right into Rutherglen. I remember walking along the road and seeing the place for the first time. We walked up the path to the main building.
23. We were taken into an old fashioned Victorian room. It had a huge boardroom type table and big chairs. It was all dark wood. I remember there were nuns all walking around us. Eventually one of the nuns said that I had to go off with either a Sister or Miss Jeanie. I was then separated from my two brothers. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] went off with two different nuns to the infant group and St Joseph's. I was taken up to a dormitory with three or four beds in it. That was it. I wasn't told what was going to happen. I wasn't introduced to any of the other boys or anything like that.

*Daily routine*

24. You were woken up about half 6 or 7 am. The method was that someone walked in the door and clapped their hands. You then got up and got dressed. You then went to the refectory for breakfast. If you were in St Joseph's you had to do chores after breakfast. In St Mary's you didn't do that. You then went to classes in the main building or school. I don't remember lunches. I can't remember whether we came back or not for lunch. Lessons were held in the afternoon. School finished at about four o'clock. We would then go back to Bellevue. When we came in we were allowed a slice of bread with some jam and a drink of water. After that there were some kind of prayers or a religious thing. We then played outside. Dinner was about six o'clock in the refectory. After dinner you went for night prayers before going to bed. You went to bed about 8 pm..
25. On a Saturday in St Mary's we probably would have just played outside. When you went into St Joseph's you were allowed out on Saturday afternoons. I would be given some money out of what my father had left. It would be a sixpence or something like that. We used to go and see Clyde Football Club in Rutherglen or go and see Celtic. I remember us having to get the tram and avoiding the conductor woman if we went to Celtic Park. Sometimes we just walked.
26. Sundays were tough. It was heavy stuff. It was a religious day. You were up for mass at eight o'clock. Mass was held in the church in the grounds. You would then come back for breakfast. You then had religious studies. It was learning Latin and all that sort of stuff. When I went to St Columbkille's, the school insisted we also go to their mass at ten o'clock. If you didn't go to that you had to report to the headmaster on the Monday morning and explain why you weren't there. That was the way things were. We had lunch at about twelve o'clock. There was a Sunday school type thing in the afternoon. After that you would play. After that was afternoon devotions. That was another religious ceremony. It's not like mass. You sing hymns and the priest does stuff with incense. That took about three quarters of an hour. Then you had dinner. You then would have a play. You went to bed about 8 pm after prayers.

*Sleeping arrangements*

27. There were between four and five beds in each dorm in St Mary's. There would be anything between four and eight beds in each dorm in St Joseph's. They were all single beds.

*Washing and bathing*

28. Washing and bathing was much the same idea in St Mary's and in St Joseph's. We got washed every morning. There were about four or five big Belfast sinks. I remember the big brass taps. It was always that red carbolic soap. You would just wash your face and things like that.
29. Once a week you went for a bath. It was a big old fashioned iron bath with big taps. I think that was on a Friday night. There was hot water. I think we shared the same water. You were in and out quickly.

*Food*

30. All the meals were had in the refectory in the main building. Everybody had their dinner in there. We didn't eat together with the staff. One of the nuns was the cook. You could tell what you were going to get by what day it was. For breakfast we got cornflakes. There was rarely any milk. There was a tea urn though. We would put tea or water with sugar on our cornflakes. You just got used to it. What I remember of the lunches was they consisted of potatoes, soup and bread. Dinner was always cooked. I remember having this stew stuff made of mutton. It was always fish on Fridays. The food was always inedible.
31. You had to finish your food or you were in trouble. They forced you to eat your food. You were threatened with getting the belt from the head nun if you didn't eat it. You would be baulking and gagging as you tried to eat your food. You would hope that they would go away to bother someone else.

32. Before you left the refectory you had to take your plate up to a pile of plates. The nun that was there inspected the plates. She checked whether there was any food on the plates. If you hadn't eaten your food they would send you to the head nun for the belt. They would give you the belt on your bum. I only remember that happening in St Joseph's. I can't recall that happening in St Mary's. I think they just told you off rather than gave you belt when you were in St Mary's.
33. We used to carry a rag to put the food we didn't want to eat in. We used to hide the rag full of food in our pockets. After our meals we would then go outside and throw what we didn't eat over a big wall by the side of the refectory. God knows what the other side of the wall looked like.
34. I was forever hungry at Bellevue. We used to go up to Woolworths to steal sweets to keep us going. One of the ladies who worked there ended up giving us broken biscuits. She must have worked out that we were stealing things because we were hungry.

