

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

QET

Support person present: Sandra Toyer, INCSS

1. My name is QET. My date of birth is 1957. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Life before going into care**

2. I was born in Paisley. My mother's maiden name is She went under a variety of other surnames. She also used the surnames She probably had other ones as well. She is still alive.
3. My mother wasn't married to my father when she had me. She was married to someone called Mr My birth father's name was He also used a variety of surnames. I know he also used the surname My father is a total mystery to me. I have no idea who he is or where he is. I am currently looking into tracing him. I've no idea whether he is still alive.
4. I am the oldest of nine children. My brother is a year younger than me. My brother is two years younger than me. After that it is my brother and sisters and is about ten years younger than me. I also have a step brother and two step sisters.
5. I don't really remember much about my early life prior to going into care. My first memory is really from when I was in care. I still don't really know why I ended up in Quarriers. I have no idea whether my mother had any dealings with social services

before I went into care. I am looking into that now. I want to know the reason why I went into care. I want to know whether there was abuse before I went into care. Those remain unanswered questions.

### **Quarriers Village, Bridge of Weir**

6. I went to Quarriers in about 1959. I was placed in cottage number 42. There were probably about 12 kids in the cottage. The age range in cottage 42 was between babies and fifteen. My brother, [REDACTED], came in about nine months to a year after I went to Quarriers. He went into cottage 42 as well.
  7. My other two brothers, [REDACTED] also ended up in Quarriers. When they went in they went to a different cottage. I didn't know them during the time I was in Quarriers. I had no idea who they were until the very day I left Quarriers in 1965. I never met them at any time whilst I was there.
  8. Everything was self-contained in Quarriers. You didn't need to go outside the village for anything because everything was there. They had a bakery, a clothes maker a shop, a church and a hospital. You were part of the world but you weren't part of the world at the same time. Everything was enclosed and you were in your own area.
- [REDACTED] QAX/QCN
9. [REDACTED] QAX/QCN were the house parents in cottage 42. They had their own separate quarters within the cottage. They shared the responsibility for looking after the children in the cottage. They both took turns doing things.
  10. The [REDACTED] QAX/QCN were lovely people. They never ever thought anything was too much for you. They cared for you. They did what you are supposed to do when looking after children. They nurtured us and they encouraged us to be open. If there was something that you weren't sure about they wanted you to ask them about whatever

it was. If you had any problems they would listen to what you had to say. They were always there to help. Nothing seemed to be too difficult for them.

11. The [QAX/QCN] had a son and a daughter. They lived with their parents in their part of the cottage. I wasn't made to feel as if I wasn't part of their family even though they had a family of their own living in the cottage. I never felt that I was being treated differently from them. I always felt included in things. I never felt as if I was stopped from being involved. I never felt as if I was pushed aside.
12. I think what we called Mr and Mrs [QAX/QCN] just depended on who we were with. If you were on your own you might call them mum and dad. If there were other people around, and they were calling them "Mr and Mrs [QAX/QCN]" you might call them Mr and Mrs [QAX/QCN]. All the other children did the same.
13. The [QAX/QCN] looked after and loved the children they cared for. The [QAX/QCN] were everything. They were mother, father, confessor and somebody to give you a cuddle if you hurt yourself. You didn't need a social worker because they did everything.

#### *Other staff members*

14. There was another member of staff. She was an assistant housekeeper. I don't remember her name. She used to come in at the weekends to take the pressure off of Mr and Mrs [QAX/QCN]. She would help with cooking and cleaning and things like that.

#### **Routine at Quarriers**

##### *First recollection of being in Quarriers*

15. I think my very first memory is Mrs [QAX] picking me up and cuddling me. I remember feeling that I was just part of the family.

*Daily routine*

16. Mr QCN or Mrs QAX got you up. They would walk in and ask us to get up. You would then get washed before going down for your breakfast. You would then get ready to go to school. You then went to school. You would come back to the cottage for your lunch. You then went back to school. After you came back from school you would get out of your uniform and get into your play clothes. What you did next depended on the weather. If it was good you were out climbing trees or whatever. You had to be back for your tea at five o'clock.

*Sleeping arrangements*

17. There was a boys dormitory with six single beds and a girls dormitory with six single beds. Our dormitory was spotless. The boys in my dormitory were all different ages. There was a boy in there that was fifteen years old. He was the oldest boy in there. We didn't all go to bed at the same time. The older children went to bed later on. I never felt that I wanted to stay up later because I had always been running around all day. By the time I got into my bed I was knackered. I just wanted to go to sleep.
18. The beds were absolutely spotless. You had nice clean beds and bedding. The sheets were cleaned every day. There were clean pyjamas every night. We didn't need to keep our beds tidy. That was all done for you. You just left your bedding and it was all sorted out for you. It was like magic. We never ever thought who it was who was tidying our rooms for us.
19. I don't remember there being night shift staff. It was always the QAX/QCN who were there through the night. They were always there making sure that everything was ok.

