

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

BCM

Support person present: Yes

1. My full name is BCM My date of birth is 1953. My contact details are known to the Inquiry. I was known as BCM when I was in care, after my natural father, He died when I was in care and I my mother later gave us the surname after her real husband

2. I have two older half-brothers, and and two older brothers from the relationships between my mum and dad. is two years older than me, is a year older, and they both went into care at the same time as me.

Life before going into care

3. We grew up poor, in Hillend, Edinburgh and I remember my father had issues with alcohol. We lived in a with no electricity when I was born. I have some recollection of being in care around the age of three or four, certainly when I was very small, but it isn't clear.

4. I just remember a beach and cot beds and my brothers being with me. That wasn't a holiday, we couldn't afford one, so it could have been a care home somewhere, I'm not sure.

5. I know we moved from Hillend to Dalry in Edinburgh which is where I first went to school. I remember vividly that people would leave belongings in the

street, before they went off on their boats, and wondering what would be left for us to play with. I also remember having lots of addresses and that I went to loads of schools.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

6.

7.

8.

Leaving Redhall Children's Home

9. We did go back to the family home for a short time. Whatever happened then happened, and I have a distinct memory of us children being herded away like cattle. I remember my mum asking the social work if she could not even have the youngest one and they said no. That was at a hearing in Linlithgow.

10. We did go back to Redhall for a very short time but then Miss Talbot came to us. She was a Children's Officer, social work of the time, and worked in Edinburgh. She took

me and my two brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] away on a train. It was [REDACTED] 1964 and it was a massive long train ride and I was crying. We went to Inverness, then to Elgin and then to Cragiellachie where we got off. Even though there was a train station proper in Aberlour we were then picked up in a car and taken to Aberlour Orphanage.

Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour

General

11. Aberlour Orphanage was an old Victorian style building with huge dormitories and a big dining room come day room. There were lots of houses within the main building. I was in the west wing which comprised of maybe five houses. There was also an east wing which contained the hospital and school. The rooms within the wings were interlinked with corridors but there was no link between each wing. There would have been about 200 kids in those wings.
12. [REDACTED] BGF [REDACTED] was a very cold, Dickensian draconian man, he was tall and blunt and really wanted nothing to do with the children. He would [REDACTED] tell us all what horrible people we were.
13. The place had its own school, its own farm and its own church, so you were pretty well isolated. The villagers certainly didn't want to know anything about you, other than those that may have been employed in the orphanage. There were joiners and gardeners, people like that, and some of them stayed on the property.
14. I have read a report by the now Chief Executive of the Aberlour Trust where she said the house parents didn't live on the property, but that was complete nonsense because they did. All the house parents I had lived on the property with the children. The system was that when the house parents had a night off, teachers would come from the orphanage school and look after you until they came back.

15. The first house we stayed in was Gordon House with Mr and Mrs **BGH/BGI** When they left **BBP/BGZ** replaced them. I was later transferred to another house, Mount Steven House, with my brother , which was after my brother left. The house parents at that house were **BGJ** and **BGG** **BGG** everybody knew him as **BGG**
16. **BBP/BGZ** were very strict and very stern. They weren't vicious, they might find fault with stuff but there was nothing wrong with them. They did lack affection but I believe they went on to run an approved school. My problems were all with Mr and Mrs **BGH/BGI** and **BGJ** and **BGG**
17. There were about three hundred kids but only two of them were actually orphans, the rest were all in care. There were some real poor souls in the place. Some were academically challenged and some were psychologically troubled. There were many special needs children.

Routine at Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour

First day

18. When we arrived and myself were put straight into the infirmary there, it was like an isolation block. I laughed at that later, as it was like keeping horses and sticking a new one in a field for a while on its own.
19. We got checked for lice and this woman, the matron, examined us. I remember she was rummaging about in our ears with a matchstick. I discovered later that she wasn't really a nurse.
20. We had come straight from Redhall and I was the youngest at ten. We were 'chavs' or the equivalent of that at that time. We had Beatles haircuts, Winkle Picker shoes and blue jeans. I remember looking out the window and seeing these guys with

shorts on and big hairy legs pushing the food trolley's and not realising I'd be living with them in a couple of days.

