

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

CQE

Support person present: No

1. My name is CQE I prefer to be known as CQE My surname at birth was CQE and this is the name I was known by at school. My date of birth is 1970. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going to boarding school

2. I was born in Edinburgh and into a large farming family and I grew up in a farming community in the Borders. I have one older sister. Farming was a strong tradition in both sides of my family.
3. I went to the local primary school for years P1 to P3. It was a very small school with around ten pupils and one teacher. All the children came from our farm or the neighbouring farms. It catered for pupils in years P1 to P5 only.
4. My first teacher retired and she was called Mrs Allen. I believe she used the strap, although I never saw that happen. Her replacement, Mrs Anne Shiel, didn't use the strap. The strap was never used on me and I never saw the strap being used on a child, but I know it was used by the first teacher as a warning to the children. I only saw it when Mrs Allen took it out of her desk drawer as a warning. Both of the teachers were kind people.
5. I don't recall any issues with this school. When I was aged six or seven my mum had to spend a few weeks in hospital for a planned operation and my sister and I stayed with my aunt. This meant we went to a different school in Perthshire where my aunt

was a teacher. It was a bigger school and had around one hundred pupils. My aunt realised our reading and writing skills were behind those of the other students, and I remember realising I was behind in class. We would have probably stayed longer at the local primary school if it wasn't for that experience.

6. I come from an extended family who sent their children to boarding school. I don't remember being asked if I wanted to go, but I do remember being told. I did not want to go and I can remember the summer before I started. I used to run out into the barley field and make a circle and sit in middle and cry because I did not want to go.
7. My upbringing was traditional and also nominally religious in that we went to church most Sundays. We weren't religious at home and didn't pray at home unless my grandparents were there. Going to church was a social thing for our farming community. Our minister frequently called at home and I was used to him coming for in coffee or for a drink in the evening. He was kind and appropriate at all times.

### **St Mary's Convent, Longridge Towers, Berwick upon Tweed**

8. From the age of seven I was sent as a weekly boarder to a school called St Mary's Convent near Berwick upon Tweed. A lot of farmers' daughters from the Borders and Northumberland went there and other girls I had grown up with. There were also some Catholic students who came from far away. The Scottish students were mainly Protestant, like me, and from the Borders. The teachers were mainly nuns.
9. I started at this school at the same time as my sister. I was there for around four to five years in total. They put me down one year from the start because it was an English school and the school years are different.
10. I never spoke to any outside agency formally about what happened at the school although I have spoken many times to colleagues and friends and people who attended at the same time as me.

11. The school closed down in the year after I left. It reopened as a secular school and is unrelated, except in buildings, to the school I attended.
12. I witnessed and was subject to the physical and emotional abuse of catholic and protestant students in this school. This was done by some of the nuns and as a punishment for having done something wrong. Some of the nuns hit the students with slippers, hairbrushes, other implements and with their hands. This was not a one off hit but a repeated action. An alternative punishment was to make students pray in a kneeling position, separated in long corridors, facing the wall for hours at a time and at night when we should have been in bed.
13. Some of the nuns differentiated between Catholic and Protestant children. Catholic children were treated more harshly.
14. There were two nuns in particular who I would pick out as treating the students badly. Their names were Sister PWD and Sister DQR, the teacher. I believe that there were other nuns that physically abused students but I did not witness it nor was it done to me that I can remember.
15. Sister PWD was a teacher for my class in when I was aged seven to nine years. was a composite class for students aged from five to nine. Sister PWD was also in charge of the younger boarders' dorms on 'bottom corridor' and had other tasks in the school.
16. If girls were caught talking after lights out she would come into the room and punish girls with a slipper, hand or other implement on their back or on their naked bottom or legs. That happened to me a lot of times, more than five and less then fifteen.
17. She would also get us up in the night, as a punishment and make us kneel down to pray while facing the wall. This could happen late at night, separated from others and alone in a dark deserted corridor. This happened to me at least twice that I can remember. I saw other girls taken out of the dorm for hours on end and they told me they were put in various corridors and separately in the gloomy darkness. I can

remember girls coming back to the dorm and telling me they had been taken to the boiler room and left in darkness again for long periods of time.

18. For girls who wet the bed in my dorm they were woken up at 11pm, by Sister PWD and made to strip their sheets and wash them in the bath there and then. This never happened to me, but I saw it happen routinely.
19. I had a friend my age called [REDACTED], she was from overseas and had African and English heritage and was Catholic. I have spoken to her and confirmed that she is content for me to share some of what I witnessed happening to her at school.
20. On occasions I saw Sister PWD comb her curly afro hair with a wire brush that was something like my mother cleaned the cooker with, and she would be yanking at it and this would make her scalp bleed. Some nuns made her pray in the kneeling position for a long period of time on a bump on the floor where the lino merged. I remember the tears running down her face and her legs shaking as she had cramp. On the occasion I remember she had left her tennis racket outside. I also saw her smacked by hand and also with the slipper and a hairbrush.
21. [REDACTED] joined as a full boarder when she was six and was unhappy at school. Sometimes I would go to the school Chapel to keep her company while she prayed. We would take her to our house at the weekend and she came many times to our home. She learned to ride horses with us and my mum used to buy her special product for her hair and give her pocket money. Apart from us, her older sister and other weekly boarding parents she was alone in the UK terms of practical and emotional help and support.
22. My friend [REDACTED] contacted me some years ago and asked if I would make a statement to the police about what I had witnessed at school happening to her. I said I would, but she never got back to about that specific issue but we do remain in contact. At the time I didn't understand why [REDACTED] was treated so badly, but looking back it I believe was because of her heritage.

23. Another school friend, called [REDACTED] and I got caught whispering after lights out in the dorm. I remember Sister<sup>PWD</sup> [REDACTED] screaming at her 'The B on your pillow is for Baby' and absolutely walloping our bare bottoms with a slipper, her first and then me as I lay in the next bed to her.
24. On one occasion, my friend [REDACTED] and I got into the bath together, we were about eight. There was a strict bathing schedule for us and we had to bathe separately and only once a week for full boarders. We were caught and were in serious trouble. Sister<sup>PWD</sup> [REDACTED] was screaming at us right up in our faces calling us 'wicked and sinful' and I had no idea what she meant. I had to ask my parents at the weekend what it meant.
25. We were only allowed one bath per week. My mother complained and I was allowed two. One on a Tuesday night and one on a Thursday Night – during Top of the Pops.
26. The food was terrible, there was not enough of it and the quality of it was poor. I can remember some of the dishes even now. We ate the same thing on the same day week in and week out. We were made to eat everything on our plates and we had little option than to comply. I can remember being forced to eat sour milk on cereal and lemon meringue pie that had fallen on the dirty floor, been scraped off by hand and put back on the service tray and then dolloped on my plate.
27. Two sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ran away from school. They would have been maybe nine and ten. They were away all day and got twelve miles. The police picked them up. Another time [REDACTED] and others ran away. I don't know how far they got.
28. We used to go home every weekend on a Friday afternoon and go back to school on a Monday morning. There was a bus that took us to Kelso and then parents took it in turns to come to collect us. I never stayed in the school for a weekend. I would never have wanted to do it and I had made my father promise that if it was really snowy he would come in a tractor for me.