*Mealtimes / Food*

20. There was a massive kitchen. I always remember the big AGA stove that was in there. It was massive. Mrs QAX did all the cooking. She did loads of baking.

She would encourage you to go and help. You got to lick the spoon and all that type of thing. Things like that made you feel as if you were part of the family.

21. There was a communal dining room in the cottage. I couldn't complain about the food. The food was spot on. You were always well fed. They looked after you really well. I remember lunch being a full meal. It was things like potatoes and mince and cabbage. It wasn't like just a sandwich.
22. I really didn't like cabbage. I don't like it to this day. I would say that I didn't like it when it was given to me. I would just rebel. The QAX/QCN would tell me that I needed to eat it because it was good for me. They'd try to encourage you to eat your greens. They didn't re-present it if you didn't eat it.

#### *Washing / Bathing*

23. They made sure you were clean. We had a bath every night. You had a bath whether you were dirty or not. It was clean water all of the time. Mr QCN would supervise bath times. He just made sure that you were being washed. He'd make sure you got dried. He dried your hair and all that sort of thing. You were then straight into your pyjamas and dressing gown. You might be allowed to stay up for fifteen minutes or so after that.

#### *Clothing / uniform / personal possessions*

24. There was a school uniform. It wasn't traditional. It was smart shorts, a shirt and a grey jersey. You were always kept tidy. I didn't have any personal possessions that I had brought with me to Quarriers. Everything that I had was given to me by the QAX/QCN. Everything was new from them.

#### *School*

25. I don't ever remember there being a nursery school in Quarriers. I think at that age you spent a lot of your time in the cottage. Once I turned four and a half or five I

attended school at Quarriers. They had their own primary school there. It was civilian teachers who came in from the outside. I don't know whether they were qualified but I would hope that they were. School terms ran just like a normal school.

*Religious instruction*

26. There was a church in the village. Every Sunday you got your Sunday best on and went to church. There was a service at Christmas and Easter and all those type of days. I remember sitting in church, looking around and feeling someone's hand on my head to turn it around to face the front. I can't remember the minister's name but I do remember him. I can remember the sermons.

*Trips / Holidays*

27. I never went home the entire time I was there. I have no recollection of going anywhere during my time in Quarriers. My entire time was at Quarriers. Holidays were spent in the village.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

28. I remember birthdays being celebrated all of the time. If it was your birthday you were spoilt rotten. The [QAX/QCN] put on a wee party for you with a birthday cake. There would be sandwiches, wee fairy cakes and things like that. You were made a fuss of. Everybody was involved.
29. Mr [QCN] would play the piano in the playroom. He could tinkle the ivories something good. It was all the old songs. The party would last for maybe an hour or so. We would play games like pass the parcel. I didn't like pass the parcel because I never won anything. Even if it was someone else's birthday I never ever won it.
30. Christmas was really good as well. The [QAX/QCN] would fill named pillowcases with loads of presents in them. Everybody was included. Everybody got given toys. We

all thought it was great. We had Christmas dinner. It was all traditional with a turkey and all the trimmings.

*Leisure time*

31. I don't remember there being swings or sand pits or things like that. However, you had acres upon acres of grounds to explore. You would climb trees. There was a river where you would try to catch fish with your hands. I never ever managed to catch one but I tried. There was always loads of things to do. There was always board games and things like that to play with in the cottage if the weather was bad. I always had my comics. I got The Hotspur weekly. There could have been after school activities like football but I never got involved. I've never liked football so maybe that was why.

*Pocket money / Chores*

32. There was pocket money. It wasn't much. You would be given wee chores to do like going down to the farm to collect some vegetables. That's how you earned your own pocket money.

*Socialising with other children*

33. I got on ok with the other kids. I never really made great friendships with them. There was a turnover. One minute a child was there and the next they weren't. That meant that there wasn't always the same people in the cottage. I think me and my brother were probably there the longest in the cottage. I spent most of my time with him.
34. I didn't really socialise with the kids from the other cottages. The people who you were in your own cottage with were your wee pals. Even though we had free reign to go out and play in the grounds I only really stuck together with the children in my cottage. I probably fell out with the other boys in the cottage. I probably fell out with my brother umpteen times as well.