### *School*

35. When I was in St Mary's I initially went to classes in the main building. I don't remember anything about the lessons there. I do remember little spelling books, memorising three letter words and counting. I think it was just a normal education. I don't remember the teachers. We only went to classes in the main building for a while because we later got moved to St Columbkille's. It was only primary one, two and three that we went there. St Columbkille's was about fifty yards down the road from Bellevue. I don't know why that changed. It might be because St Columbkille's hadn't been fully built when I started in St Mary's.
36. Something changed when I was in St Joseph's. They changed the school that we had to go to from St Columbkille's to Fairy Street. I would have been about eight when that happened. Fairy Street was about a mile away. Fairy Street had been a non-denominational school before we started going. In those days that really meant



it was a protestant school. I remember that, after we started going, they split the school into one half catholic and the other half non-denominational.

37. We used to walk down in a group of ten or twelve towards Fairy Street. I remember walking past the tenements and people throwing things at us out of their windows. They threw bottles and things. I remember all the windows being open in the tenements and people shouting at us. I think they thought that we were taking their school away from them. Ultimately we were escorted by the police. That only lasted a while. It eventually all calmed down.
38. We were known as the "convies" in Fairy Street. That was because the other children thought we were from a convent. There were no school uniforms in the school but people could tell who we were because we had second hand stuff on. We were different in that respect. We protected ourselves in our numbers. We would all get together as a group. We were quite tough. We kept to our group and no one dared to come across us. It was only when you were on your own that you were subjected to things from the other children.
39. I saw my older brother at Fairy Street. He would have been in primary six or seven when I started there. The much older boys went to a high school in Motherwell. Neither my brother or I were old enough to have ended up going there before we left Bellevue.
40. I never did any homework when I was at Bellevue.

*Chores and work*

41. There were no chores in St Mary's. When you went up to St Joseph's you had to do certain jobs. You were given work. Everyone had to do it. You just had to get on with it. I don't know how the jobs were divvied out. They usually gave the worst jobs to the boys they didn't like. There was no rota or anything like that. I think you did each job for between six months and a year. You had to do your work between breakfast and going to school.

42. The first job I remember getting was mopping out the dormitories. I had to mop them out to the top of the stairs. Another boy had the job of sweeping out the dormitories. I followed at his back with a mop and bucket filled with water and Jeyes disinfectant. Doing your work with others caused problems. I would have to wait for the guy in front of me to finish sweeping the floors. I would have to wait for his work to be inspected by the person supervising before I could start mopping. Sometimes the guy sweeping the floors would be told to do it again. You could be waiting there wringing your hands.
43. On one occasion I remember mopping the floors. I finished my bit. Sister BAF came in. She wasn't happy with what I had done. She picked up the bucket of water and emptied it all out on the floor. I had to then mop it all again. I ended up being late for school. I got sent to the headmaster's office. I then got the belt off of him.
44. Later on I got the job as the "refectory boy" or "revvy boy." That was the worst job you could have. It was a dreaded job. Nobody wanted it. If you had that job you had to wash the refectory after everybody before you went to school. When you finished school you had to come back and set all the tables with the plates and cups and stuff.
45. Maybe two or three times a week you had to peel all the potatoes. They had a machine. After the machine had done its work you had to scrape all the dirt and muck out of the machine. After that you had to take all the potatoes away to "eye" them. You had to sit with every spud and do that by hand. You did that in the extension at the back with the door open. It was freezing. It took well over an hour to do all of that. There was no soap or towels or anything after you finished. You just finished and went off.
46. The sweeping and mopping of floors and the duties involved with being the "revvy boy" are the main chores that I remember. I also remember having to clean bathrooms and polishing taps with Brasso. I recall some boys cleaning toilets and windows.

