

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

LDB

Support person present: No

1. My name is [REDACTED] LDB [REDACTED] My surname was [REDACTED] when I was a child. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1937. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. My mother's name was [REDACTED] and my father's name was [REDACTED] My father was the youngest of six boys, although I never knew my uncles. He was a graduate of Glasgow University and he spoke German, French, Gaelic and English. He was used as an interpreter in the army.
3. I don't remember anything about my life before going into care. We lived in Glasgow but I don't know where. I had a sister, [REDACTED] who was two and a half years younger than me and who is no longer alive. My brother, [REDACTED] was two years older than me. He stayed with my father for some time after my sister and I were taken into care. He then went into Bellevue Home in Rutherglen. He doesn't talk about his childhood at all. I never spoke about it either because I was so ashamed of it.

### Nazareth House, Paisley Road West, Cardonald, Glasgow

4. Nazareth House was a convent run by the Poor Sisters of Nazareth. The nuns wore black with white wimples. They wore blue on special occasions, such as feast days and

processions. It was a big building. It was built on three levels. It celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary after I went in so it was well established. There were elderly men and women within the convent. There were also children, divided between babies, juniors and seniors. The baby section was for new born babies up until the age of five or six years old. Sister [REDACTED] LKV was in charge of the babies. A former resident of Nazareth House, [REDACTED] worked there too. I'm not sure how many children were in the baby section. All the babies slept in one room on the ground floor. There was a special bathroom and a special cooking area for the babies. There was a play room and a porch at the end which lead out onto the grounds. The church was also on the ground floor, along with the dining hall.

5. The old men were on the ground floor. The elderly women and the nuns slept on the middle floor, except for the nuns who looked after the children. The bedrooms and bathrooms for the older children were on the top floor.
6. We had our own cows, chickens and pigs on the grounds. There were many fields so there was plenty of space for us to play. There was a big hill, where we used to go to pick wild flowers once a year. We were surrounded by countryside. There was an iron fence and railings all around the edge of the grounds. It was very isolated and we were well away from any of the public.
7. There were boys in the convent up until the age of 5. They then moved on somewhere else, although we never knew where they went. There were 48 girls in the junior section, which was for children aged five to seven. We were never called by our names. We were all numbers. It went up to 122. I was number [REDACTED] Most children stayed at the convent for a long time. Sometimes, children just disappeared and we never knew where they had gone.
8. There was one sister in charge of the babies, one in charge of the junior section and two in charge of the seniors. There weren't many. They relied upon former girls to help. The sewing and linen rooms were also staffed by girls who had spent all their years in Nazareth House. They didn't have homes to go to. There were no staff who

came in from outside, apart from the boiler man and [REDACTED]. We were educated completely in the convent until secondary school.

## **Routine at Nazareth House**

### *First day*

9. I went into Nazareth House in [REDACTED] 1940. It was a very, very cold day. I was wearing a black coat and a white scarf. My father brought me in to the parlour of the convent. He had to carry my younger sister because she was just a baby of a few months old. My mother was in hospital. The nuns terrified me, with their wimples. A few years later, three other children were coming in, screaming. My father told me I had been worse than that, kicking and screaming and refusing to let him go.

### *Mornings and bedtime*

10. We lived by bells. I never saw a clock and I didn't know how to tell the time until I went to grammar school. The nuns got up at 5 o'clock and then there was the angelus at 6 o'clock, midday and 6 o'clock in the evening. When I was at grammar school, I got up at 6 o'clock to start the furnace. After that, we went to Mass at 6.45 and had our breakfast before school.
11. When I moved from the babies and junior section to the seniors, there were three separate dormitories. We just went where they put us. One nun slept in a dormitory and the other two had a former girl sleeping in the corner. When we reached the age of seven, we moved to the seniors.
12. The babies went to bed at 6 o'clock. As we got older, bedtime was at 8 o'clock. At bedtime, we washed, undressed, said our prayers and went to bed. Lights out was at 9 o'clock. We would hear the JMJ bell. We heard the nuns saying, "Jesus, Mary and Joseph," so we called it the JMJ. There was no talking at all. They called it the great silence. Our routine was like little nuns. A dim light stayed on all night, but we weren't

allowed to read in bed. As we got older, we would pass books around and read under the bed covers, although the light was very dull.

13. The war ended when I was seven years old. In the baby section, we were put under the beds when the siren went off. There was a large barrage balloon over the convent. We used to watch the spitfires doing exercises above us. The senior girls had to get up and go down into a shelter during air raids.
14. The children who came in to the home later on tended to be the bed wetters or unable to read or write. They frightened us. There was a girl called [REDACTED]. She would scream all night long and none of us got any sleep. Finally, she was removed. I remember one particular girl would walk round the dormitory at night. She'd fill her shoe with water, lift somebody's sheets up and throw the water over the sleeping child. Then she'd say, "People will think you've wet the bed." She was a very disturbed girl, but I don't know why. We worried about her a lot but we didn't feel we could tell anybody.