*Visits / Inspections*

35. I didn't get any visits from my parents or social workers. I don't think I even knew what a social worker was back then.
36. I don't remember there being any inspections. Maybe there was but I never ever saw that.

*Healthcare*

37. There was medical care. There was a hospital in the village. It was staffed by doctors, nurses and medical people. If you were ill you were taken up to the hospital. The hospital itself was huge. Although you were in a way isolated they still did their best for you. You got the treatment that you needed. There was a dentist. If you had any problems you could go to the dentist. There was everything you needed.
38. At one point I got the measles. At that time measles was still a killer. I remember drifting in and out of consciousness. I remember looking up and the QAX/QCN saying that they were going to take me to hospital. I then got taken up to the hospital. I was kept up there until I was better.

*Running away*

39. I never ran away. Why would I want to run away? I had everything I needed. Cottage 42 was my home and as far as I was concerned the QAX/QCN were my mother and father. There was no reason why I would want to leave.

*Bed-wetting*

40. I did suffer from bed-wetting. There was nothing I could do about it. I didn't really know what was going on. I was still young then. I would have been about four or five. It was just something that happened.



41. The [QAX/QCN] dealt with my bed-wetting really well. I was never abused about it. I was never shouted at or anything like that. I never had any big issues with my bed-wetting. I was never made to feel that it was something that I should be ashamed about. It was just something that happened. The [QAX/QCN] would just strip the bed and wash the sheets. You were bathed straight away. They would make sure that you were clean. I'd be given clean pyjamas. I remember the bed being all nice and fresh when I got back into it. It never ever felt like an issue.
42. When the bed-wetting continued the [QAX/QCN] took me to the doctors. I was then taken into Quarriers' own hospital. They put me in a bed that had a sort of wire mesh underneath it. The mesh was attached to a bell. If you wet the bed the bell would go off. They also gave me medicine to try to help. I eventually grew out of the bed-wetting whilst I was there.

#### *Discipline / Punishment*

43. If you did something wrong you got hit by the [QAX/QCN] on your bottom with the slipper or a wooden spoon. They would hit you only once. They would tell you not to do whatever you did again. I think they did that by the area next to the stairs. It was never excessive. You just got disciplined. I was never hurt or injured as a result of it. It never worked. As soon as you were away you were doing whatever you had done again.
44. I never ever really experienced being disciplined for doing anything serious like pinching something. I can't say whether the [QAX/QCN] punishment for more serious things was excessive because that was not something that I ever experienced. There could have been excessive punishment but that was not something that I ever saw. I never saw any of the other children upset or being punished. Everybody was just treated the same. The [QAX/QCN] were always really good to me and my brother. I would never say anything bad about them.

## Leaving Quarriers

45. I left on [REDACTED] 1965. I was about eight and a half. The day I left was the worst day of my life. I had no idea what was happening. I got up that morning and had my breakfast. Me and my brother then went to the washroom to brush our teeth. The assistant housekeeper came to the bathroom. She said something like "by the way you are going to stay with your mum today." It wasn't even Mr and Mrs QAX/QCN who told us that. Me and my brother then looked at each other. We had never met our mother. I told the assistant housekeeper that I didn't know who she was talking about. Me and my brother didn't know the person she was talking about.
46. We were then told to get dressed. We got dressed. Our wee brown suitcases were packed for us. We didn't see them packing the suitcase. After we got dressed we were taken downstairs. It was absolutely bucketing it down outside. It was one of the worst rains that I ever remember. It never seemed to let up. We were then told again that that was us going. We weren't sure what was going on. We didn't understand where we were going. The assistant housekeeper kept saying we were going to be staying with our mum but we didn't know who she was talking about.
47. This old bedford van pulled up. It had wooden benches in the back. The back door of the van was opened and we were told to get in. There were two other boys sitting there. Me and my brother just looked at each other as if to say "who are they?" The assistant housekeeper then told us that the boys were our brothers. We didn't know how they were feeling because we didn't know who they were. There was no way we could work out or know what was going on in their heads.
48. We never saw Mr and Mrs QAX/QCN that day. I don't know what was going on there. I don't know whether they were told to stay out of the road or they just couldn't handle it. I have no idea. Nobody explained to us what was happening. Nobody told us that the QAX/QCN would be in touch or anything like that.