29. We told our parents what school was like and they said that was what happened at boarding school and we should behave and we would be fine. My mother did raise concern with the school and as a consequence I got moved up to the 'top corridor' early and was roomed with the older girls.
30. There was absolutely no maltreatment or abuse there that I can remember on 'top corridor' and Sister Mary Colombia cared for us kindly and with compassion. By that stage I was struggling to fall asleep at night and when I did sleep I would sometimes sleepwalk. Looking back I think it was due to the trauma of what I had witnessed and suffered. Sister Mary Colombia went to lengths to try to support me and would make me hot drinks in the night, sit with me and eventually moved me and roomed me with my sister for additional reassurance.
31. I believe that physical chastisement in schools was legal at that time, but this chastisement was completely inappropriate even at that time.
32. Some of the nuns were kind and very empathetic to us and did not discriminate by religion.
33. This is not an exhaustive list of the things [REDACTED] myself and other students were subjected too.
34. On the road between the convent and my family home a young girl of my age was abducted and murdered by Robert Black. I was aged twelve. It had a huge impact on our lives.

**St Leonards School, St Andrews, Fife**

35. After St Marys Convent I went to study at St Leonard's school in St Andrews in Fife when I was aged twelve. Lots of my parents' friends sent their children there.
36. I went there with other girls from the convent school and, in addition, I already knew other students there. My sister and I went together at the same time. We boarded and

went home every second or third weekend. We also spent the holidays and half-term at home. In addition, my parents came to the school to take us out for lunch at weekends. They would take the Borders families children out too. Almost every weekend we spent some time with our own family or our extended family. I didn't enjoy boarding full-time, but also I didn't not enjoy it at the same time.

37. The school was very well run, extremely safe and also extremely boring. I remember the feeling the day I realised that no-body was going to hit us or scream at us or make us pray for long periods, I had been in the school about ten days by then. It was like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. There were clear routines and clear expectations. There was nothing especially negative about my experience and I had no feeling of being unsafe. It took me about a term and a half to be able to fall asleep easily and also to stop sleepwalking regularly.
38. There were private baths and private showers, but the house boiler could only cope with a small number of hot showers in the morning and evening. I frequently had cold showers. The boarding house was cold in the winter. Blow heaters would come on in the morning and evening. We were frequently cold between that and at weekends. I remember us all plugging in our hairdryers and putting them to hot blow and waving them in the dorms to heat it. Very occasionally, I remember there was frost on the inside of the windows in the morning. At some point I found the master switch for the house heating and would put the heating on for a boost. When the school found out they locked the box with a padlock. After that I wrote to Citizen's Advice to ask them for help. They wrote back and told me as a private school there were no rules that the school had to follow over minimum heat for us and they were sorry they could not help.
39. There were no structured activities in the evenings and weekends, except twice a term when you could sign up for an activity such as ice skating in Dundee. We weren't allowed to mix with local people and that felt strange to me with my background.
40. In my entire time in senior school I attended one school dance with a boy's school.

41. It was common at that time to leave the school after doing O' levels and before doing A' levels or Highers particularly for girls at all-girls boarding schools and to go onto co-educational boarding schools.
42. I told my parents I wanted to go to a different school for my sixth form years and I wanted to go somewhere that was co-educational. My parents agreed with me about moving and we looked at various schools.
43. I ended up choosing to go to Gordonstoun. My parents were anxious as they didn't know many people who had been to that school, other than maybe one or two families. It wasn't a traditional school for our community or an area that they knew much about and none of my cousins had been there.
44. I was attracted to that school as I wanted to join their fire brigade and I wanted to learn to sail and they were opportunities I'd not had in my previous schools or at home. My sister left school altogether at the same time as I transferred to Gordonstoun.

#### **Gordonstoun School, Elgin, Moray**

45. I went to visit my new school with my mum in the summer of 1986 before I started there in September of that year. I was sixteen then. The school looked great to me and it appeared to be everything I was looking for in a school.
46. The school itself is on a large estate about five miles from Elgin and next to RAF Lossiemouth's runways. It was very spacious with lots of wooded areas around the grounds with sports pitches. There were individual boarding houses and teaching block areas. There was also a main building like an old castle called Gordonstoun House. In my first year, part of it was a girls' boarding house and in my second year it was the main administrative building and the girls moved from there to the new house called Plewlands. There were eight boarding houses. The school was run by a headmaster called Michael Mavor. He is now deceased. There was also a deputy head and I can't recall his name. Each boarding house was run by a house master or house



mistress. The house parents would be in charge of you and if you did anything wrong in school it came back to her or him.

47. I think were between four and five hundred pupils and there were more boys than girls when I was there. It had previously been an all-boys school. The pupils ranged in age from thirteen to eighteen or nineteen. There were a lot of international students there when I was there. This was very different to other boarding schools at the time in the UK.
48. The boarding houses were called Round Square, Gordonstoun House, or G House and Plewlands House. Cumming, Altyre, Duffus and Bruce were boys' boarding houses. My house was called Hopeman and it, along with Windmill and Plewlands/Gordonstoun House were girls' houses. The boarding houses were not physically close to each other and they were separated over the campus. There was a dining room called the Refectory and a medical block called the Sanatorium that we called 'the San'.
49. In my lower sixth there were too many new girls to be accommodated in the boarding houses. Some of them stayed with some of the teachers in the staff bungalows. I recall one of the girls was called [REDACTED] I don't remember anything more about that except surprise and gratitude that I was not in a teacher's house. I don't know what their accommodation was like, but there were four girls I think. They were there for a year. Then they moved to the new girls' boarding house called Plewlands. That opened in 1987.
50. The school was founded by a European Educationalist called Kurt Hahn and the school followed his teachings as well as European systems. The school was a member of The Round Square Conference and there was a small number of schools in Europe and around the world that operated on the Hahn Philosophy. It meant there was an emphasis on self-determination with 'soft touch management' and we were encouraged to do quite adult things at a young age and resolve our problems ourselves. In Hahn philosophy punishment is a last resort.