21. We stayed the weekend in the infirmary and then we were sent to our house. We were frightened we were all going to be separated but we were kept together. We went to Gordon House and Mr and Mrs [BGH/BGI] were our house parents.
22. It's difficult to say what age they were but I would have said perhaps in their thirties when I was there. Mr [BGH] was very heavy set, very swarthy and greasy and had a moustache. Mrs [BGI] was very matron like and seemed older, they were from the [REDACTED] area. They were never meant to be working with children.
23. I remember being suitably shorn and given one change of clothing at Aberlour. They kitted us out and then billed the City of Edinburgh.
24. When me and my brothers first arrived and went into Gordon House, it was boys only in the house. The ages were between about ten and fourteen. Apparently, to be more forward thinking the Aberlour Trust had this business model that would split the orphanage up and have smaller houses that would be mixed.
25. So they practised this with Gordon House and it became a mixed house which had the [BGH/BGI] in their element. The first draft was about fifteen girls that came to the house, they were working towards a 50/50 mix and the intake was for younger kids. It was so much better, like a whole new experience from then on and I loved that.

Mornings and bedtime

26. The dormitories had a corridor up the middle with about twenty beds on either side. There was a small space at the side of the bed and you were responsible for keeping that area tidy. You were responsible for bumping that area every day. Bumping was waxing and cleaning the floor with a big block on a pole with a cloth on it. At the weekend the whole house was bumpered. All the floors were polished and shined up.

27. There were bathrooms at one end of the dormitory and the house parents' bedroom was at the other end. There were plaques above the beds saying who it had been bequeathed by. We had to shine the plaques and keep them clean.
28. You were expected to be in bed and asleep by nine o'clock. The times were staggered between older and younger boys when I first went in to Aberlour but that changed when the girls came in and things became more mixed up. After that bed time was the same for everyone.
29. You would get up at half past seven when the assistant house parent came in and pulled the covers off you. Then you went through to the bathroom and washed yourself as quickly as possible. There were only about eight wash basins.
30. Then you got dressed and made your bed for the inspections. They had a tool they used to measure the hospital corners on your bed and woe betide you if wasn't done right as your bed was stripped and you had to make it up again. Once you had passed that test then you went down for breakfast in the dining room.
31. After breakfast it was back to the dormitory and those that hadn't shined their shoes the night before did that. Then we went off to school.

Food

32. You could never have said there anything wrong with the food in the slightest. We were fed like kings. You could eat as much as you wanted and we would always work or walk it off.
33. At breakfast we got cereal or porridge and then a fry up and you could have rolls or butteries. There was tea and a lot of the boys would even go up and get extras.

34. At lunch we had soup, a main course and a pudding. Tea time was five o'clock and we had supper every night before bed, about half past seven. Supper was a cup of cocoa or tea and a rock bun.

Washing / bathing

35. The baths were at one end of the dormitory and we were bathed about once a week. There were bath nights for different groups, we weren't all bathed on the same night. Mrs [BGI] took the boys and Mr [BGH] took the girls. That is what I would describe now as the [BGH/BGI] grooming period. Bearing in mind that no children stayed at Aberlour beyond their fifteenth birthday, they were all put out when they were fifteen.

Clothing / uniform

36. We always wore our shined shoes and we had two day shirts that we wore during the week for school. On a Sunday you wore a white shirt with your kilt. Your kilt hung in a room at the back.
37. All our clothes were labelled with our names on them. The laundry was taken away in hampers and we all changed our clothes at the same time. We kept our clothes in wee lockers, which had to be kept organised and tidy, as we sometimes had inspections.
38. If everything wasn't absolutely pristine then your locker was picked up and upended on to the floor. This was them preparing you for the future, making you all neat and tidy, which just doesn't happen in real life.
39. I didn't have many possessions at all, just my clothes, my toilet bag and maybe my pyjamas. My dressing gown hung at the side of the bed.