49. It was all just like “right get in the back of the van.” Nobody ever came to us and asked us whether we wanted to live with our mum. If they had asked us we would have said “no. Absolutely not. Why would we want to leave?”
50. I am not aware of there being any social workers involved at that time. I have no idea who made the decision for us to leave Quarriers. Whoever did make that decision has a lot to answer for. They failed us big time. They made a decision that took us away from a safe environment where we had everything and sent us to a slum.
51. I never heard from Quarriers after I left. I never had a visit from them or anything like that. There was nothing to say that they were still there and looking out for us. I always hoped there was contact and I would go back but that never happened.
52. I have checked my records to see whether there was anything there that could suggest why we were taken out of Quarriers. I think it was all to do with money. I have seen in my records that my mother was supposed to be paying for us being in Quarriers. There's quite a few letters in the records where my mother is telling Quarriers that she hasn't got the money because she wasn't working. It looks as if she got herself into quite a bit of arrears. It could be that because our mother was paying for us to be there that that was why we didn't see any social workers.
53. At the time we left Quarriers there was four of us already in there. My mother was trying to get our two sisters in there as well. I think that Quarriers probably thought “enough is enough.” They probably thought that my mother was just having kids and throwing them into the home. I could be wrong but that is what I think was going on.

#### **Life after being in care – time spent living with mother**

54. I moved into my mother's house on [REDACTED] 1965. The address was [REDACTED] Paisley. It was a ground floor tenement flat. There were three bedrooms. My mother had one room and the girls had the other room. There was a resemblance of

a garden at the back. I think when we left Quarriers my mother was a bus conductress.

55. Later on we moved to my gran's old house. She had moved to a different part of Paisley. For some reason my mother got my gran's house. I think I moved into my grandmother's house in about 1968 or 1969. I stayed there with my siblings until I left at the age of seventeen.
56. To begin with none of the men that my mother had over to the flat stayed for any length of time. I just didn't like the guys that she was hanging about with. They were always drinking, staying overnight and playing cards. You would wake up in the morning and see them still there. They were all passed off to us as "uncles". It seemed as if there was a new person every week. The "uncles" came and went until she met my stepfather. My stepfather moved in when I was about eleven.

*First memories of journey to and arriving at my mother's house at [REDACTED] Paisley*

57. The bedford van belonged to an "uncle" that was associated with my mother. I can't remember his name. He was the person who came to pick us up. When he came to pick us up we had never ever met him before. I remember that the van broke down half way between Bridge of Weir and Paisley. We abandoned the van and walked all the way to Paisley.
58. We eventually came to the back of a series of closes. I had never ever seen a close before. We'd always been in cottages. I remember seeing that the back of the closes were all full of old washing machines, broken down things and bikes. It was a total culture shock for us. We then went through the back of a close into the back of a flat. I don't know what happened next but I remember looking about and thinking "what am I doing here?" There was just no rhyme or reason for me being there. I had come from a healthy, clean environment to a total slum. I had gone from a place where we had our own bed to a place where there were four boys sharing one double bed.

59. I would say that I was totally stunned for the first week or so. I didn't know where I was. I was questioning who I was. I didn't know what was happening to me. I was totally confused. I was trying to relate to my mother. She was a stranger who I did not know.

*School*

60. We went back to my mother's on a Friday. We had the whole weekend just staying in the flat. The following Monday we went to the local primary school. Our mother didn't even come to the school with us on our first day. What she did was take us into the back bedroom and pointed to a building. She told us that it was our school and told us to go. Me, [REDACTED] then walked over to the school. The primary school was called Craiglee Primary. It was in Ferguslie Park. There was no preparation or anything like that. It was all like "this is where you are going."

61. When me and my brothers got to the school we just stood in the playground. We didn't know what to do. Nobody came out to see us to tell us what to do because we were new. When the bell rang all of the children in the playground went into their classes. We just stood there because we didn't know what to do. Eventually I think it was the headmaster who looked out of his window and saw us. He came out to ask us why we were standing in the playground. It was my brother who then said that we were to start at the school. We were then taken in and sent to our classes. I think it would have probably been something like primary four that I went into.

62. We were targeted straight away. We spoke too politely and properly for the other kids. It was a school and area full of total neds really. We went to school with our school uniforms on. All the kids there didn't wear uniforms. Me and my brother were immediately targeted by bullies because of that. A bully ripped the badge off of my blazer.

63. I always felt in school as if I wasn't there and didn't exist. I would go through the motions of school. I would be in the classroom then try and hide away from being

bullied. I tried to make sure nobody would see me. Nobody picked up on that. None of the teachers intervened or asked questions. The other children excluded me from playing groups and things like that. There was name calling. I ended up leaving school when I was fifteen.