51. Gordonstoun had a big intake of students into sixth form. In my boarding house there were six new girls including me. That made our number up to roughly twelve girls in Lower 6<sup>th</sup>. There was an extremely tight hierarchy in school. The entire school called us '6<sup>th</sup> Form Bentrants' it was a play on a derogatory phrase for same sex relationships and used to ensure that we understood our inferior place in the school and that we entered in Six B or Lower Sixth. Staff did not use it, but staff did nothing that I remember to stop it happening. It was common language, used daily.
52. In terms of the hierarchy I learned quickly that the top of the hierarchy were a group of Six A (final year) boys. They were big strong boys. Finally at some point through my first year they were expelled and suspended. Everyone knew their place in the hierarchy.
53. I had to sit an entrance exam and an entrance test at an interview. I also had to have passed at least five O' Levels.
54. My housemistress was called Angela Clutton. She was nice and very jolly. She was married and her husband, Dr Clutton, who quite rightly, never came into the girls boarding house. They had their own accommodation that was physically attached to the end of the boarding house. Angela Clutton remained my house mistress throughout my time at the school. There were fifty or sixty girls in the house so there were a lot of girls to manage.
55. In her role she was in charge of us and was expected to be responsible for discipline and control. Sometimes you were aware that you were in the house and staff were not always there. I can't give specific times of the day, but you just had that feeling.
56. There was always supposed to be someone in the duty office at one end of the H-block in daytime hours from 7am to 10pm. That room was very separated from where we were and there was a low staff presence in the house. Some girls were verbally unkind other girls. I never saw any physical bullying from girls on girls in my boarding house. It was harmonious and we got on ok. Some kids struggled for their own reasons, but it was ok.

57. Angela Clutton had assistant house mistresses and they would be on duty when Mrs Clutton was busy elsewhere. Mrs Clutton was also a teacher and most of the house parents were teachers. She didn't teach me. One assistant house mistress was Miss Geraldine West and I knew her as she was in the school fire service with me.
58. Most of the staff lived on the campus or nearby. There was a lot of accommodation on campus. I also had a Tutor who was attached to Hopeman House and mine was also my geography teacher. She was very nice. The Tutor was like my key worker and she lived out of school. I went to her house once or twice with other students for a 'brew evening'. Which was eating toast and drinking tea.
59. There were prefects at the school and they were called Colour Bearers. The school was modelled on Plato's Republic and that is where the name Colour Bearer comes from as they were people of responsibility in Plato's Republic. The head boy and head girl were called Guardians as in Plato's Republic. They had their own suite of rooms in the main house or they could use a room in the boarding house.
60. There were both 'duty' and school Colour Bearers. Colour Bearers had a lot of authority. They came from sixth form pupils and there were between ten and twenty of them. They also had a purple sign sewn on their jersey to indicate that they were a Colour Bearer. They had responsibility for some of the day to day management. My relationship with the Colour Bearers was good.
61. House 'duty' was a list you were put on in Six A where you were the person in charge of the day to day running of the boarding house, supported by the staff member in their duty room. I was on 'duty' many times. When you were on duty you got the house up in the morning, you ticked the names at morning run, you nominally supervised prep, or homework, you made sure people were in at night and you ticked names and duties against a register. You also ticked names at breakfast and supper to make sure people were present. You had no training and indication for this, you just did it.

## **Routine at Gordonstoun**

### *First day*

62. Both of my parents took me to school for my first day. I was nervous but excited and I was looking forward to it. I was focussed and I wanted to go there. I arrived and I got my allocation, by which I mean my bed, and I remember going into the boarding house and meeting other people. I was greeted by my house mistress, I had already met her when I went up to look around the school. I was taken to my dorm in the boarding house which was called Hopeman. It was a modern breeze block building and in an H-shape. The middle part of the H as the common rooms and communal areas and the legs of the H-shape were dorm rooms.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

63. The dorm accommodation was better than what I had come from. In the past I'd been in dorms that were mixed ages of girls from thirteen to eighteen and the rooms were cramped. At Gordonstoun there was a long corridor with beds in it for around twelve people. There was a three feet high partition between the beds and we called these areas our horseboxes. You only had to stand up to see over the partition into the next person's area. You had a cupboard, a work station and a bed and a set of drawers and somewhere to put your toiletries in.
64. The house was always warm enough in the summer and winter, and the water in the taps was always hot for baths and showers.
65. The house Six A student on duty would wake us up in the morning at around 7am by ringing an electric bell and shouting at us to get up. Immediately we were expected to be dressed in our gym kits and go outside to do the morning run round the outside of the boarding house, so it wasn't far. This run was a circuit of an assigned course but it was horrible when you'd first woken up. It was approximately 600 metres long. If you got on well with the person on duty you could escape doing the morning run as they supervised it and could tick your name on the list as if you'd done it. I used to tick my friends off all the time rather than have them do the run.

66. The boys from Cumming House would be running round their boarding house in the opposite direction to us and we'd meet in the middle. There was some camaraderie involved and some larking about. There would be a laugh about what people were wearing. There was nothing abusive about it and the run was not so far that you were really tired, and even if you were unfit you would manage it.
67. Then we came back to the boarding house to shower and get dressed for the day. The house prefects for Hopeman lived in the boarding house and the head of the boarding house prefects had her own area.
68. I can't remember if the boarding houses were locked or open at night. I do know I could get in and out of them all night long as I had to attend fires. I can't remember the detail of how I got in and out now, but I can recall accessing the dorm through my study window as a fairly routine short cut.
69. Bedtime was at 10:00 pm or 10:30 pm and the times didn't differ when I was there. The person on duty would take the list of names of girls ticked in as present to the house mistress. I don't remember the housemistress coming round to routinely check everyone was there as happened in St Leonards.
70. Nobody was directly supervising us overnight. There was a house mistress in her own area and no wake-in night staff. I remember being on a fire service call out in the middle of night and I came back with another girl from my house. We went into the tea room to make some toast and we realised there was a car outside parked between our boarding house and the wood. We watched this guy sitting in the car for ages and we knew it wasn't right, but we didn't feel able to wake the house mistress. He eventually drove off. The next day we reported it and the police came to take statements. It turned out the car was stolen. We knew whatever was going on was wrong, but we didn't know what action to take to deal with it.
71. In the first term my dorm was on the ground floor and the room had big swing windows that you could open fully. Now they are locked, but when I was there people could come into the dorm very easily through the windows. My dorm backed onto woods

and that meant it was the access for anyone coming in or out in the night. The windows were regularly used as an entry and exit points for me and for other pupils into the dorm. It was a lot quicker than walking round to the door. If you were coming or going in the night and were caught you would have been expelled, but the chances of getting caught were almost zero.

72. On my first night three 6<sup>th</sup> Form A boys came into our dorm through the windows, in the middle of the night. They were partying with some of the girls in my dorm and running around and making a lot of noise. Somebody had a tv and it was on. The beds were the kind that folded down from the wall, along the long side of the bed and were on two legs and then two hinges attached to the wall. In addition to general party they were 'bed tipping' people, which meant you were slammed up against the wall in a sandwich between the bed and the wall. This did not happen to me.
73. That first night was the worst for me and I was lying in bed thinking, 'what have I done?' I was frightened. The housemistress who was on duty was asleep with a schedule of teaching expected from her the next day. She was in her own accommodation at the opposite end of the house.
74. Throughout my time in Gordonstoun there were frequent comings and goings in the night. If anyone was caught they would be expelled but I don't remember anyone being expelled for this. There was a distinct lack of staff supervision through the night.
75. There was a difficult group of boys in Six A, among the boys who came in on that first night who were either suspended or expelled later on. Those boys were horrible to me. That group would call me names, make stupid noises etc. if they saw me around school. There was nobody I could turn to to stop it. Most students were afraid of them and they were known, amongst students and staff, for their reputation of bullying. When they would name-call, people would look at me in sympathy, but nobody did anything. There was no staff member I could turn to. My seventeen year old self was ecstatic when they were finally suspended and expelled, while my adult self recognises them as students in need of help and support themselves.