#### *Mealtimes / Food*

15. We always had porridge and dripping bread for breakfast. On Sunday, we also had eggs for breakfast. We were well fed in the convent. We all had our own tables to sit at. There were glass plates for the bread and the top table was made of glass. When the plates were washed in hot water, they'd crack when they were put down. One of the nuns blamed the children. I said, "It's because the hot's eating the cold." But the nun didn't know that and said, "Stop arguing with me." I said, "It's true, you should leave them to cool off."
16. At lunchtime, we usually had mutton stews with lots of vegetables and pudding afterwards. When we came in from school, we were very hungry. We were given one slice of buttered bread on a plate. We were only allowed to eat half of that. We had to leave the other half for supper. We were also given a cocoa drink. I've never had cocoa since because I hate it.

17. We did too much work and many of us were underweight. In the junior section, Sister Francis used to give the underweight children extra food. We would stand on chairs and she would feed us. She wanted to make sure nobody else got the food.
18. If you didn't like the food, you did without. Sometimes, one of your friends would eat it. We didn't get into trouble. Before Mother [REDACTED] arrived, we were never given any drinks between meals. We'd be running around mad in the hot weather and we'd get dreadfully thirsty. It was cruel. There was a sink in the corner of the washroom. We would put our face under the sink to take a drink. At night time, the washroom was locked up. We would drink the water from the toilet. When Mother [REDACTED] came, she would make sure cups were brought outside and say, "They must have drinks."

*Washing / bathing*

19. There were six baths for the seniors. There were so many of us. Saturday night was bath night. The baths were filled with water and Jeye's fluid or pink pine was added. We all used the same water. The children who went in first were roasted and the children who went in last were freezing. We never showed our bodies. We had to put gowns on in the water. A big sheet was held up and wound round us for privacy. The sheet would be soaking wet by the time it got to the end, as we had to share that. On other nights, we sat round the bath like sardines and washed our feet. We were always playing bare footed so the water would be filthy. When we were older, we were able to use the baths on our own but there was no privacy.
20. There were two aluminium baths. One would be filled with hot water and Jeye's fluid, the other was for rinsing. We would put ourselves in and rub our hair with carbolic soap. When we came out, we just had to shake our hair like wild dogs. There were no towels to dry our hair. We all had short hair with pudding basin haircuts.
21. I never cleaned my teeth until I was thirteen. I didn't have a toothbrush. Mother [REDACTED] changed all that.

*Clothing / uniform*

22. Our clothes were dreadful. We wore pinafores for going to church. Other than that, the clothes were so inadequate. I remember we all got jumpers as a gift from the Canadian Red Cross. They were very heavy and jaggy. We were all complaining. Shoes were a problem. We just had to hope they fitted. The children who had big feet had the most difficulty. We used to go bare foot a lot outside. We weren't allowed to wear shoes in the convent. We made these knitted uppers with a leather sole, like slippers.
23. In the summer, we wore green and white cotton dresses to school. We were expected to wear them for the whole summer without them being washed. I hated that. I started rinsing it out in the big sink myself. I'd put it under my mattress and I slept on it. They'd be clean but wet the next day. Our underwear was only washed once a week. It was made out of brown, white and black ticking. They were dreadful. They were so embarrassing when we went to gym at school.

*School*

24. The primary school was in the convent. I can still remember, "A for apple, rosy and red, B for baby, sleeps in the bed." The children who came in later never seemed to know how to read. They would be given another child to teach them. The nuns would put a clever child next to a child who couldn't read. There wasn't a single child who left unable to read and write. There were very few nuns teaching, the children did most of it. Sister Francis taught the juniors, aged five to seven. She was a good teacher.
25. We all learned to read and count in the junior section. When we moved up to the senior section, the schooling was dreadful. There was just a map of the world with the capital cities. There was too much religion. We had tests on the catechism. We stood up and had to stay standing until we got something wrong. We got a reward at the end if we won, a spoonful of jam or malt. There was a lot of singing.

26. Sister [REDACTED] LKT was a proper teacher, but the other nuns weren't. One of them used to give us mental arithmetic. She would ask how I got the answers because she didn't know how to do it herself. I'd never communicated or had anything explained to me and I couldn't tell her how I'd worked it out.
27. I sat and passed the qualifying exam for grammar school very early because I practiced so much. I spent hours and hours doing examples, which I loved. I was nine years old. I didn't go into the grammar school until I was ten. I went to St. Gerard's Grammar School in Govan. The grammar school was the worst period of my life. In the convent, we were so detached from the outside world because the majority of us never had any visitors. We were strange children. We developed our own dialect. We had a different accent from the other children. The other pupils and teachers knew we were convent girls by our accent. I couldn't understand what the teachers were saying at all. I'd been cut off from the age of three. I'd never been outside, never done anything on my own, never met anybody from out with the convent.
28. We got a bus pass and took the bus to school. It was about two miles away. If the priest was late saying Mass, we had to race out of the convent to catch the bus in time for school. We'd be punished if we were late for school. We'd get the strap and have to run around the grounds. We had to go back to the convent for lunch. It was a mad rush all the time. If we lost our bus pass at the start of the month, it wasn't replaced until the following month. We'd have to borrow from a girl at school to get back for lunch. Sometimes, we'd take a lift in the milk float.
29. My friends, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] also passed the exam to get into grammar school. We were separated from each other and put into three different classes. We didn't know anybody else and nobody wanted to be friends with us. We wore the beautiful school uniform, but it made no difference. It was our voices and our behaviour and the fact that we never had anything that made us different. It would've really made a difference if I'd been put in the same class as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I don't know why the grammar school chose to separate us.