*Abuse in mother's house*

64. My mother was nasty. She was evil. I don't understand why she had all the kids that she did if she had no interest in loving them, nurturing them or bringing them up the way they should be.
65. I was getting teased by the other kids. They were asking me where my dad was. I told them that I didn't know. One day, about four months after leaving Quarriers, I was alone in the kitchen with my mother. At Quarriers I had always been told that if there was something on your mind then you should just speak about it. At that time I still had that confidence in me. I turned to my mother and asked her where my dad was. I asked her why he wasn't about. The next thing was that my mother slapped me right across my jaw. She said "don't you ever speak about that bastard again in my presence." That was the first time I had ever experienced violence. I had never even seen it before.
66. I walked out of the kitchen. I was totally stunned. The side of my face was red. My brother saw me and asked what had happened to my face. I told him I had been hit. He asked me "what for?" and I told him. He said that he didn't understand because we were allowed to ask questions. He was still in the same frame of mind as I had been from Quarriers.
67. The slap was the start of it. I have no idea what went on between my father and my mother. Whatever happened she made me pay for it. When she slapped me across my face something changed. I just felt I wasn't going to ask anything else. The slap was the start of years of physical and mental abuse. It was the start of years of horrible situations that my mother put me into.

68. My mother treated my sisters differently. They were alright. I never ever saw them slapped or anything like that. My brothers and I were treated differently. It was myself and [REDACTED] that got most of it. [REDACTED] could talk his way out of things though. I think, even though I was the oldest, my brothers were all a bit more wise to it all. They knew how to avoid and cope with it better. I couldn't do that. I think it was because myself and [REDACTED] came from the same father. I think that was why we got it the worst.
69. I was once sent home from school because I had lice in my hair. I had flea bites all over my body. I know there were treatments for head lice back then but the way my mother dealt with it was to shave my head with a pair of clippers. There was no care taken. It was a case of getting all my hair off as quickly as possible. She took big chunks out of my scalp and the back of my head. I was bleeding. That was her answer to treating the lice. My other brothers got the exact same treatment.
70. When we all went back to school we were made a mockery of. We were teased because of the state of our heads. I don't know why but none of the teachers, or anybody who was an adult at the school, asked us what had happened. No one asked why our heads were in that mess.
71. My mother's brother, [REDACTED], was a nasty guy. I think he was ex-army. He was married to my Auntie [REDACTED]. She was a lovely woman. He used to physically beat her up all the time. She would end up with black eyes.
72. One day when I was ten and a half I was in the bedroom with my younger brothers. My younger sister, [REDACTED], was in the bedroom also. We could hear the radio in the background coming through the wall. I was sitting on the edge of the bed. My sister was standing with her feet on my feet. We were dancing to the music because [REDACTED] liked the music. My Uncle [REDACTED] then barged into the room. He had a drink in him. He asked me what I was doing. I told him that I was showing [REDACTED] how to dance. He told me that I was doing something else. I kept on saying that I was trying to teach [REDACTED] to dance. He kept on going on and on saying that I was doing something else. He asked my brothers what I was doing. They all said that I was

showing [REDACTED] how to dance. Uncle [REDACTED] kept on going on. It felt as if it was going on for ages. He just couldn't accept the answers I gave him.

73. Later on that day my mother went out. She left Uncle [REDACTED] in charge of us. I remember it was a beautiful scorching day. It was really nice weather. We were all still stuck in the bedroom. Uncle [REDACTED] got me and my brothers into the living room. He made us stand in a line. He started going on again asking what I had been doing. We kept repeating what we had already been repeating. We were only showing [REDACTED] how to dance. She liked the music and we were showing her how to dance. He continued to insist that we were doing something else. He just couldn't get it into his head that we had been teaching [REDACTED] to dance. He kept interrogating us for twenty minutes or so. Then he told my two younger brothers to go. They left the living room. He then continued to interrogate me and [REDACTED]. When we didn't give him the answer he was looking for he took his leather belt off of his waist and beat us to a thin inch of our lives. He battered us stupid. We were black and blue all over our backs and our bums. He just thought he had every right to do that.
74. Uncle [REDACTED] was trying to make out that we were doing something sexual to our sister. All we had been doing was dancing with her. I don't know what was going on in his head but he got it in his head that we had been doing something to her. There was nothing like that at all. At that time we hadn't even heard the word sex never mind knew anything about it.
75. When my mother came back Uncle [REDACTED] made up a story that we had been doing something to [REDACTED]. It was totally untrue. She believed him. He told my mother what he did to us. She never ever even said "how dare you do that to my children." She didn't ask to see the damage he had done with the belt. She wasn't interested. She didn't ask us what was going on.
76. I just couldn't take to my Uncle [REDACTED] after that. It was the first and only time he ever hit me. If I ever thought he would have come and done that to me again I would have put him in the ground. There was no way that I would allow him to touch me again.