76. Partly because of the treatment by these boys, and because of my earlier experiences at the Convent, I was more aware than some other students of the possibility of bad things happening in school, particularly in the dorms and at night.
77. I am aware that some of those boys will be able to identify themselves from this statement. I do not want them to dwell on the contents of this statement or to feel badly for what happened. I do not hold them responsible for what happened and any hurt is long gone for me. I mention it here only to support this Inquiry to understand the background, environment and context of the school at that time.

*Mealtimes / Food*

78. After getting showered and dressed in the morning we walked about one kilometre to the refectory for breakfast. It took just over ten minutes to walk there and is situated to the other side of the main Gordonstoun House. We were free to sit where we wanted and generally you sat with your boarding house. You would collect a tray and then get whatever food you wanted from a buffet set up. There was a wide variety of food on offer both hot and cold and the kitchen staff were kind and generous. We were allowed to joke and chat with them, unlike at St Leonards.
79. Afterwards we went back to the boarding house and to assembly in the chapel before attending classes. The lunch times in the refectory were staggered to allow for all the pupils and staff to eat. It wasn't supervised, but teachers also sat in the same dining room. After sports in the afternoon we had toast and then supper later on which was a full hot and cold buffet and pudding. Finally at bedtime you could have more food in the house. Food was plentiful, tasty and freely available.

*Washing / bathing*

80. After the morning run you'd go back to the boarding house for a shower. They were communal. There was a room with five or six showers against the wall and there was also a bath somewhere else in the room, just plonked in the middle. There were no curtains. It was a shock for me, as I didn't know the showers were communal until my

first morning. There was no alternative to these showers as there weren't any that were enclosed.

81. The shower room in Hopeman House was the same as the ones in the other houses to the best of my knowledge. They were all communal. The showers were not supervised by the house mistress and no staff came in that I remember. I never saw physical or sexual abuse of anybody in the showers in the girls' boarding house. In my house there were no same-sex relationships that I was aware of.

#### *Clothing / uniform*

82. There were two uniforms. One was for day to day wear that was practical and the other was a weekend one for special occasions, and was a kilt of your tartan choice. There was a clothing/linen and laundry block and the staff there were kind and helpful. You could get new clothing or borrow clothing if you needed extra.
83. While we were there we realised that we had to do our laundry while the boys got their laundry done for them in the laundry block. We complained and arrangements were made for us to have our laundry sent if we wanted it sent as the school recognised that girls and boys should be equal. There was a strong theme of equality between girls and boys at the school.

#### *School*

84. After morning assembly we started classes and there were two lessons then a break, with a snack supplied by school and then two more lessons before lunch. Classes finished at around 2:00 pm in time for sports and community service in the afternoon. My class size was small and I think there were about sixteen people in my largest class. I don't know about lower down in the school. There was a lot of teachers.
85. There were bright students brought in on scholarship in the sixth form. Some of the boys that came in 3<sup>rd</sup> form had brothers in other public schools in England that they couldn't get into as they weren't bright enough. Some students had very complex family and learning backgrounds.



86. Some teachers did not have an additional formal qualification to teach above their degree or their teaching qualification was not recognised in Scotland. Despite this, I believe I was well taught. If you needed extra help in any subject you just had to ask the teacher and they would help you outside of the classroom.
87. We were graded for effort and a grade for attainment. The ethos of the school wasn't academic it was based on more than academia.

### *Religion*

88. Before the school day started we attended the Episcopal chapel for a hymn and a lecture. It was not a religious school, but nominally Christian. There was a [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who would wear a [REDACTED] over his suit. If you were not Christian you did not have to go to a religious service. There were lots of international students of different religions who didn't have to go. Sometimes I went with my Catholic friend to the Catholic Mass on the RAF Lossiemouth base. The option was there to pursue your own religion.
89. Assembly would be taken by the headmaster and [REDACTED]. The headmaster did most of the talking and there were speeches and notices given out. Then [REDACTED] would then tell us what today's lesson was and a pupil would read it out. We would then sing a hymn and there was a bit of a lecture given by the head teacher.

### *Trips / Holidays*

90. The school had a training yacht that the school used for us to sail train along the west coast of Scotland. In my lower sixth we went all round the Western Isles. It was hard work and there were twelve of us sleeping in births. There was <sup>EXL</sup>[REDACTED] and the Bosun [REDACTED]. We all had to sail the boat and some of it was fantastic. The school had more than one captain and more than one Bosun and I did not know them.

91. We had to do a morning swim and were expected to jump in the water first thing. I hated that because it was freezing, but kind of fun at the same time. [REDACTED] was very stern but you knew he was kind at heart and would push you in if you didn't jump in the water yourself. In Gordonstoun culture, it was reasonable to expect students to jump into the freezing sea. If you could not swim or were sick you would not have to swim. The push was to get you in as you dithered, giggling and squawking, and not an act of abuse. If you had been genuinely afraid you would have received help to overcome your fear, you would not just be pushed in. Even though we had to do this, my cruise was a happy time and I remember it with great affection.
92. I went home to my family at the end of term. The school chartered a train from Elgin and I got off in Edinburgh. There was one teacher on the train. Kids got up to all sorts of mischief on that train. It went all the way to London.

*Leisure time*

93. We could go to the shops in Elgin on a Saturday afternoon. I don't think I ever went to a museum or concert out of the school, but you have to remember the geographical location we were in.
94. The three pillars of the Round Square and Hahn Philosophy was service in the community, outward bound education and seamanship. These were the focus of our free time.
95. Everyone did some level of service in the community. I was in the Fire Service. You could serve in the Coastguard Service, the Special Boat Service or do Community Service or the Grampian Mountain Rescue.
96. There was outward bound training from the start. We were well trained in survival and map reading with a compass. It sounds like a lot of responsibility, but even looking back I am clear that I was entirely safe in the hills.
97. I also had to do compulsory seamanship in addition to school sail training, known colloquially as cruise. The school had two cutters in the Hopeman harbour and you

got a very warm uniform loaned from stores and learned sailing and how to get the boats in and out of the harbour in summer and winter conditions.