30. It's hard to express how inadequate we were. We struggled with moving from class to class. We had never followed a timetable or anything like that. We never had any gym shoes and had to go bare footed. We had nothing. We had to depend on one of the other girls giving us a pencil to use. The other children avoided us. Nobody ever wanted to sit beside us.
31. We hated being singled out. I remember the music teacher going round the class and singling me out. She wanted me to take a solo part. I told her I couldn't do it. In the convent, we all had to be the same and do the same thing. We all played together, we all went to church together and we all ate meals together.
32. There was a Latin teacher at the school who came into the convent to teach us the flute. He used to say, "You're so different here. You're so quick." I knew where I was in the convent, but I never answered a question in his Latin class. The English teacher took a special interest in me when she heard me talk about lighting fires. She used to give me sweets.
33. I remember Mr LKU a maths teacher. He used to go round the class very quickly, asking, "When the signs are the same, what do you do? When the signs are different, what do you do? A plus and a minus equals what?" I never answered. In the convent, we were never asked individual questions except in the catechism lessons. He would slap me on the hands all the time. The other girls used to cry because I was getting slapped so much, but it didn't make any difference.
34. There was no time to do our homework. I used to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning and sit in the toilet, doing my homework. I struggled at grammar school. They couldn't understand why I was so useless. I had to take regular IQ tests at grammar school. They did the same to We would come out top in the IQ tests. We must have been a real mystery to the teachers, but they never made any further investigation as to why we were doing so poorly at school. There was no communication between the school and the convent.



35. There were boys at the grammar school, but we were kept separate from them. We didn't come together until the fourth year. I do remember one boy being brought into our classroom and being strapped on his hands, really hard. The teacher put all his weight behind it. I was appalled. It upset me for ages.
36. When it came to careers, I just thought I was a convent girl. We could never imagine ourselves outside of the convent or see any future. When girls turned fifteen, they were a means to earn money so they were taken out of school. They would come back grubby, untidy and pregnant. I felt so sorry for them. They were better off in the convent. The only lesson I ever had in sex education was from Sister [REDACTED] FAF at the convent when I was about thirteen years old. She told us that we shouldn't wear make-up, we shouldn't reveal our cleavages, we shouldn't wear short skirts. The lesson finished, "Now, remember girls, if there are no bad girls, there will be no bad boys." I put my hand up and asked, "Have boys got no free will?" I was put out the class for that. My question wasn't answered.

*Leisure time*

37. There were swings outside on the grounds, but they were always padlocked up because we'd bang each other with them and jump off them. We could unpick the lock. We used to be very cruel. We would take the legs off spiders and daddy longlegs and wonder why they were still moving when they weren't attached to the body. I told the other children that I knew the answer. In "A Tale of Two Cities", they spoke about strapping the person down on the guillotine or he would walk away afterwards. We had nobody to ask so we had to find everything out for ourselves.
38. People would donate bicycles and rocking horses to the junior section, but they were wired off. We weren't allowed on them. Because there were no toys, we made our own. We were very inventive. When the field lay fallow, we would pick the grass and make houses. The farmer would take them for hay and spoil our houses. We collected daisies and made daisy chains. We spent hours making somebody the bride, but there was never a man in the marriage. We used to play skipping and hopscotch. The nuns never played with us.

39. On the first Sunday of every month, the children who didn't have visitors would be given a book to read in the refectory. Every other Sunday, everybody was given a book to read. The thing is, we got a different book every Sunday so we were never able to finish them. Sister [REDACTED] LKT always allowed me to turn the page for her at music. I was a bit of a favourite of hers. She always chose a special book for me.
40. Every Sunday, provided it wasn't raining, we were taken out for a walk. We walked round Cathcart and to the Pollok estate. I loved the walks. However, the pockets on our coats were sewn up and we had no gloves. It was cruel. Once a year, we got to go out to the cinema. I think the manger let us go for free.
41. Some of the children were feral. They would hit each other and give what we called Chinese nips. Away from the nuns' supervision, we would be out playing on the grounds. The children would shimmy up the pipes, three storeys up, to get balls that had gone into the gutter. They didn't use ladders or ropes. There were 56 steps on the staircase to the dormitories. One person would go on the outside of the bannister and race against the person on the inside. It was terrifying to see. They'd vault over the top of the swings. The children were fearless. However, all the years I was there, not one child had a broken bone.
42. We sang every Sunday, every Wednesday and every Friday at benediction and also at special Masses. We had practice on Saturday, which was led by Sister [REDACTED] LKT. We loved it. We went on a bus to competitions. I think it was called the Glasgow fete. We were always together so we had an added advantage over other choirs. It was judged by a Benedictine monk. On one occasion, we scored 99 out of a hundred. I used to feel sorry for the other choirs. They heard us sing and they knew they didn't have a chance. The certificates we won in competitions were framed and kept on the corridor walls on the way to the church.
43. We had a record player with classical records. We loved it. We were very musical children. We were given flute lessons in the convent. Mr Lavelle would come in from the school. He would say, "You're all very good, I'll need to prepare more lessons." We all practiced a lot because we were all together. We learned on recorders.

44. There was a radio in the convent, but we weren't allowed to turn it up and it was difficult to hear it above the din. We got three days off school for the coronation. Somebody gave us a television for the occasion. I watched it for the whole day. The nuns said the coronation was just like a high Mass. We were allowed to watch television after that. I used to race home from school to watch Heidi.