77. My stepfather was called [REDACTED]. He came onto the scene when I was about eleven. I think I was just about ready to be going to secondary school at that time. [REDACTED] was the father to the last three of my siblings. He was just as bad as my mother. He liked to drink. He didn't work. He was an animal. I am surprised I am alive today because of some of the things he did to me.
78. After he moved in I started wetting the bed again. Rather than helping me, my mother took me out of the bed I was sharing with my brothers. She put me into a room on my own. I think she thought that if I was put into a room on my own I would settle down and stop wetting the bed. That didn't happen. I still continued to wet the bed. Every time I wet the bed my mother or stepfather gave me a doing. Things continued. Rather than taking me to the doctors her answer was to take my bed away from me. I ended up in a bedroom with nothing in it but a wardrobe and a wooden dining chair. I would sit locked in the room on that chair. A lot of the time I didn't get fed or given water. I think she thought, in her twisted warped way, if I didn't have anything to drink I wouldn't wet myself. I sometimes sat in that room for days.
79. Being locked in the room on my own really affected me. I started talking to myself. I thought that I was going to get killed. I remember that I wasn't allowed to look out of the window at any time in the room. If I looked out of the window I would get a doing. I missed a lot of school because I couldn't go in because of the bruising. I would spend a lot of my time either sleeping on the floor or sleeping in the chair. I remember sleeping with my knees drawn up to my chin on the chair with no blankets or heating. I wasn't getting proper sleep.
80. One time, when I was about thirteen, I had been at school and I decided that I was going to run away. I just didn't go home. I just wandered the streets. I didn't know where I was going. It was getting really late. At about eleven o'clock at night I was sitting on a wall outside of a garage. This man and woman approached me in their car. They asked me whether I was ok. I said I was fine. They asked me why I was out late. I told them that I had run away from home. They asked me whether I

thought my mum and dad would be worried about me. I then started to think that they were maybe right and I should go home. I was given a lift back home in the car with the man and the woman. I remember that they knocked on the door when we got back. My stepfather answered the door. The couple explained that they had found me wandering the streets. My stepfather thanked them for bringing me back and said that they had been worried about me. I know that they hadn't been worried about me because the lights were out and everybody was in their beds.

81. I went into the flat. My mother then started shouting at me. Before I got the chance to answer my stepfather punched me right in my stomach. I fell backwards onto the floor. He then sat on top of me and started punching my face. He just kept punching me and punching me. He was bawling and shouting at me. I couldn't speak because he was hitting me that much. He punched me until he could punch no more. My face was black and blue. I couldn't see out of my eyes. He then got off of me, picked me up and threw me down the hallway. He said "get in your fucking room and don't get out of there." I went into my room. I remember drifting in and out of consciousness. I didn't know whether I was going to be alive the next day. He'd hit me so much I thought I could have been damaged inside. My stepfather had taken a pleasure in hitting me. My mother let him do it. She never stopped him. She just watched.
82. The next day I could barely open one of my eyes. I was sitting on the wooden chair in my room still drifting in and out of consciousness. I heard the door opening. I saw a head look around the corner of the door. It was my mother's sister, Auntie [REDACTED]. She saw the state of my face, looked at me, never said a word and just walked out the door. That has always stuck with me. Why would somebody who had kids of their own see something like that and just walk away? Why would they not ask what happened to me or who did what they did to me? I know I would if I saw a child looking like I did. I remember that a couple of minutes later I could hear them all laughing through the wall.
83. When I was about fourteen and a half my mother kicked the shit out of me. She physically kicked me whilst I was on the floor. She did that because I had wet the

bed. After she had done that she walked out of the room and collapsed. My stepfather called an ambulance and she was taken to hospital. She had taken a stroke. After leaving the hospital she refused every single piece of help that was offered to her. She gave dogs abuse to any doctor or health visitor that came to help. She would shout and swear at them and tell them not to come near her door again.

84. My mother blamed me for the stroke. She told everybody that it was my fault. She told the neighbours. I believed it. When you get told something repeatedly by lots of different people you start to believe it yourself. I didn't defend myself or say it wasn't me. Nobody ever heard about the part about what my mother had been doing prior to her taking the stroke. Nobody knew she had been kicking the shit out of me.
85. During all my time at my mother's house my brothers never came to my help. They ended up taking part in the mental abuse side of things. They'd call me names and laugh at me as if I was stupid. They made me feel as if I didn't matter. My mother encouraged that.