98. There were also traditional things like hockey and netball to play and it was up to you to make use of what was on offer. There were a lot of activities on offer. All you had to do was turn up and engage.
99. There were also hill walking and camping called 'ex-peds'. Every year or every term you had a house expedition of two or more days and nights out walking and camping. There was also an ex-ped for your school year, so the Lower Sixth would go on a camping trip together.
100. If you were otherwise feeling restless you could ask your house master or mistress and they would decide if you could go on an unscheduled ex-ped for several nights. We went once after our A' Levels were done. There were camping stores in the school and you went in there to choose the equipment you required. I don't know if they checked where you were. When your boarding house went on ex-ped the house staff came with us and when your school year went on ex-ped I can't remember if staff went too.
101. I volunteered for the Fire Service and this gave me a high level of autonomy. I carried a pager and the pager was controlled by Grampian Fire and Rescue, who would activate it. You had to be over sixteen to be actively part of the fire service called 'on the run'. We were well taught by Grampian Fire Service. We had to pass medical and physical tests and trained for sixteen weeks and passed an exam before attending a fire. I did not feel unsafe or poorly trained and I was happy and proud to serve my community
102. I attended many fires and road traffic accidents as we also carried cutting equipment. Even now I can remember some of the big fires I attended. I spent a lot of time training, cleaning equipment and the fire engine and attending fires.
103. I did one week fully residential in Anderson Drive fire station in Aberdeen. I was there as a trial in preparation for the first female fulltime firefighters as they wanted to see

how they would adjust things for women and adjust facilities in the fire station like sleeping arrangements and bathrooms. It was a big responsibility for me and I was eighteen at the time

### *Birthdays and Christmas*

104. We had a four week holiday at Christmas and I went home. We would break up around 12<sup>th</sup> December. The school had a Christmas tree and there was a special lunch and a carol concert. It wasn't a major thing.
105. Birthdays were acknowledged by staff. You could order a cake and have people round at your boarding house to eat the cake.

### *Visits / Inspections*

106. In between the start of term and half-term, my mum and dad came up to take me out and we'd stay in a cabin in Aviemore. My sister came once and we spent a day out together and no one realised I'd gone out of the school. On another occasion I went to Inverness for the day by myself and no one noticed. I also had a little hitchhiking trip along the Moray Coast with a friend from house. Again nobody noticed.
107. When I was at the school I felt that I was in the middle of nowhere and completely unconnected to anywhere or anyone other than the school. My only outside contact was Fire Service or the letters and phone calls from family and friends. My parents came for an open day in the summer and to collect me when I left in the last year.
108. I'm not aware of any inspections from outside agencies.

### *Healthcare*

109. At the start of term you were weighed and your height was recorded and also at the end of term, and in between too if they were worried about someone. I was surprised as it never happened at my other schools. It was called going for 'weighing and measuring' and it would be written in your school report. It was mandatory and you

had to go along with it. One of my friends didn't like to queue to be weighed, but there was no option and you'd be chased up by your housemistress if you didn't go.

110. You'd see a doctor for a medical at the start of your time at the school. I don't remember what the medical was for, but do recall that when I went I was told I had an ear infection and I couldn't go on ex-ped. I had not realised I was as unwell as I was and I was given antibiotics and put to bed. Up until that chance medical I had been packing for ex-ped later on that day. If you were ill you went to the Sanatorium or the 'San'. It was a block with beds in it and it was supervised by a nurse. A local GP would come in. If you needed to see a doctor then you got to see one.
111. There was no lack of healthcare, but you had to know you were ill as there was no one there to tell you or say to you 'you don't look well – are you ok?' I had bad period pains at school and I was given paracetamol, but I needed medical help. My mum got that organised in the holidays. There was no one person for me to go to with a health problem. I felt a lack of connectedness to an adult that I had a trusting relationship with.
112. There were some pupils who were choosing not to eat, I don't remember it specifically. There was no force feeding that I remember.
113. As a hangover from that ear infection at the beginning I suffered from repeated ear and throat infections. My mum asked the school to send me to the specialist in Aberdeen. Arrangements were made, but nobody accompanied me. The school gave me a bit of paper with a hand drawn map and I got a taxi from school to Elgin, got the train and had to walk from the train up to the hospital. I had never been out of the train station before in Aberdeen, I did not know Aberdeen. I had never been on a paying bus before and I had never attended a specialist on my own before. At that appointment, with a male doctor I had never met, they stuck a camera up my nose and down into my throat without an anaesthetic. I was gagging and feeling faint and it felt frightening and out of my control.
114. On the way back I went into a fast food restaurant. I looked at the local children and I could see that they were happy and I wanted to have a burger and be like them, but I

did not know how to order one. It all felt horrible and overwhelming and I felt just so unprepared for this experience in a city, in addition to the trauma of the health care appointment and so I just walked out and got back on my train to Elgin.

115. One day I was on flag duty with my friend [REDACTED] We were on our own Gordonstoun House putting up the school flag. She had been asked to do it and I was accompanying her. As we came down stairs she fell and broke her ankle. I remember hearing something snap and she was screaming in pain. I then tried to find someone to help her. I couldn't find a phone in Gordonstoun House. I ran to the Refectory but it was locked. Behind it was the stores and the laundry. One of the ladies in there helped me and I started to ring the boarding house duty rooms from her list. I tried ringing the number for Hopeman House with no answer. I tried the San with no answer. I eventually got a house mistress from another boarding house to come in her car to collect my friend. [REDACTED] was taken to San and then to the hospital in the town.
116. There was no system in school to deal with such a situation, no instructions had been given about what to do and no concept of how to deal with such a problem among the students.
117. While I was there a lifelong best friend died suddenly in a different boarding school. It was in my last term at school. I had sat an A' level paper that day and the housemistress asked to see me. She told me to call my mum from her office while she stood by. My mum told me what had happened. I dropped the phone and ran from the boarding house screaming. Nobody came after me and I was away for hours.
118. Finally my friend came to find me and took me back to house. I don't remember what happened. I could not go home for three days as I had A' levels. I was wandering around campus and the grounds, in the middle of the night in upset and on my own.
119. Finally I took myself to the San and asked for the school doctor and I asked him to give me a tranquiliser. He gave me a mild sedative. The next day I went home. I stayed at home for a few days for the funeral and then I had to return as I had more A' levels.

120. When I came back I went to chapel that first morning by chance they sang the same hymn that they had sung at the funeral. I ran out of chapel crying and ran down the campus. One of the students came to find me. He kind of coaxed me into my A' level. I had missed the first half hour or so. I spent the next week or so walking round the school grounds at all times of the day and night like a zombie on autopilot with a red puffy face. I slept in the day and walked around the campus all night. I spent one night in a barn on a neighbouring farm listening to my Walkman radio. Nobody in the staff team seemed to notice.
121. It was at this time that I took myself to Inverness for the day. I walked to the end of the drive, went into the post office to the pay phone, I called a cab, went to the station and got on the train. My previous trip to Aberdeen to the Hospital had given me the skills to get away and I did. I spent the day walking around the centre of Inverness aimlessly in my school uniform. Nobody in the staff team noticed.
122. The only staff member who helped me was Mrs Evans and she came in one evening to talk to me, I believe it was the only time she talked to me. I wrote a note to OKX OKX explaining I was distraught and I could not be relied on to do the Fire Service duty as I knew I was expected to go to Aberdeen for a week to be in the Anderson Drive Fire Station, as described earlier. He never acknowledged my note or replied. On auto pilot I just went to Aberdeen and did a week in Anderson Drive Fire Station living residential with the all-male Crew in an all-male station. I had never met any of them before, but I was accompanied by two of my Fire Service buddies from school,                      and                     .
123. There was absolutely no system that I could access at that time, to deal with emotional crisis at Gordonstoun. I just had to deal with it myself.