*Irish and Scottish culture*

45. I feel that we were robbed of our Scottish culture because all of the nuns were Irish. Almost all the songs we learned were Irish, such as Moonlight in Mayo, Castle of Dromore and Old Kildare. We had an autographed picture of De Valera up on the wall, which I thought was wrong. I loved dancing. We all did Irish dancing. We never really learned anything Scottish. We all wanted to be Irish. On St. Patrick's day, Irish children got preferential treatment.
46. One of the nuns in particular would give an Irish girl more sweets. The girl wasn't musical. She couldn't even sing in tune. She was chosen to go out for piano lessons. The rest of us didn't get to do that and I thought that was very unfair. I think our accents were different because of the Irish influence. The only Scottish nun came later on, Mother [REDACTED] LGE [REDACTED]. She also the only nun whose real name was known to us. Her brother, who was a priest, used to come in and sing with us. We always gave a concert for the feast day. She specifically requested Scottish songs. She must have noticed that we were too Irish.

*Religious instruction*

47. Canon Galbraith used to come and visit us with his dog. When I was almost five, he would ask us, "Who made you?" We were taught to shout out, "God made me." I couldn't pronounce my "Gs" and "Ds" properly. He asked me, "Was it a big dod or a little dod?" I just said, "Don't you know?" Whenever he saw me, he would say, "Keep away from her, don't ask her any questions." He couldn't stop laughing.

48. The younger children were given a holy picture to stare at during Mass, to keep them engaged. I used to get so bored, I would learn the Our Father backwards.
49. I remember making my first communion when I was seven. We were dressed up beautifully and sat right at the front of the church. We had a special breakfast in the dining room. We had bacon and eggs and the priest came in and said grace and wished us all well. After that, we went up to the sewing room and got changed into small white dresses. We went into the old men and the old ladies' sitting rooms. We were allowed to run riot all day.
50. Our Lady of Lourdes Church was just across the road from the convent. We only went there once a year to sing the requiem Mass for Remembrance day. Other than that, a priest would come into the convent to celebrate Mass every day. Easter was the biggest feast. We had what was called forty hours. We had to sit there for an hour. The public would come in for that, but we didn't mix with the public.
51. We had two Jewish girls in the convent because of the war. One of them was from Lithuania. They didn't have to learn the catechism. They came to church and sat at the back. The nuns didn't indoctrinate them, which I thought was good.
52. I loved Sister Francis, who looked after me in the junior section. When I moved to the senior section, I used to run up to her after Mass and give her a cuddle. She'd give me sweets. One day, I was playing with somebody at benediction. I ran up to her afterwards and she said, "No, LDB, you were playing in church." After that day, she cut me off and she never spoke to me again.
53. On feast days, the nuns would go into a big jar of sweets. Most children only got a few, but the children who were the favourites were given a big handful. The children who got sweeties would give them to the older girls to curry favour.

*Work*

54. When I was at grammar school, I was in charge of the furnace. I had to go down at 6 o'clock in the morning and light the boiler. I did that every morning. It was hard work. I used to clean it out the night before. I had to go out and get all the coal and make a cinder pad from the ashes before Mass. It took about an hour. We had a lesson at grammar school in how to light a good fire. I wrote about dampers and flues. The English teacher called me over and asked me what sort of fire I was lighting and I said, "A boiler."
55. The senior children were used to work in the laundry during the school holidays. It was a colossal job. [REDACTED] L J X [REDACTED] was in charge of the laundry. She got very cross if we didn't do it right. We had to hang the clothes on huge big horses. We had to starch all the altar garments and then iron the nuns' wimples. We were only little children. We worked in the laundry from 8.30 in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It was a long time standing. We did far too much work. Many of us were underweight. I was the thinnest and smallest in my class at grammar school.
56. In the morning, we made the beds and then we had to sweep and polish the dormitory. In the evening, we did the washing up. At the weekends, we also did polishing. In the summer, all the blankets had to be taken off the beds to be washed. The children did that. We went to the washroom. We used to wheel the blankets along in things we called "bougies". We would jump on top of the blankets and wheel them along. Housemaid's knee was common amongst the children. I think all of us got it at some point. It was very painful.
57. When Mother [REDACTED] L G E [REDACTED] arrived, if she saw children on their knees, scrubbing, she got very angry. She would say, "You're not meant to be doing that." She'd reprimand the adults involved. We still helped out, but we didn't have to wash the floors and the corridors. After she arrived, I think girls came in to do the scrubbing and the laundry.

*Trips / Holidays*

58. We had one trip a year to Seamill in West Kilbride. It was very rocky. We collected mussels there.
59. In the 1950s, we started going to Aberdeen for the holidays. The children at the convent there swapped with the children from Cardonald. Every day, we took sandwiches down to the beach. It was lovely. We were given a wooden thrupenny bit for an ice cream. We all made bits of cloths for purses to keep them in. They got wet and some children lost their coin. We would look for the lost thrupenny bits in the sand for hours, but we never found them.
60. On Sundays, we went to the cathedral in Aberdeen to hear the high Mass. It was the first time in my life I'd heard trebles singing. It was the boys Nazareth House in Aberdeen. I thought it was wonderful and I've never forgotten it.
61. During one of the trips, the nuns told us not to go out too far in the sea in Aberdeen because the water was too rough. These exhibitionist children, as I call them, went out too far and they couldn't swim. [REDACTED] and her sister had to be rescued. It left us all dreadfully worried that night. Years later, when I was living in London, I read in the papers that the children involved were reputed to have drowned and the nuns had got rid of the bodies. It was sheer lies.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

62. I never got any presents all the time that I was in there. In the junior section, we sat at the desk and got a present. We sat and looked at the presents and played with them for part of the day, but they were only temporary. They were taken away to be used again the next year. Nothing was kept. We had nothing personal. Mother [REDACTED] LGE arrived at the convent when I was thirteen. After that, we all got a present at Christmas time.