*Leaving school, finding work and leaving my mother's house*

86. I left school when I was fifteen. After that I never did any training or further education. I was told by my mother that I wasn't allowed to stay in her house if I wasn't working. I went out every day to find work. I went around all the factories and the shops asking if they needed anyone. I eventually did find work. I got a job in a factory. As soon as I got work my mother wanted my wages. She was at the factory gates every Friday morning asking for them. I, being the stupid idiot I was, handed over all the money I was getting.
87. I stayed in my mother's house until I was seventeen. She basically threw me out. I had started to get a wee bit of confidence in myself. I started refusing to give her my wages. It wasn't as if I was getting anything in return for it. After I left my mother's I just floated about. I slept in different places with my pals. I was never stable after that.

**Reporting of abuse during time at mother's house**

88. There was nobody to tell about my abuse at the time it was happening. There were visitors who came to see my mother but I couldn't have spoken with any of them. I didn't mix with them because I was always locked in my room. There was never any social work involvement with me. My brother [REDACTED] did have social work involvement but that was because he stole things and because the police had got involved. He would break into people's houses when he was supposed to be going to school.
89. There were always police officers who went back and forward to the house. I think my stepfather got done a few times by the police. I remember him being done for being drunk and incapable whilst in charge of a bicycle. I never reported anything to them at the time.
90. The teachers weren't interested in what was going on in the class. I never made an attempt to tell them what was going on. I didn't even know their names. That was how far apart I was from them. There was no support or anything. Nobody took the time to ask what was going on or whether I was ok. It was as if they were just going through the motions.

**Reporting of abuse after leaving mother's house**

91. I've never reported what happened to the police. I don't know whether they would believe me. I don't think my brother has ever reported anything to the police.
92. It's been weird. In the past I always felt that if I told someone else then I wouldn't be protecting them. I didn't explain at all what was going on to anyone. I was too ashamed of what I had been put through. Looking back I wish I had spoken to people earlier about the abuse I suffered. If I had spoken earlier then I think I probably wouldn't be in the state that I am in now.

93. I went to the National Confidential Forum. I told them what had happened. They weren't able to provide me any support. I didn't know anything about survivor groups or anything. They were the ones who put me in touch with Sandra Toyer of INCSS. I have told her everything that happened to me.

### **Impact**

94. Being moved from a loving caring environment in Quarriers to an abusive environment at my mother's has impacted on my life in every way. My world was turned completely upside down. It has resulted in me experiencing and doing horrible things in my life. I feel hurt in my head and my very soul. At times I have not known how to deal with all the anger and hurt.

95. The abuse I suffered has led to me feeling as if I was the black sheep of the family. I lost all my confidence. My self-esteem has been made rock bottom. At the time I just didn't think I was worth anything. The environment and people I was put into destroyed any confidence, happiness or peace of mind that I had. I found myself somewhere where I wasn't allowed to be happy or to have an opinion. That feeling has carried on right through the rest of my life.

96. Had I remained at Quarriers I would have had every opportunity under the sun. All those opportunities were taken away from me. I could have had an education, gone to school, gone to university and become a doctor or a lawyer.

97. I was never hospitalised because of the abuse I suffered. I don't think I have had any long term physical effects. However, I have suffered quite a bit of psychological trauma. The first time I had any idea that I had mental health problems was when I was about fifteen. I hadn't seen any doctors but I knew there was something wrong with me. I didn't know who to speak to or how to get help. In those days guys didn't talk about their problems or what was going on in their heads. You felt as if you were isolated.

98. When I was twenty I ended up at a stage where I just didn't want to be here anymore. I took a breakdown. I ended up getting admitted into Dykebar Hospital. It was a mental institution. I don't really know how I ended up in there. A lot of the time whilst I was in there I was doped up that much I didn't know whether it was New Year or I was in New York. I spoke with the psychiatrists there. They were trying their best to get me to speak. However, in my mind I felt I had to protect my family.
99. I've continued to have mental health problems. I have flashbacks. I suffer badly from night terrors. I wake up screaming the house down thinking about the things that have happened to me. I have woken up to find myself pulling the curtains off the window or sitting in the bathroom. I think I am doing these things in my sleep because I am trying to protect myself from what I am thinking when I am sleeping. It is a defence mechanism. I need to look into getting help for that because I have not had a proper night's sleep in years.
100. I've managed to form relationships. However, every relationship I have had has gone wrong. Every one of them has cheated on me. I don't know whether that is something I am carrying from my mother. That is who she was.
101. My brother [REDACTED] is now trying to deal with his own demons. His way of dealing with things is wanting to kill the people who abused us. He doesn't internalise his anger like I do. I've told him that confronting those that abused us wouldn't solve anything. I've told him that he would just end up in jail for the rest of his life.
102. Uncle [REDACTED] is one of the people that my brother is really angry with. He wants to go and kill him even though he is in his eighties. I have talked with my brother about that. I have told him that doing that is not going to make a difference.