*Running away*

124. I don't remember anyone running away.
125. I wasn't aware of people being away overnight because they'd run away.

*Bed Wetting*

126. I wasn't aware of any bedwetting, but it must have happened. There were big laundry machines in house and you could just use them whenever you wanted. If anyone had wet their bed they could have dealt with it yourself without anyone noticing.

*Discipline*

127. One punishment the school had was doing penalty drill. The teachers could tell you to do it. This was a run round the square in front of Gordonstoun House in break time when everyone was getting their snack from the Refectory. You either had to do it in ten minutes or you did a certain number of laps. The rules were published in the Gordonstoun rule book. The run was like something in the army but not gruelling. Normally when penalty drill happened everyone would be laughing and the teachers would be sort of laughing too. The kids who were running would be laughing and smiling too as they ran.
128. Students generally did it on the instruction of teachers, and Colour Bearers didn't have that authority at break time during the school day.
129. One night, I saw a boy from the school running round his boarding house. It was late and it was raining. I was on my way to lock up the [REDACTED] and he was still running and on my way back I told the sixth former to 'stop it now'. I heard stories in the school that younger students were made to run until they were sick and I'd never seen it happen, but it looked like that was what was happening to that boy. He was running in that way that was not OK. The sort of exhausted run, he was young, third or fourth form and it was lightly raining.
130. The time I saw it happening to that boy it wasn't funny at all, there were no teachers and it would be after 10pm as I was locking the [REDACTED].
131. For punishments you could be reported to your house mistress and you could be gated so you couldn't visit another boarding house or you could get lines. You could also be rusticated and this meant you could be suspended. Ultimately you could be expelled.



The school put up a notice if you'd been suspended or expelled. I was caught drinking, with others, and there was a lot of drinking going on. We had to write out the wine list of Bordeaux. This punishment was given to everyone who was caught, on that occasion, and was given by the headmaster. I remember being told that the headmaster did not want us to just write lines, he thought that there had to be some learning in the lines and so for us it was the wine list.

132. The headmaster was ultimately responsible for the discipline, but I don't think I ever spoke to him directly in two years.
133. I very much doubt if there was a record made of any punishment given out. There was no physical chastisement that I remember.

### **Abuse at Gordonstoun**

#### *Boys' boarding houses*

134. My boarding house was fine, but I believed the life for some of the boys was quite different. If a boy who for whatever reason wasn't accepted or not popular then life might not be good. The girls would talk about it in the dorms at night and I would ask some of the boys directly. Some of us were more aware and asking more questions about what life was like in the boarding houses for boys, but I don't believe that everyone was aware.
135. While I was there, another boy came to Gordonstoun and my family knew him. My mum told me in her letters that he was having a hard time. I don't want to give his name. I told the house master what was happening and it wasn't right and I named the boy who was allegedly the problem. That boarding house was not ok and a boy was expelled later on for that.

OKX [REDACTED]

136. OKX [REDACTED] or OKX [REDACTED] as he liked to be called, was the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and also an [REDACTED] teacher, and [REDACTED] of the fire service for Gordonstoun Station. I was in the school fire service and my only contact with him in my first few terms was through the fire service.
137. I was in the fire service from the start of my time in the school. OKX [REDACTED] made me feel uncomfortable to be around. I was aged sixteen to eighteen years of age.
138. Early on, I remember I saw a female student in the watch room completing an entry in one of the books and her saying under her breath 'don't leave me' and I knew there was a problem. OKX [REDACTED] told me not to call him 'Sir' and to call him OKX [REDACTED]. All male staff had to be called Sir, except him. He was blurring the boundaries.
139. He would always smile at me, but he was dead behind his grey eyes. The eyes just didn't match with the smile and it wasn't genuine. I can picture his face even now. He wore glasses like the old national health black ones. He had greyish hair that was over to one side and a crooked front tooth. He had an odd, effeminate, camp demeanour about him and he gave me the creeps.
140. He'd put his hand on my back lightly and on my bottom and rub it down slowly, but really lightly during a drill or when moving around the station or moving me around in training. So, for example, if I needed to hold the hose in a different way, it would be done with this inappropriate light touch. In fire service we had to touch each other because many of the positions were a two-person hold. We would do this firmly and with confidence as firefighting is hard. It's not a place for light touching and although we had fun in fire service, off duty, we knew it was serious business and we were there to save property and possibly lives. The way he touched me was not appropriate for context. Those touches should have been firm and directional, those holds should have been tight and linked, not this light almost airy brush, but it was done within the context of when it was legitimate to touch me.

141. He'd also take hold of me by the tops of both my upper arms and he would kiss me on the forehead or on the cheek. I remember this happening and I remember the grip on my upper arms. It was almost sore and no way of breaking free and that kiss plonked on my forehead as I tipped my head down to my chest to escape, leaving my forehead exposed.
142. He was taller than me and it was impossible to escape this hold. He did it in a way that I couldn't say, at the time, was sexually motivated but the first time it happened I was shocked because the grip was nothing like the almost effeminate way of touching me in drills and other activities. He kissed me like this between five and ten times before I got wise to him and learned not to put myself in a position where that could happen. I used to call him 'Sir' and he would correct me and say 'Call me <sup>OKX</sup> [REDACTED] with that strange smile.
143. I don't remember going on many call outs with him. We got skilled in the fire service at not leaving girls alone with him. It was understood between the girls.
144. He reminded me that I had keys for the fire station and I could work in the Watch Room where it was quiet and I could have peace when every I wanted. He also showed me where the additional food and biscuits were kept and that I could take some but they were meant for us when we returned tired from a fire not for this circumstance.
145. Later on in my time in school I was made a [REDACTED] and it was also called [REDACTED] I didn't like it and I didn't want the role as I didn't want to have to see <sup>OKX</sup> [REDACTED] any more than I had to. It was <sup>OKX</sup> [REDACTED] who made me [REDACTED] My name was written in the school rule book and that is how I found out I had been made a [REDACTED] Nobody asked me. If they had, I would have said no. It meant I had to open the [REDACTED] in the morning, if it wasn't already open, and definitely lock it again in the evening. It meant I would have to go outside to the [REDACTED] and walk round it myself to check it was empty before I could lock it. I locked it after 10pm every night. The [REDACTED] was five minutes' walk from my boarding house.
146. This meant I had keys to the [REDACTED] and if you had keys people could ask you for the keys or for you to deliberately leave it open for them. It was a multi-functional building.