School, work and religion

40. School started about half past eight, quarter to nine. I remember standing in the school room and saying prayers every day before school started.
41. We went home at lunch time, but that was literally next door, you went out one door and in another. Then back to school until about half past three, when school came out.
42. Between four and five o'clock, which was tea time, we worked for an hour. You could be in the locker room cleaning everybody's shoes or cleaning baths. There were various jobs and it was a very strict regime. It was on a rota and every week your job changed.
43. When Mr and Mrs **BGH/BGI** were our house parents, they just didn't care if you had done your job or not. It was up to the assistant house parents to come and check you'd done it. The pressure was on them to make sure things were done properly and on time.
44. When Mr and **BBP/BGZ** were our house parents, in the same house, it was entirely different, because they did care. I suppose it was all down to personality.
45. In primary school we had one teacher per class and in secondary, which was just across the playground, we had things like metalwork and woodwork. There was a basic timetable and I suppose they were preparing you for life in a factory or manual work. They didn't think they were going to have anybody that was going to work in an office.
46. The armed services was a favourite as well, they used to come once a year. They would put a white screen up and show a film.
47. The school was within the grounds of the orphanage and I loved the school. I remember on our first day at school we were taken to see the headmaster, Tommy Robertson. Tommy was a lovely man, a caring character and he spoke to us and told us to keep our heads down and be good.

48. Then we were all taken into a music class, it was a Mr **BGK** that was the teacher and this was the shape of things to come. He said we were late, we said we'd been with the headmaster, and he then gave us the belt for being late for his class.
49. I excelled in school, I was quite clever, I passed my Eleven Plus and I was dux of the primary school. I was then moved out the orphanage school and went to Aberlour High School in the village. I liked the village school, it was great and I made some really good friends there, that I still have today.
50. The headmaster was Mr Wood, who was very encouraging and gave you as much help as he possibly could. The deputy head was Neil Gillies, who was very strict. It was entirely different from the orphanage school.
51. I remember my P7 teacher, Mrs Gordon, was so pleased that I'd passed my Eleven Plus. She brought me on and I suppose could take some personal credit. I used to go and visit her at weekends and she would make me a cup of tea or lemonade and it was just great, it was so civilized. Don't get me wrong I also played with the other kids and we would go up the hills and play Japs and Commandos, it was brilliant growing up with other children. It was just dreadful with some of the house parents, that was the problem.
52. At the end of the day, that is what the place is judged on. Children relate to us because of what we do for them and with them, that's what counts the most and that's what shapes them. With the **BGH/BGI** there was no expectation, they were marking time and didn't care.
53. Saturday morning you got an extra half hour in bed then when you got up you went downstairs and you had your jobs to do. Jobs started at nine and finished at twelve.
54. We polished the floors, in maybe two teams, upstairs and downstairs. Instead of the electric things they use nowadays we had to bumper clean the floors. Sometimes

you would get a smaller child to sit on the bumper which would give you a quicker, easier shine.

55. We also did the bathrooms, the windows and all the jobs we didn't have time to do during the week. At twelve we had lunch and at one our pocket money was handed out. It was all logged in a book and I used to save mine. Peter Walker was in charge of that as assistant house parent.
56. It was really the Episcopalian church that had Aberlour and directed the funding. I am an Episcopalian because every child was baptised in the Episcopalian faith. I was in the choir, if you could sing you were in the choir, and if you could sing well you were farmed out. Aberlour actually got paid for the choir singing at events.
57. On Sunday the church service started at eleven o'clock. If you were in the choir you were in half an hour early. If you were ringing the bells you were ten minutes early.