*Being an altar boy*

47. One of the jobs you had to do was being an altar boy. I think everybody had to do it between the ages of about seven and ten. I seem to recall that the older boys didn't have to do it. I think that the older boys didn't do it because the robes didn't fit them. I think that was the only reason.
48. You had to learn all the mass in Latin. You had to be able to say it in response to the priests. If you got it wrong the priest would give you a look. He would just stare at you with one of those looks. They used to give you extra work in the home when you didn't get it right.
49. I remember doing funerals. I remember one time there were four of us taken out in a car. I would have been between the age of seven and ten. I don't know where it was that we were taken. It wasn't that far from Rutherglen. We maybe travelled half an hour away or so. It was a big Victorian place with a big church adjacent to it. It could have been a nunnery or a children's home. I don't know.
50. I believe the funeral was for someone who used to be the mother superior of the place we were taken. I'm sure she was high up because I remember the archbishop being there. There ended up being about ten altar boys who were there and about six priests.
51. I remember we had to file past this mother superior's body. She was lying on this bed thing. She had rosary beads on. We all had to bend down and kiss her beads. To this day that still gives me the creeps. After that we went to have something to eat. We then had to go into the church for the mass. When they brought this mother superior's body in there was a big "to do" about which way round the body should be. They were debating whether the head should be towards the altar or not. The altar boys sat there watching them as they moved the body this way and that. Nobody explained to us what was going on. Later on I found out that if you only attended services your feet should be to the altar. If you gave services, like if you were a

priest, then it should be the other way round. The whole "carry on" with the body really freaked me out.

*Leisure time*

52. In St Mary's we played outside. There was a set of swings and maybe a see-saw. I remember kicking a ball. There was a little playroom with Snakes and Ladders and that kind of stuff. I don't recall many toys. There was no TV or radio. I remember there was an old nun who played records on her gramophone. It was Harry Lauder and some classical stuff. I don't ever recall there being any books. I don't think I ever read a book the whole time I was in Bellevue.
53. In St Joseph's they had a football park. It was a black ash thing with wee bits of grass and a couple of goalposts. If the weather was good on Sundays everybody went out to play football. There was an old big wooden box full of old strips and really old football boots that had been donated to Bellevue. You dived into that box and found something that fitted you. You would play football all afternoon.
54. In the summer we were occasionally taken to swimming baths in Gallowgate in Glasgow by AHB. The swimming baths were on Whitevale Street. We would be taken every Monday on the tram. In the winter time AH would put up a boxing ring in the recreation room. You would have to learn to box there every Monday night.
55. I remember missionaries would come in and give you a slide show about their work in Africa and things like that.

*Pocket money and possessions*

56. My father used to leave us money when he visited. I don't know how much that was. The nuns would take it and then give you your money later on when you asked.

57. I never had anything in terms of possessions. The only thing I had was my school uniform. It was a blazer with the school crest on it, a shirt and some short trousers. They took the uniform off me when I went into Bellevue.

*Holidays and trips*

58. I don't remember any trips away or holidays in St Mary's. In St Joseph's we went on day trips. I remember going to Ayr and Girvan a couple of times. They took us on a bus. Once a year the Glasgow taxi drivers would take us all down to Troon. Sometimes, during the summer, families came in and took children away for a holiday. I didn't go on those holidays but other boys did.
59. There was a man called Mr Smith who was apparently a millionaire. At Christmas time he used to come and take every child to Kelvin Hall for the fun fair. When you arrived there you got a meal of fish and chips, bread and cakes. Everybody would tear in because it was a really good occasion. It was a great meal. After that they would come round and everybody would get a wee box with half a crown in it. That was a good sum to us. We then had about an hour to go on the rides. We bought things like candy floss. You were given a wee gift at the end of the day. It was something like Mr Potato Head, a compendium of games or something like that. It was a great day out.
60. A man and a woman took myself and a girl called [REDACTED] to their house. The house was a nice house in the south side of Glasgow. They had a car. They were obviously quite well off. I remember being taken one afternoon to a pantomime by them. At the pantomime we were given sweets and chocolates. We weren't used to that. We were sitting eating handfuls of the stuff. After the pantomime they took us back to their house in their car. I remember telling the woman that I was ill. They stopped the car to let me get out so that I could be sick. We ended up staying with the man and the woman for a couple of days. On one of the days they took us to a big park which may have been Queen's Park. On another day they took us to a museum. I remember thinking to myself "This is great."