OKX [REDACTED] gave me those keys knowing that I would have to do duties for him, but also it would make me more popular with the kids as kids could use that building for time alone and time with a partner. It was [REDACTED] who were made [REDACTED]

147. Being [REDACTED] also meant I had to go into the [REDACTED] in the morning and ensure everything OKX [REDACTED] needed in the [REDACTED] was there and ready for him, such as [REDACTED]. He wanted me to help him get his [REDACTED] on over his suit. From the beginning I said no and I walked off and I was determined that wasn't going to happen. He never said anything to me after I pulled away from him. He never asked me again to pat down his [REDACTED]. I used to keep my eyes down and not meet his eyes and march really quickly into the [REDACTED] grab the [REDACTED] and march out without breaking my stride or making any eye contact.
148. If I had complained it would have been difficult to say it was of a sexual nature because I did not really understand what was happening as the messages were so mixed. I was new to the school, I had never been taught exclusively by a male teacher before and I had no reference points to understanding the kind of hierarchy that existed at Gordonstoun. It was 1986-1988 and in the context of that time, it was, and is, hard to understand what this touching and chaste kissing was. A nod to an outdated notion of the weaker female sex, an opportunity for some inappropriate covert authority figure sexual harassment or something we would now in fact now call grooming.

*Andrew Keir*

149. There were issues at the school about the behaviour of Andrew Keir after I'd left. Andrew Keir was a physics teacher and in the fire service and he did his training with me. He was an odd guy and socially awkward.
150. During a fire drill one day, he came up behind us and told us that his wife was heavily pregnant and her nipples had gone brown like walnuts. There was no preamble to this conversation he just launched into. In the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of the other girl, we were sort of trapped there with the hose on full pressure, our arms linked in the drill and we were braced against the pressure of the water. It was the end of

that conversation with him. At the time I felt I needed to stay away from. I was new to the school and I had so much to get used to and it was just another thing on a list of strange things to get used to.

151. I definitely didn't know Andrew Keir behaved inappropriately with other students. I wasn't involved in the prosecution case against Andrew Keir although I did give a statement to police about seven years ago about the incident described above.

### **Reporting of abuse at Gordonstoun**

152. I spoke to a female teacher who gave me a lift back to school from Elgin one day. I had run into her in town. On the way home in her car, when I should have been on the bus, I told her I didn't like [REDACTED] OKX She told me everyone knew he was tricky or difficult and I needed to just try to avoid him. Nothing came of our conversation.

153. Several of the staff were in the fire service together, including [REDACTED] OKX Andrew Keir, Miss West, Mr Emery who taught physics also, and Mr Spooner who taught me English. Mr Spooner was a formal sort of person but kind and a good teacher. He never did anything to make me feel uncomfortable and neither did any of the other teachers that I remember, except Andrew Keir and [REDACTED] OKX It is hard to believe that they did not have a sense of [REDACTED] OKX behaviour. We trained together, we worked together and we were a tight unit. They must have noticed that we girls avoided him.

### **Leaving Gordonstoun**

154. I did my A' Levels at the school and left at the time I was expected to have finished. My last term was really hard, as described earlier in my statement. I was extremely glad to go home.

### **Life after being in school**

155. I undertook an Honours Degree and then spent two years working in a voluntary agency in social welfare. In 1994 I went to university to study post graduate social work. While studying social work I worked part-time in a children's house for young people who were looked after by the local authority. Upon graduation, I have worked consistently in Child Welfare and Protection both in Social Work and for SCRA. I currently work as a [REDACTED] for Child Protection for a local authority. I hold an additional Post Graduate Certificate in Child Welfare and Protection.
156. Without doubt my career choice was influenced by my upbringing and boarding school experience.

### **Impact**

157. I went back to the school about fifteen years ago to visit my friend a teacher's son when the school was closed.
158. I went again in around 2010 as my daughter was choosing her secondary school. This was before people had started talking about the things that had happened to them while at school. She chose not to attend the school having made the choice to look to look and also to say she did not want to attend.
159. Between that time and the next time I went to the school, some students had started talking about their experiences both privately and on Facebook. Hearing what they were talking about was deeply upsetting and troubling.
160. The next time I went back it was a different experience. It was about five years ago with a group of my close friends from school and we stayed the weekend all together in one of their homes which was local. It was a day for old boys and old girls of the school.

161. We arrived at the start of the day and there was a service in the chapel. What happened to me was so curious. I sat down and smelled that familiar smell. They started the service and I started to have some sort of acute emotional experience. I felt absolutely horrible. I was sweating and feeling sick and I thought this is what a panic attack is, although I had never had one before or after. I used the skills I had been taught as a social worker and put my mind to calm deep breathing. After a while it subsided.
162. There was a service in the Michael Kirk later in the day and the Chaplain stated that the school were sorry for the things that had happened in the past at the school. He was referring to the experiences that the former students were talking about during the time I was at the school. It felt genuine to me and heart-felt and I appreciated the Chaplain speaking like that and being able to sit with my close friends and share that experience.
163. After that service the Chaplain and I walked down from the Michael Kirk together to the Refectory and I felt he was a genuine warm and empathetic man. I instinctively liked him and I felt moved by his honest address to the difficult subject of the past and very much appreciated the school acknowledging it in the frank and open way that they had.
164. Although I had not wanted to go to the school that weekend, because of the disclosures made on social media and the associated turmoil it had swept into me, my friends had persuaded me and I felt better afterwards. I had seen a snapshot of happy students and that reassured me and I had felt genuine gratitude at the approach the Chaplain had taken in the Michael Kirk. I felt a sense of closure and that a line had been drawn and I could move forward.
165. I'm in touch with some people from the school. My core friends from house are lifelong friends as well as some others who were not in my house.

## Reporting of Abuse

166. Before I trained in social work I made enquiries to I find out if <sup>OKX</sup> [REDACTED] was still at Gordonstoun. I spoke to a teacher's child, who is a friend of mine, to ask if he had retired. This was many years ago and he confirmed that he had retired and was not a [REDACTED] either.
167. Later on I was told he had died.
168. At some point between seven and ten years ago I reported what had happened with <sup>OKX</sup> [REDACTED] to police. I did not give a formal statement as he was deceased.
169. At the point that Andrew Keir had been charged I had raised my concerns with Police Scotland's Public Protection Unit in Elgin that I had been subject to what I believed to be inappropriate behaviour by <sup>OKX</sup> [REDACTED] and that he and Andrew Keir had been in Fire Service together, that there may be a connection and wider risk.

## Records

170. I don't know anything about record keeping at Gordonstoun.
171. I am aware that a friend of mine contacted the school to request a particular document and she had a conversation with someone at the school who told her that some records had been lost.
172. Gordonstoun had a difficult period about six or seven years ago. People who were linked up in the school started talking about the bullying and there was a Facebook page.
173. A number of people were sharing their school experiences, some of these were upsetting, and I think it was around the time my friend was trying to get her records and couldn't. On the Gordonstoun Facebook page people were taking about different



things. As far as I can remember somebody started it off by posting an initial memory. Others quickly commented.