63. The older girls would decorate their classrooms for Christmas. We would go to midnight Mass. We went to bed and would be woken up, given a bun and sent off to midnight Mass. The doctor, his wife and his children were the only people invited to midnight Mass. Sometimes, older girls came back to the convent for midnight Mass. The seniors had to share beds with their sisters to make room for the visitors. I hated that. After midnight Mass, we went to the first Mass at dawn. It wasn't a punishment. We sat and listened to the music and we loved it. We had a big Christmas dinner with turkey and Christmas pudding.
64. Birthdays weren't celebrated before Mother LGE arrived. I didn't even know when my birthday was until I started at grammar school and I had to bring my birth certificate with me. Some children discovered they had been wrongly named when they had to bring their birth certificates to school. When we went for walks, we picked up hair clips and silver paper. We would collect milk bottle tops in the convent. We put silver paper on and scratched the paper. We would give them to each other as presents. Mother LGE would get a cake for us on our birthdays.

*Visits / Inspections*

65. My father visited infrequently and then it fell away altogether. I used to put my father to the test all the time. I didn't think he should've put us in there. I thought he could've done something differently. When I was in the junior section, he was still visiting. He asked me what I would like him to bring. I told him I wanted 48 pencils. There were 48 children in the junior section and we all needed pencils. He fulfilled it. I'm not sure when he stopped visiting. Then, out of the blue, I was told he had died.
66. The visiting was crazy. It was once a month, on a Sunday afternoon, from 1.30 till 4 o'clock. We all went up to the dining room and sat there. We could see the visitors arriving. Somebody would come up and call the names of the children with visitors. Very few of us had visits. Once, a girl from the grammar school tried to visit me. She never got past the dragon at the desk. The dragon at the desk sat on the ground floor with a box, which I presume was for visitors to put money in when they arrived.

67. There was a Catholic organisation called the Knights of St. Columba. Its members would come and visit the children who didn't get visits. They took us out to the theatre once a year and organised a party for us.
68. When I was twelve, a couple came and took me and my sister out to their home. We went on to a restaurant and the theatre. I was shocked when I saw the wife changing to go out in view of her husband and me and my sister. We were never told their names, we were just taken out. We weren't told that we were being adopted, but I guessed that was what was happening. I felt that I was too old to be adopted and I didn't want to stay with them. We returned to the convent and we never heard anything about it again.
69. We weren't allocated to a social worker. I remember a group of people coming in, who must've been social workers. We were asked to sing a song for them. We sang, "In the prison cell I sit, thinking of you, mother dear, in the dear old happy home so far away." It must've been a military song. We were telling these people we hated this place, but they didn't understand us and nothing was done about it. We didn't speak to them individually. There were too many of us.

### *Healthcare*

70. There was a little boy in the babies who had a prolapsed rectum. He wasn't allowed to scream because it came out. I'd watched [REDACTED] get the muslins out. One day, he was screaming and nobody was around. I got hold of the thing and pushed it back. I was just a baby myself and doing things like that. The nuns and the older girls were over worked.
71. I didn't have a toothbrush until I was thirteen. A dentist used to come in and see those who needed fillings. It was always the children who had visitors and ate sweets. The doctor came in if you were ill. We were very well treated if we were ill. We liked being ill. We went to a special sick room on the middle floor. We had special meals and visitors and lots of books to read. The girls who worked in the sewing room were in charge of the sick bay.



72. We had an outbreak of ring worm at the convent. Everybody was taken into the parlour and examined under an ultraviolet light. Two of the children were taken to hospital and x-rayed. All the hair fell out of their heads. One of the children had dark, straight hair before the radiation. It grew in blond and curly, so we envied the children whose hair fell out. I still worry about what happened to those two children, exposed to the radiation.
73. When we started our periods, we asked each other about it. Nobody else told us what was happening. We used cloths until Sister LGE arrived at the convent. Then things changed and we got normal sanitary towels.

#### *Bed Wetting*

74. The children who wet the bed were the children who came into the convent later on. Goodness knows what had happened to them before they came in. They were given dreadful hard sheets made of calico. It must have been very hard to wash them out. They had to hold up their wet sheets in the morning and the nuns would say, "Wet again." They were sent to wash their sheets. They never got beaten, but they were shamed.
75. I remember a girl asked me to wake her up in the middle of the night. I felt bad because I'd wake her up and she would already be wet. Then she'd have to suffer longer so I thought it was best to ignore her.

#### *Discipline*

76. Discipline just happened. There were no set rules, we just knew. We didn't dare talk when we were eating. We said grace and we got on with it.