61. Over the course of the next year the man and the woman sent gifts. I can't remember what they were. All I remember is being told that I had parcels to collect. I remember having to write this man and a woman letters of thanks.
62. Going on trips away with the man and woman was great. However, I remember the feeling when the trips were over. I don't think I can ever fully describe the feeling I had in my gut when I returned and saw that old black building. You've no idea how bad I felt walking up the zigzag path back to the place.

*Attempted adoption*

63. One day, when I was about eight, I was called into the big room with the big wooden boardroom table. The head nun said that I may be lucky because the man and the woman who had taken [REDACTED] and I out, wanted to adopt me. She said that she needed my father's permission for that to happen. Later on my dad came up from Liverpool for a visit. I remember my dad being asked permission for me to be adopted. My dad went "off his nut". There were heated exchanges. I remember him saying "No I'm putting the family back together again." He point blank refused. I was then ushered out.
64. I ended up staying in Bellevue for a further two years. I remember the nuns and staff saying to me over those years "There's the one that refused decent people." They made me feel really bad. They made me feel as if it was my fault. They made me feel guilty. How could that decision have been anything to do with me? I now know that they were saying that to me because they couldn't get to my father.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

65. They didn't really celebrate Christmas. It was a religious occasion. On Christmas Eve you went to bed at eight o'clock. You were then got up at about eleven thirty for midnight mass. You then came back and got a wee drink of juice and a biscuit before going to bed. In the morning nothing really happened. It was a day of playing about. I seem to remember getting oranges and a wee bag of chocolate coins.

66. I only remember one birthday. I remember being punished for something on my birthday and thinking "They don't even know it is my birthday." Birthdays were never mentioned. There were no presents. There was nothing like that. You never got sweets other than at Easter and Christmas.

#### *Visits / Inspections*

67. My father came up occasionally from Liverpool to visit. He would take us out of Bellevue. He did that every six months or so. He would take all three of us out into Glasgow. We would go to the pictures and have fish and chips afterwards. He would take us back after that. I don't remember anyone else visiting. I never spoke to a social worker.
68. I don't remember there being inspectors or any inspections.

#### *Healthcare*

69. I don't recall ever seeing a doctor in Bellevue. I never got anything like a cold or the flu when I was there. I remember getting jaundice when I was about eight or nine. I was taken to a clinic or a hospital that wasn't far away. I came straight back.

#### **Abuse at Bellevue**

70. My younger brother doesn't have any real memories of there being problems because he was never old enough to go into St Joseph's. It's different for myself and my older brother. We have memories of problems because we spent most of our time in St Joseph's. The problems only really happened in St Joseph's.

*St Mary's*

71. They had inspections of your underwear in St Mary's. Everybody had to take their underwear off. You had to stand in a line with your underwear held out. They would check for stains. In St Mary's they sometimes got one of the older girl residents to help out with the inspection. Even at that young age that was excruciatingly embarrassing. If your underwear was dirty you had to go to a sink, wash them and bring them back. Your underwear would then be inspected again. If they were ok, you got to put them on again.
72. I met a guy at a dance ten years ago. I don't know how we got onto the subject but it turned out he had also been at Bellevue. His name was [REDACTED] I remembered him from my time there. He's since passed away. He told me that the older girl who came down to do the inspections of the underwear was called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] told me that she later went on to marry and become [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] She was involved in drugs and other things. I have looked up the dates she was in care and they do crossover with the time I was at Bellevue. I do wonder whether her life was affected from being in care. I don't know.