174. I felt shock, sadness, upset, horror and somehow embroiled because I was working in child protection and I was there when some were alleging this was happening. I am linked to the trauma of it by being linked to the school and linked to the victims and knowing some of the victims as they were and are my friends even now.
175. The school quickly closed down the open page as I think it was on a page that current pupils and parents could see and it was not appropriate. After a very short time there was a new Gordonstoun group set up called G2 to continue to discuss matters, but outwith the current students and parents page, where this had started.
176. I will not share the details here as it is a matter for the people making the allegations to disclose and only if they want to disclose. I have disclosed everything in this statement that I can remember that I was subject to or witnessed.
177. I was a member of G2 for a short time before I realised it was counterproductive to my equilibrium. I withdrew from that but did not want to withdraw from anyone who wanted to report to the police and needed help to navigate how to do that.
178. At that time a person had contacted me directly and asked me directly for help to report and I had linked them with the police. As a direct consequence of that link, the Rua Fiola outward bound island camp was finally disbanded and the manager was jailed for sexual offences against children. That person had not been placed in the Rua Fiola camp by Gordonstoun.
179. I wrote an email to the G2 group dated 19 October 2013 and I think it is that individual's disclosure that I am referring to in the email. It was at the time of the newly created Police Scotland, and there were some challenges with the initial phone connections.
180. I don't know if the G2 group is still going. I honestly don't remember now the specifics of what else I am specifically referring to in that email.

181. During that time Gordonstoun wrote to all former students offering help and support and advising anybody who wanted to report to contact Police Scotland. Gordonstoun also offered direct support. Latterly Gordonstoun have continued to take this open approach and have continued to highlight the capacity to report to this Inquiry. I believe that they also commissioned CELCIS to support them.
182. This period was really upsetting for me. I had been at the school during the period that some were talking about. I was aware when I was at school of an atmosphere that did not always feel right and references made by some of the boys to bullying in their houses.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

183. There is such a lot of information I could give in a statement like this. I could talk as a boarding school-experienced individual, a parent of children who are still in boarding school (although not boarding now) and also as a professional who can see some of the story through a different set of eyes. Getting that balance is tricky and I have tried to stick to what is my own personal experience, the things I saw first-hand or felt directly myself and when I was in school.
184. The structures and systems in place in school is driven by the Leadership Team, but they need to operate to the direction of the Board of Governors and that balance between the Board and the Leadership Team within school sets the tempo, focus and ethos. There needs to be strong links with mainstream and contemporary Scottish society and there needs to be an examination of the training, experience and diversity of the Board to ensure that they are representative of our contemporary society and able to provide the breadth of leadership needed. There needs to be a particular focus on 'Protected Characteristic' groups and Child Welfare and Protection.
185. That requires a very specialist skill set and/or lived experience and it is important that this is reflected meaningfully into the Board of Governors and the staff team.

186. I have outlined some of the abuse that I saw and was subject to when I was placed outwith Scotland. We need to consider whether Scotland has any responsibility to its children who are placed outwith Scotland, and how that can be balanced with the right to family life and the rights of the child to be part of the decisions being made around them. Unpacking that will need detailed and informed consideration.
187. Most of what I experienced at Gordonstoun was good and happy and I made lifelong friends and am part of a lifelong extended community. It is a long time ago and what I talk about has to be seen within the context of the late 1980s.
188. I can identify areas that were lacking for me. There weren't enough visible staff and no one staff member I felt I could trust. I was bullied in my first year and I had nobody to turn to and make it stop. I attended a key medical appointment on my own, on public transport with a hand written map. I was uncomfortable around OKX OKX and there was no mechanism that I knew of to report it. My friend died and despite being in personal crisis there was no mechanism presented to me to support me through this. I was aware generally that there was some bullying amongst some the boys that seemed to go unchecked. As a consequence of this I did not always feel safe and I did not always feel nurtured.
189. Students need to have an advocate who is independent from their parents and their schools. This needs to be independently managed out with the school and should exist for all boarding school pupils from the day they are placed until the day they leave.
190. Overseas students, expat and foreign national students are especially vulnerable when placed in Scottish schools.
191. Overseas students, who do not have a consistent and UK present guardian, who are personally known to them and remain their guardian during their entire time in the UK have additional challenges and vulnerabilities around the weekend, half term and school holiday periods.

192. There needs to be a higher staff presence to interact with pupils. Even now in boarding schools there is only one person on duty overnight in a boarding house and they are asleep. This needs unpicked and unpacked and fully considered.
193. There is a tendency in boarding schools to take on their own or other boarding schools ex-pupils as unqualified teacher assistants or sports coaches or for a gap year or when they are a professional sports person and to do some coaching. These former students tend to be young and not professionally qualified. The change from student one term to a 'teacher or coach' the next term is a risk and a vulnerability and needs special care and attention.
194. Legislation around 'grooming' is not robust enough and needs strengthened.
195. Prefects even now are given a high degree of responsibility and autonomy in what I call 'duty' in my statement. It is customary even now for them to be supervising homework and getting the younger students to bed without consistent and direct staff supervision.
196. School commissioned overnight trips require detailed examination.
197. In general, there is something about rights here, the rights of the child and the capacity of students to know their rights and be able to exercise their rights, as well as responsibilities of the schools themselves in how they discharge their duty of care to the students ensuring their safety and welfare.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**

198. Boarding schools will require support, guidance and legislation to make changes such as those I have described in the 'lessons learned' section.
199. This Inquiry will reveal acts of commissioned abuse and omissions in leadership and consequentially the care that students experienced, that allowed that abuse to occur and student on student bullying to happen. Specialist support in the area of child

welfare and protection is needed to ensure that informed welfare and protection is at the centre of all decision making.

200. A national body could help drive change and to be comprised from boarding school experienced individuals and professionals in care and education. This model is working successfully in the Care Review and I would urge this Inquiry to consider elements of that model as a possible way forward.
201. It might be helpful to consider the employment of a qualified and currently registered social worker who holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Child Welfare and Child Protection now and before this Inquiry is concluded. This will bring some immediate safeguarding and diversity support while strategic guidance and legislation is commissioned and drafted to underpin structural change.
202. There needs to be an external agency commissioned to provide the consistent non-school advocate and support service, available for all pupils placed out with their parents' care.
203. There needs to be a detailed overhaul of the arrangements around safety, welfare and protection for the weekend, holiday and half-term care of students who have non-UK resident parents.
204. There needs to be some thought about whether the state has any duties or responsibilities to its children from Scotland going outside Scotland to study in other UK countries or further abroad.
205. We also need to think about how decisions are made for children to go to boarding school and how they need to part of this decision making process and how that is achieved when balancing their rights against the right to family privacy.
206. Arrangements need to be made for all boarding schools to have a representative at the Child Protection Committee local to them. This is to ensure that they are appropriately linked and engaged with the wider public protection agenda.

207. All individual boarding schools should be required to have a forum working with current and former students to hear and consider their views in a way that is meaningful. These views must be heard and considered by the senior management team and the Governors of the school.

**Other information**

208. 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.....  .....

Dated..... 05 January 2021 .....