#### *Death in the convent*

77. In the junior section, there were girls called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I used to get sent upstairs to keep them company. I was only six years old myself. [REDACTED]

██████████ mother used to visit her and had given her a little sailor doll. We used to play with the doll. ██████████ never had any visitors. She used to say, "I'm afraid to die." I would wheel her cot over to the window and say, "Oh, you're lucky. Look at the sky, it's a lovely day. You'll be up there soon, having a wonderful time." One day she said, "I don't want to die when it's raining." I told her, "That's only the angels having their baths, don't worry about that." We played together for hours.

78. Both girls had tuberculosis meningitis. ██████████ died first and then ██████████ died later. ██████████ had ██████████ It was waking up all the children in the dormitory. She was wheeled out into what they called a cell and candles were placed all around her. She died when she was six years old. Nobody ever died on their own in the convent.
79. The morning after ██████████ and ██████████ we all went to see them in the bathroom where they were laid out. They were both dressed in beautiful white dresses. We were all jealous. We all wanted to die. When we went to see ██████████ ██████████ in the church, I remember an old man, Mr Kelly, going over and kissing her. I thought to myself, "That's the first time she's ever been kissed." None of us ever cried when a child died. We were all so happy for them.
80. When I was in the seniors, there was a girl called ██████████ She had ██████████ ██████████ of the knee joint. She had to consume a lot of milk. I would go up and drink the milk for her. She would let me feel her knee. ██████████ ██████████ It was so sad. When we were in the dormitory, the ambulance came for her. We could see its lights. She said, "I won't see you all again." She died in the hospital. She was seventeen.
81. We went to the funerals of men and women who died in the convent. There were wooden boards in the corner of the dormitory. They smelled the same as coffins. When I was about ten years old, I took paper and stuffed it up my nose and in my ears, go down to sleep and wish that I would die. I was so disturbed, I wanted to die for a long time. Other children did similar things. We didn't want to live. What were

we living for? We didn't have any family and we couldn't see lives for ourselves outside the convent.

*Family*

82. I had never formed a bond with my sister. We were in the same place, but we were never together. I hated her. She always wanted to show off. I was embarrassed by her. I didn't see my brother for nine years. I always knew I had a brother. When I was five years old, Sister Francis helped me to write a letter to him. He never got it. I didn't know where he was.
83. Mother LGE thought it was scandalous that boys and girls were separated. She arranged for brothers to visit. There were loads of us in the big parlour together, meeting brothers for the first time. We had a special tea and cakes. I don't remember anything else, apart from my brother telling me that he was the dux of his school. He was clever. The doctor of the home introduced to Mr [REDACTED], who sort of adopted him at the age of fifteen. He went on to university to study marine engineering.
84. A few months after I entered the convent, my father came to tell me that my mother had died. My sister was too young to understand. He gave me my mother's rosary beads. I was three years old. I was bare footed and went into the play room. I waved the rosary beads around my head. All the little babies were coming over to see what I had. I said, "To get a present, you've got to have a dead mother." We never kept any personal belongings so I've no longer got the rosary beds.
85. Out of the blue, I was told my father had died. I was nine or ten. A lady called Mrs O'Neill came up to the convent to deliver the news. My sister and I were taken to his funeral. We were dressed in black and wearing black hats. We were right at the back of the house, where the body was. The priest called us to the front. There were no tears or anything. All we could hear was people saying, "The poor wee things."
86. When I left the convent, I asked my brother why he wasn't at my father's funeral. He said he was asked, but he didn't want to go. He's still angry with my father.

87. When my father died, Mrs O'Neill gave me a photograph of my mother holding me with my brother at her foot. I no longer have that. We never kept anything. There was nowhere personal to keep anything.

### Abuse at Nazareth House

88. When I was four years old, a baby was crying in the baby section. I must have been breastfed and remembered it. I said to Sister **LKV** "She wants your body." I got a slap across the face for that. She thought I was being cheeky.
89. A woman by the name of **LJX** was in charge of the laundry. **[REDACTED]** She used to hit children. She'd give them a good slap. **[REDACTED]** There was a man **[REDACTED]**, Mr **LHM?** He'd stand and watch her hitting the children and he didn't do anything.
90. We all went out to get our eyes tested. Some of the children got drops in their eyes. Nobody told the nuns that we wouldn't be able to read after getting the drops. A girl was asked to read, but she couldn't. She got slapped on the hands by Sister **LKT** twice.
91. Before one of the Sunday walks, my sister got thoroughly thrashed by Sister **LKT** I was ten and she was eight. I saw it happen, but I didn't know why she was being beaten. She was pulled over the desk and whacked repeatedly. She didn't know what she'd done wrong either. From her head down to her legs, she was black and blue. She had to go on the walk, but she couldn't walk. We had to carry a basket with her in it. People kept saying, "Poor wee thing," but nobody asked what had happened.
92. By this time, we were all going out to school. Every time one of the teachers passed my sister in the aisles, she jumped sky high. The teacher reported it and asked what was wrong with her. She was seen by a doctor and diagnosed with chorea. She was

in the sick bay for nine months and then she got better. Nobody ever asked us what had happened. We all knew it was the beating.