### **Treatment and support**

103. In about 2016 I started speaking to [REDACTED] of INCSS. She's seen me at my darkest points but she's always been there for me. She has actually listened to what

has been going on. Before speaking to [REDACTED] I have never had anyone in my life who would actually listen to what I am saying. It is a sorry state of affairs that it took me until I was fifty nine to actually find someone to speak to and take on board what has been going on with me.

104. I haven't joined a survivor group. I don't know whether they are for me. I do have one to ones with [REDACTED] though. I am also involved with Future Pathways. I have instructed a lawyer to look into my case. I realise that can take a long time.
105. I am on medication now. I have had everything under the sun to try and treat my depression and anxiety. I am now on sertraline for anxiety. I have to take that every day. I've been taking that for about a year. It seems to be working. It keeps me a wee bit steady. It keeps me a wee bit calmer.

### Records

106. I don't know whether Quarriers kept records. You would think that they would keep house records. We went to see Josie Bell who is the archivist at Quarriers. I went with [REDACTED]. We phoned in advance and arranged to see her. We didn't get anywhere with her. We asked her about my records. We asked whether there were any photographs. She said that there are thousands upon thousands of negatives and slides. She said that no one could develop them because they don't have the money to do it.
107. I only have one picture of when me and my brother were boys in Quarriers. It's the only thing I have to say "that is who we were". Me and my brother are sitting out in the grass area with our pyjamas on. It must have been a nice night or something. There is a woman sitting in between us. I don't know who she is. I have asked Quarriers. They won't even tell us who the member of staff sitting with us is.
108. For all the time that we were in Quarriers there must have been somebody who was taking photographs. I don't know where those photographs are or why Quarriers

won't provide them. The response I get from Quarriers is that I am not allowed to see any photographs, if there are photographs of me, because of data protection reasons. I understand that but I am not wanting to see other people's pictures. All I want to see is other pictures of me and my brother when we were growing up. Seeing photographs is a big thing for me and my brother. We have a right to see them because they are us.

109. We did see some yearbooks. They were nonsense. All they said was how much Quarriers had raised and what events they had been putting on. There was nothing that said anything along the lines of "this is [REDACTED] and this is his brother [REDACTED]" There was nothing specific about the children in the yearbooks.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

110. I have been back to Quarriers. I've been back a few times. Me and my brother went to cottage 42 a few years ago. We just did that ourselves. There was no one official from Quarriers involved. Cottage 42 is now a private house. The people that were in there were so lovely. They invited us in and showed us around. They'd obviously made loads of renovations but the staircase was still exactly same. I felt as if I was five years old again when I was standing there. It was amazing.
111. I know that people have talked about having a lot of bad experiences in Quarriers. I have spoken with other people regarding their own experiences. I have told them that my experience was really good. They have said that theirs wasn't. They were having a bad experience and they were probably only two or three cottages away. Every cottage was different.
112. To this day I still don't know why they allowed us to be moved to my mother's house. Why did Quarriers not go and check the house we were going to? Somebody from Quarriers must have gone and checked my mother's flat. If they did do an inspection why did they think that that environment was ok? Why didn't whoever did the inspection turn around and say that it wasn't good enough? Questions should have



been asked about why four boys were going to be put in a single bed together. Surely someone should have said that there should have been separate beds?

- 113. My experience of Quarriers has been mostly positive. However, there are also failings on their part. They should have looked into where they were sending me. I don't understand why they were sending kids out from a safe clean environment to a slum. What purpose is there in that? Who looked into where they were sending me? Who looked into the addresses that my mother was providing? She was providing any number of addresses as her home. I can see that from the letters in my records. There's no consistency there. How could they possibly think that my mother was going to provide me any consistency? Quarriers have left me feeling, in the way that I left, that I didn't matter and that I was being abandoned.
  
- 114. I know that things have changed over time. I would hope that there is now proper guidance provided which allows people in care to be provided with a voice. Children in care should be allowed the opportunity to say that they are quite happy where they are if they want to. Children shouldn't be moved to stay with people they don't know. Children have got to be heard. Assumptions shouldn't be made as to what they are feeling or what is going on in their heads. The people making those assumptions don't matter. The children matter.
  
- 115. 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. QET .....

Dated. 04/07/18 .....