*St Joseph's*

73. You could get punished for things like refusing to eat something, breaking something, answering back or not doing your work right. If it was a special punishment for something they sent you up to your room. You would have to wait for maybe two or three hours. If a mealtime came along in that period then you missed a meal. Sister [BAF] would come up after you had been waiting. You would then have to bend over your bed. You would then feel someone hitting your bum. You never knew what she hit you with because you didn't see it. Sister [BAF] would shout and ball at you when you did something wrong. You were shaking.
74. I remember one time I was fighting with a boy called [REDACTED] I don't know why we were fighting but we were. I was sent up to the bedroom to wait for my



punishment from Sister [BAF] [REDACTED] was sent to another bedroom. I didn't get my dinner. I remember waiting for about three hours.

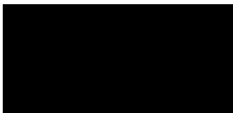
75. It wasn't the act of being skelped that was the thing. That was over and done in seconds. It was the waiting for three hours that did it for me. It was torture. That was the difficult thing for me. It was psychological abuse. Whether the waiting was a deliberate course of action or whether they just wanted us away because they weren't ready I don't know. It was 75% mental abuse and 25% physical abuse.
76. One time a window got smashed. Nobody knew who done it. We were in the recreation room. They asked us all who had smashed the window. Nobody admitted to it. We were then taken into the scullery at the back. The scullery had a stone floor. We were all made to kneel on the stone floor. We had short trousers on. The floor was rough and cold. We had to hold our hands out. Sister [BAF] then walked around us. She walked up and down with something that looked like a bamboo cane. We all got tired. Our hands would start going down because it was hard holding them up. Every time our hands started to go down Sister [BAF] would whack us across our hands with this bamboo cane. She shouted "Own up, own up, who done it." Eventually someone owned up to it. I don't know whether the person who owned up did it or how they were punished after that. I just don't know. I seem to recall Sister [BAF] doing that on a couple of occasions to us. When I think about it now she was torturing us.
77. They used to threaten to send you to a place called "The Dalton". They would say things to us like "This is your final warning, if you don't behave you'll be going to The Dalton." You would get scared when they said that and start behaving. It was never explained to us what that place was or where it was. I did hear some tales whilst I was in Bellevue that some of the girls who were a bit wayward were sent to The Dalton. I don't know whether The Dalton was a fictional place but we all thought it was a real house of correction or something. Maybe it was a lunatic asylum. I don't know.

78. I remember that Miss AGC used to tell AH<sub>B</sub> what boys should be fighting one another. If you had broken the rules or something you would be put in with a much bigger older boy. That was her trick to get you to behave. I remember being told by AHB early one day that I was going to be made to fight a much older boy. I worried about that all day. There was no way I could get out of it. I was made to fight a boy called [REDACTED]. I must have been four stone and he would have been about fourteen. He was a big lad. He could really pack a punch. The boy damaged my nose. I ended up being taken to the clinic. The guy who saw me at the clinic thought it was broken.
79. I wet the bed fairly regularly. It happened amongst all the kids. When you woke up you were made to roll down your sheets so that Miss AGC could inspect them. If you wet the bed, and she found out, she made you take your sheets off and carry them down to the laundry in the main building. If the sheets were really wet they could be quite heavy. You would have to walk through the refectory as you carried your sheets. That was "sport" for the other boys. The boys would cheer and shout "Peed the bed, peed the bed, peed the bed" and that sort of thing. Looking back, I think it was encouraged. They certainly didn't try to actively ban it. It certainly wasn't frowned upon. I think they thought that treating you that way might cure you.
80. When you got to the laundry the nuns there were kind of angry with you. They grabbed the sheets off you. You would be called you a "Filthy little" this and that. There was no sympathy for you. You were made to feel that you were dirty and disgusting.
81. I remember a couple of occasions when I woke up in the middle of the night and discovered I had wet the bed. Both times I was in a panic. I remember going into the next room where my older brother was, waking him up and telling him what had happened. I was terrified about the consequences. We went to the washrooms together and tried to wash the sheets with soap and water. It seemed to darken the sheets. We had to try and wring the sheets. On one occasion the radiators were still on because it was wintertime. That time we tried to hang the sheets over the radiators to dry them out. On the other occasion it was summertime so the radiators

weren't on. Because the radiators weren't on we had to kind of flap the sheets out of the window to try and dry them out.