### Leaving Nazareth House

93. When I was sixteen, Mother **LGE** sent me down to London. She took an interest in me and **[REDACTED]**. A lot of the other mother superiors were only interested in the babies, but not Mother **LGE**. We never knew when we were leaving the convent. We never said goodbye. I travelled on the train by myself. I went to a convent school there, Marie Auxiliatrice, for one year. I hadn't got any qualifications in Scotland. In London, I got eight O'levels in one year. The things I'd been taught in the grammar school came back to me. I got on much better than at St. Gerard's because nobody knew me there. I stayed in a lovely hostel in **[REDACTED]**. I was a boarder there. I used to walk along to the school, which was just a short walk away in East End Road. It was a fee paying school, but I didn't have to pay.
94. Mother **LGE** said I was a clever girl. It was the first time in my life anybody had ever said that to me. She asked me what I was going to do. She suggested teaching or nursing. She thought nursing would be best because all the girls training to be nurses would have left home and we'd all be the same. To start training, we had to be seventeen and a half. I was seventeen. Mother **LGE** arranged for me to get into the hospital before the next training course started. I stayed in the hospital and worked for six months, helping out on the wards, and got paid.
95. Mother **LGE** arranged for me to go to a warehouse in Glasgow to get clothes to start me off. She also gave me the address of her sister so I could stay with her during the holidays. She said I could visit her any time. She put me up as a guest at Nazareth House in Kilmarnock just before I got married, as she had left Cardonald by that time. Sister **LGE** was really kind to me.

### Life after being in care

96. I trained to be a nurse at the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow. I applied to work at the Royal Infirmary and the Victoria Hospital, but in those days they didn't take Catholics. When I was training to be a nurse, everybody was the same. We were all in uniform and we were all lost, which was good. Everybody else stayed in the hospital too. I made friends. We all got to know each other and it was good fun. When I left the convent, I considered myself to be no good at anything. I thought I was a convent girl so I was nothing. I didn't realise I was a bit different until I went into nursing. I was always top of the class. Some of the doctors asked why I didn't become a doctor. I was too shy.
97. At nursing college, it was wonderful to be able to go out by myself and to relax in a bath on my own. I used to go out dancing. I used to go to orchestral concerts in Glasgow. I would come in late and share a bed with a friend. I had a friend, [REDACTED] I used to go and see her father. He suffered from manic depression. When he was twelve years old, he walked bare footed from London to Glasgow, sleeping under the hedgerows. He knew I came from the convent so I could talk to him about it. He'd had a dreadfully hard life himself so he was wonderfully sympathetic.
98. After I finished my nursing college, I went on holiday to Arbroath with my friend, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] asked me out and his friend, [REDACTED] asked [REDACTED] out. We both ended up getting married. [REDACTED] and I got married two years later. He was a scientist based in London, so I moved there. My husband's mother was one of fourteen children. She was marvellous. She taught me everything about running a home. When I came from work, she used to have the cooking on for me. She had such a big family. She loved to show me off to her sisters and brothers.
99. I did general nursing and midwifery. I worked as a private nurse in London for a while and nursed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I didn't know they were famous. [REDACTED] suggested I would get more if I changed from nursing to the civil service. I worked at the [REDACTED] which was for supplementary benefit. I dealt with unmarried mothers and deserted wives.

100. I then got transferred to the Department of Health and worked for the World Health Organisation. I dealt with people overseas and tried to find placements for them. I got to know a lot of university professors.
101. My son was born on [REDACTED] 1966 and my mother in law died suddenly on [REDACTED] 1966. I was still able to go to work because my husband's aunt helped with childcare. I also looked after her brother, my father in law.
102. I was married to [REDACTED] for 34 years until he died. He'd had diphtheria as a little boy. He wasn't allowed any toys and he could only see his parents through the glass. He had a dread of hospitals ever since. When he became ill, I knew he didn't want to go to hospital, so I nursed him at home. He knew he was dying even before he was diagnosed with cancer of the lung. On [REDACTED] he told me he wouldn't be around for Christmas. He died at home on [REDACTED] twenty years ago.
103. My brother has Parkinson's Disease and he wanted me in Scotland. We missed our childhoods together so we're learning about each now. I always say to him we're having our second childhoods. I moved to [REDACTED] a year ago. I've been very lucky and I've had a good life.

### **Impact**

104. Because I had never encountered boys when I was growing up, I felt inferior when I left Nazareth House. I was always in the background and I never asked a question. That changed when I went to London and when I started doing my nursing and I gained in confidence.
105. When I left the convent, I was completely inadequate for independent living. I could make an urn of tea but not a cup of tea. I could light a furnace but not a home fire. I could scrub floors and kitchens, but I couldn't cook. I couldn't even use a bread knife to cut bread and I didn't know how to buy meat. The only thing I could cook was scrambled egg, which I learned in the hospital. I had never used an iron. We should

have been supported in small groups. Everything was mass produced and there was no individuality. I had to be taught everything by my mother in law, other than scrubbing and cleaning.