82. I remember I could see a wall from my dormitory. It was about eight feet in height. I could see through the trees to the main road. I would watch the trams going up and down that road. I remember thinking "I can't take this anymore. I'm going to go down and get on one of those trams." I never did it. I don't think I was ever brave enough.

83. Other guys did run away. Boys ran away quite regularly. They were always brought back by the police. I don't know if they were physically punished but their lives would be a misery from the time they came back.



84. There was one guy called [REDACTED] He used to run away. They hated him worse than me. His nickname amongst the kids was "the hellish devil." How he got that nickname I don't know. I remember one of the nuns overhearing one of the boys calling him that. She whacked the boy who had called [REDACTED] "the hellish devil." It wasn't because the boy had called him a name. It was because the nun had thought he had called [REDACTED] "the Irish devil." I remember the nun whacking the boy and saying "There's no devils in Ireland." I remember the boy saying "No, no, I was calling him the hellish devil, the hellish devil."

85. One time [REDACTED] went to hide in the furnace room that heated the main building. That was in about 1956 or 1957. The furnace room was full of coke. He hid there for a week. We took him food. Me and the other boys would smuggle him in bread and things like that.

86. [REDACTED] was found because a man walked into the furnace room. I don't know whether this is true but apparently he was a man who had been on the run from the police. He had come into the furnace room to hide. When this guy walked in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] got the fright of his life. He ran out. I remember [REDACTED] being all black

because he was dirty from the coke. I think they took him away to another place. I think they said he ended up in The Dalton. I often wondered what happened to [REDACTED]

87. The man who walked into the furnace room was there a wee while before the nuns found out. Whether they got him out themselves or they called the police I don't know. At the time, the talk amongst the boys was that this man was a murderer. I have since learnt that there was a murderer in the Rutherglen area around that time by the name of Peter Manuel. He murdered some people not half a mile from where the home was. It could be we put two and two together and got five but that was the story around the time.

### **Leaving Bellevue**

88. When I was ten or eleven my dad came to visit us. He told us that he was going to get married again. He told us that we were all going to go back to the house in Clydebank. I said "Great, when are we leaving?" He said "Next week." I was taken aback.
89. It was arranged that we were to leave on a certain day. The day that we left coincided with the day that everybody was away on their summer outing. My brothers and I were the only boys in the place. All the other kids were on the summer outing. In the morning the one staff member who was there took us to a part of Bellevue I had never been in. They then gave my older brother and I the school uniforms we had been wearing when we came into Bellevue. Both the uniforms fitted us. We then had to hand back the clothes we had taken off. It was all very strange. I remember thinking "This is it."
90. We were taken back to the reception area where there was the big wooden boardroom table. We waited there for our dad to come. Nobody told us when he was going to come. There was nobody there sitting with us. I remember that my older brother got bored. He started rummaging around in the drawers. He found a

packet of cigarettes. We took them out and started playing blow football with them on the table. When we finished we bashed up all of the cigarettes. I remember bashing every one of them, putting them back in the packet and putting the packet back in the drawer. It felt like a bit of revenge doing that. My dad then came in. I don't really remember much after that. My next memory is us being back in the house in Clydebank.

### **Life after being in care**

91. We lived with our father in Clydebank. After about a year my dad got married to my step-mother in Liverpool. She then moved up to Clydebank. At that point my two very youngest brothers, who had been living with our paternal auntie, moved back in with us. That was the five of us back together again. That was the way it's been ever since.
92. I went to school in Clydebank. I left school when I was fifteen without any qualifications. After leaving school my dad helped me get an apprenticeship with [REDACTED]. After that I ended up as an engineer in the merchant navy. After I left the merchant navy I tried to get on the oil rigs. Whilst waiting for a job on the rigs to be sorted, my brother asked me whether I could cover his [REDACTED] for a short while. I originally did that as a stopgap. I'd just got married and my daughter was on the way. I worked out that I was earning more money running the [REDACTED] than I would be working on the oil rigs. I ended up doing the [REDACTED] permanently and that's what I've done ever since.

### **Reporting of abuse at Bellevue**

#### *Whilst in Bellevue*

93. My father visited us a short time after Sister [REDACTED] BAF kicked over my bucket of water and made me mop the floors again. I told my dad what Sister [REDACTED] BAF did. I told him

about being late for school because of having to mop the floors again. My father went to Bellevue and caused a stir. He complained.

94. After he went away I never heard the end of it. Every day the nuns and staff were saying things like "Oh here he comes" and "Your father's not going to help you now." It was around about that time that I became the 'revvy boy'. I could have been given that job then because it was my turn. It could be because I told my father about the incident with the bucket. I don't know. I can't say for certain.
95. I probably told the man and woman that took us out what was happening. I have wondered in later life whether that was the reason why they wanted to adopt me. They must have known that something was happening because they would have seen how distraught I was when they took me back to Bellevue.

*After leaving Bellevue*

96. I didn't really speak to my dad about my experiences before he passed away. It was as if the subject was taboo. We just didn't talk about it. I've only talked about Bellevue on occasions with my brothers. I don't see my older brother that much because of his job. When we talk about Bellevue it is more sort of banter than anything serious. It isn't anything in depth. I think we've both just wanted to "put it away."
97. I have spoken to my wife about my time in care. We ended up trying to find the home in Dundonald. We found a building that I thought might be the home. I believe it was a care home. I spoke to the person in charge there. She took us to look at the dormitories. She showed me some photos and said it had been a children's home. I believe she said the place was called Dundonald House when it was a children's home but I can't be sure. My wife and I also went to the site where Bellevue used to be. The walls and drive are still there but the rest of it is all gone. There is a school on the grounds now.

98. I spoke to a guy called Cameron Fyffe who is a lawyer. I spoke to him about ten or twelve years back. I went to visit him. I went to Cameron Fyffe because I heard that the Daughters of Charity had put aside millions of pounds. I thought to myself "I wouldn't mind making these buggers pay for what they did." Cameron Fyffe said that it was all time barred. There was no real talk about what had gone on. It wasn't mentioned. I ended up not taking anything further. I just left it at that.
99. After I spoke to the Inquiry the police came round to my house to take a statement from me. I told them about what had happened in Bellevue. I felt a bit better after that. I felt speaking to the police was something I needed to do.

### **Impact**

#### *As a child*

100. When I went to my school in Clydebank I saw the school as being too posh for me. I remember this school was an ordinary school but, in comparison to the school and the area we had been living in whilst at Bellevue, it felt like Eton College. I got into trouble at school. When the other boys used to say things to me my immediate response was to strike out. I wouldn't argue. I would just go for them.
101. I found the discipline hard to deal with. When teachers asked me to do things I would just tell them to "fuck off." They would give me the belt. I thought there was something wrong with me at the time. I now know that it was all a backlash against authority.

#### *In later life*

102. There wasn't a great deal of physical abuse outside the incidents I have mentioned. However, you were always on edge because of the threat of something happening. I'm sure that has left me nervous in adult life. I've always been nervous since. I

have this wariness. It's left me not being able to deal with people in authority. Its led to me getting in trouble with people in authority since I left Bellevue.

103. Until I was about sixty five I was ten stone or there about. I certainly did football and running but even if I ate a lot but I still couldn't put weight on. I don't know whether that is connected to my time in Bellevue.
104. I have often wondered whether there was a connection between the peeling of the potatoes and me getting jaundice. I caught jaundice not long after getting the revvy job. I have had liver problems ever since. I have spoken to a doctor about it since and he said that it is very likely there is a connection there.
105. In 1974 I went for a medical in the merchant navy. The guy doing the medical said that there was something wrong with my nose. He noticed that I wasn't breathing properly. He told me that my nose had to be repaired. I ended up in the Western Infirmary in Glasgow. They operated on me. They broke a bone and took out a bone that had been lying across a nostril. I had been breathing through one nostril ever since my nose was broken in the boxing ring against one of the older boys.
106. The smell of the refectory has always stuck with me. I've never been able to eat cabbage, butterbeans, macaroni or mutton since leaving Bellevue. The smell of those things makes me gag. I can eat anything but if there is anything with those things in it I can't accept it. I can't go near it. The smell of those things makes me queasy.
107. My views on Catholicism have completely changed since Bellevue. I consider myself an atheist now. I still feel part of the Catholic community but I don't believe it all. Whenever I get together with my friends, and they are talking about the subject, I always play devil's advocate.
108. Whenever I see religious ceremonies with bishops and priests and all this carry on I feel it in my gut. I feel angry. It really makes me feel sick. I don't know whether that's because of the treatment in Bellevue, the constant masses or having to go



other places for ceremonies. It could just be that I can see through the masquerade now.