106. I never spoke about my childhood when I left Nazareth House. I was so ashamed of it. My brother and sister were the same. It wasn't so much what happened to us, it was the reaction of the public. Every time they saw us, they would say, "The poor wee things." Hearing nothing but that was damaging to a child. We were all very damaged children. I consider my childhood to be a concealed childhood, a missed childhood.
107. Growing up in Nazareth House made me very independent. I've travelled all over the world. It's made me a free spirit. I love isolation and I love to be alone. I think it's because I was always in a crowd in Nazareth House. I went to Japan, India, Taiwan and China on my own. I love music and I love books that were denied to me when I was younger. I've got no regard for money. I'm also frank with people and tell them what I think of them. I think religion has been a main stay in my life. For a number of years, I didn't bother with it. I went back to it and now I don't know what I'd do without it.
108. At work, I was given the difficult clients to deal with. People used to tell me things that they wouldn't tell anybody else. I was good at my job. The headquarters said I put up more cases than the whole of the region. People used to have big rows with clients at work. They'd be shouting and bawling. I'd go out and speak to the client and he or she would tell me everything. People would ask me how I did it. I'd say, "I just speak to them quietly and treat them as human beings." I think I learned to be tolerant of people at Nazareth House. I've never had any problem making friends.
109. I think the care of the elderly people in Nazareth House had a big impact on me. We had to sing, dance and help them along a lot. I like to help people a lot. I used to help a lot of Jewish people in Finchley. I find it hard to say no when people are in need.



110. There was a young mother in my parish who [REDACTED] when she had her second baby. She wasn't able to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The father couldn't cope with two young children and a mother who was very ill and he left. The next we heard, the children were going to be taken from their mother and adopted. I didn't think it was right, just because the mother was disabled. I'm a trustee for a charity, [REDACTED] The patron of the charity is a judge. She was a QC at the time. I asked her if she could do something because the authorities wanted to take the children into care. She took the case on and won. Our parish got a group together who could always be with the mother. We would take the children for weekdays. At the weekend and in the school holidays, the children would go home. I used to do Saturdays. It lasted for twelve years. We found out that all the parishioners who volunteered to help had been in a home at some point.
111. We used to romanticise about our families in the convent. We would wonder what our father or mother was and imagine a happier ending. I know absolutely nothing about my mother. Later, Mother [REDACTED] LGE told me that my father was a clever man. My sister got in touch with my father's siblings later on in life. They said that they didn't know my father had been married. I wasn't interested in meeting them. I think it's sad that I know nothing about my mother. I must have some relatives. When I was doing nursing, there was a girl by the name of [REDACTED] which was my maternal grandmother's name. People used to say that we looked alike. I often wondered if we might be related.
112. When I was nursing, people used to ask whether I was going home to parents. I was too ashamed to tell people that I didn't have any. When I got married, I thought that would change. However, I still felt the absence of grandparents for my son. I spent much of my life looking for relatives because I was never given any information about my mother's family.
113. I never had a good relationship with my sister. She kept in touch, but even as an adult she made an exhibition of herself. She never told her husband or her two children what happened to her in care. She was so hard on her children. She'd had

no mothering herself. I didn't see my brother for such a long time. Our relationship didn't develop for many years. My brother lives in [REDACTED] now. He has Parkinson's Disease, which is why I moved from London to [REDACTED]. He hates my father for what he did. He feels he is to blame, as he was an intelligent man. I also blame our other relatives. Why didn't they come to our aid?

114. I've never been back to Nazareth House since leaving. I think that's why I've been successful. I put it out of my mind. My sister kept going back and she never got over it. People used to say I had original answers to so many things and they wondered where I had been in my life. Because of that, I wrote about the regime in Nazareth House some time ago. A relative thought I had an interesting story to tell. I was then asked to participate in a TV programme in the 1960s. They wanted to take me back to Nazareth House, but I didn't want to go back there and I refused to do it.
115. My son once told me he was lucky because he had a wonderful childhood. I was too soft, but he was happy and he got to do what he wanted. Joy was absent from my childhood. I would describe it as a non-childhood.

### **Records**

116. I never had any access to my records. I had one picture of my mother with me and my brother, but it was lost. I wish we'd been told more about our family history in the convent. They must have known something. I did try to find more information out about my mother, but I had so little information that it was impossible. I know she died in the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, but I don't know the actual date of her death. I'm not even sure of the year. I think it was 1940 or 1941. I even had different information about the cause of her death than my brother. My father told me that she had cancer of the throat, exacerbated by giving birth to my sister. My brother thinks she died in child birth.

**Final thoughts**

- 117. I want to emphasise the hardship these nuns put up with. They helped hundreds and hundreds of children and very few were beaten. Everybody is talking about the abuse that was administered. I'd like to know what the child was doing before, to raise the heckles of the nun. I know that beating a child is not the answer, but it was a different era.
- 118. Sister [REDACTED] LKT was dreadfully cruel, but she was a brilliant musician and a brilliant teacher. She was at the convent for nineteen years. When she left, we were all heartbroken. She gave us continuity. We were fed well, we had a routine and we knew the people looking after us. I feel that never comes out.
- 119. I think children should be kept out of institutions. Home is the best place for them. It's not just the people running homes, it's the staff working in them as well. Human nature being what it is, there will always be corruption. I am now of the view that no matter how bad the family is, it's better for the child to have a family. I don't think any children should be taken into care at all. You can't take hundreds of children in and be mother to them all and love them all.
- 120. I feel that abuse in schools should also be investigated. I was beaten at the grammar school, but I was never beaten in the convent. The nuns were overworked. They had us from 5 o'clock in the morning till 9 o'clock at night, except for prayer time. It would drive anyone mad.
- 121. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed. [REDACTED] LDB .....

Dated..... 16 / 2 / 18' .....