109. Until recently I ran the boys football for the local council estates. I would do the football coaching. People used to say to me that the kids were mad. They would say that I wouldn't be able to deal with them. I could though. I was able to get down to their level. I understood where the kids were coming from. I ended up taking teams of kids to football tournaments [REDACTED] I feel that I put a lot back into the community through the football. I remember helping some of these kids out by paying for their trips abroad with the football team. I don't think their parents knew or even cared about that.
110. I think there is a connection between my involvement with the football and the kids and my own experiences. I feel there is a kind of bonding between me and some of the kids from these rough areas. I understand youngsters who are a bit wild. People would pooh-pooh these kids but I understood where they were coming from.
111. When I started thinking about this all again recently I started not being able to sleep at night time. I ended up going to see a doctor. He was a locum. He asked me what I thought was causing it all. I told him that I didn't know and that I had been alright for years. I didn't go into the detail. I told him that I'm suddenly waking up in the middle of the night. The doctor gave me a prescription for anti-depressants. I ended up not taking them.
112. I went back to my regular doctor. He ended up giving me a much milder thing. I've taken some of it. The tablets have helped. It's helped me get some sleep. They helped me to go on a trip to France I felt nervous about. I went back to my doctor after I came back. He arranged an appointment with a psychiatrist. I ended up not going to that.

## Records

113. It would be good to find any type of information. I have tried to get information. I just haven't been able to get it. I wanted to find out some history about Bellevue and what has been said about the place. I made contact with a lady in the Mitchell Library called Patricia. She just couldn't find anything about Bellevue. There's no record of anything. There's no photographs or anything. I find that all very strange. There has got to be documentation somewhere about Bellevue.
114. I've never tried to get hold of my own records or my medical records. I don't know whether there were any medical records kept from during my time at Bellevue. I have no idea. I wouldn't know how to go about getting all my records. I would love my records to fill in some of the gaps.

## Other information

115. I walked into my house one day and there was some spokesman for the church speaking on the radio. He was saying that all these allegations of abuse were rubbish. That sent me fizzing mad. I was so angry. That's when I decided that I wanted to speak to Cameron Fyffe. I wanted to tell my story before I go. I wanted to make sure that people remembered what happened. After I spoke to Cameron Fyffe I put it all to bed. I then decided to tell the Inquiry later on when I saw something about it in the news.
116. I'm not interested in seeing people punished. I really don't blame the individuals. I don't really blame the nuns. I look on them as victims of their institutions and the era. They weren't quite forced to act the way they did but they were put in a position of power.
117. It was the whole system that was wrong. I feel anger towards the system that allowed this kind of thing to exist. As soon as you have control without any

monitoring, this situation will always go on. If you allow institutions to run with a free hand these problems will always exist.

118. I feel that we should not allow any organisation to have total control when it comes to looking after children. If an organisation is allowed to have total control then abuse will inevitably happen. There has to be some sort of exterior oversight or monitoring.

119. In hindsight, if the children had been able to separately speak to someone outside the home I think there would have been big changes in the attitudes of the carers towards the children. That change didn't happen because there was no one that the children could speak to. There was no one you could tell about what was going on. The only thing I'm grateful for now is that there was no sexual abuse. That could have happened because there were no controls.

120. I spoke to the inquiry because I want to get it all out. I don't really have an agenda. I hope that I am believed. I just hope that this won't happen again. If there is a change that means institutions can't be run without oversight again then I will be happy.

121. 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.

ABO

Signed.....

Dated..... 8/12/17