58. After the church sermon, we would be out singing, while people left the church then we would go back for lunch. There was no free leisure time on Sunday but after lunch we always went on our walk. I think it was about a ten mile walk, it was like the Burma railway, you walked until you dropped in all weathers.
59. Then we had Sunday dinner, which was never great, for some reason, then we went back to church again. That was from half past six until half past seven and then we had supper before we went to bed.

Holidays and leisure

60. Aberlour orphanage had its own holiday villa at Hopeman, on the Moray coast, near Buckie. We went for a week or a fortnight and it was great. We also went to Rothesay once. It was Peter Walker or Miss Donaldson that took us. That was the only trips I ever went on.

61. There was some leisure time and then we would get out to play in the big field or in the woods. There was a level of supervision, Mr BGL, the gym teacher from the school, would be there taking football practice but it was a massive area and under today's health and safety climate it wouldn't have been acceptable.
62. At the orphanage they worked on the principle that if you were young and well fed the best way to keep you quiet was to exercise you, so they absolutely encouraged us to take part in sports. The orphanage had a good football team and were prolific cup winners probably because we had so much exercise.
63. We went for walks every day, rain, hail or shine. Then when we came in and went to the day room. There was a TV and bureau in there, we would play with broken toys and things like Lego.
64. Aberlour also worked on the principle that if you were at the village school you did what they did, so I was fortunate by being at the school and I got to go to the swimming baths in Elgin and things like that.
65. We had no way of entertaining ourselves in the dormitory at night. There were no books or other materials, you simply went to bed to sleep. Some people did smuggle in torches but they would be taken off them.

Birthdays and Christmas

66. When it was your birthday you went to see Mrs [REDACTED] in room nineteen. She was a lovely woman, she kept a note of all the birthdays in a ledger and you would get a note from her a couple of days before your birthday to say you were to go and see her on your birthday. She would have all these donated toys there and you would get to pick a toy. There was no other acknowledgement for our birthdays, no cake or cards.

67. At Christmas there was a tree in the big hall but I don't remember any decorations. You did get a present, which would be from your social worker if it wasn't from your parents. We did all sit down in the house to a Christmas meal as well and I don't want to berate that because I feel the house parents did the best they could. We all had the same Christmas depending on the house you were in.

Visits / Inspections / Review of detention

68. I have records that go on and on about my father coming up to visit us at Aberlour and that he was drunk and abusive. There was no mention of what he was being abusive about. He visited us twice, late at night and I'm sure it was by arrangement. All visiting had to be by arrangement or they wouldn't get to see you.

69. My mother wrote to Mr BGF at the home asking to visit us but said she could only manage visits from Tuesday to Thursday. She worked in a hotel and couldn't get time off at the weekends. Visiting was strictly on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon at the orphanage, and it would have been a round trip of three hundred odd miles for only a couple of hours visit at the weekend. Very few parents visited because of the distance and my mother only managed to visit once.

70. My records show many visits to Aberlour from Miss Talbot, my children's officer, but they weren't to see me. She would have had many other children to deal with at the time so perhaps that's why her visits are recorded but I didn't see her as many times as it states on those records.

71. The only visit I remember from Miss Talbot was when I spoke to her about Mrs BGI I don't recall any official inspections at the home but I do remember a school inspector coming round.

72. The school inspector would stand in front of the class and the teacher was behind him. He would ask us questions and the teacher would be writing the answers on the board behind him. That's not a word of a lie, and that was because the school had to pass as well.

73. I do remember they used to have bus parties of people that would visit the orphanage. We would be lined up and these complete strangers would come in and stare at us. I thought it was for adoption. My brother [REDACTED] used to get locked up in the gym when they came because he would make a fuss. I later found out that the orphanage got donations from these people so it was purely commerce.

Healthcare

74. If you were sick, or perhaps had something wrong with your stomach, you would be taken to the infirmary at the orphanage. I had the flu and a respiratory infection and there's reference to that in the records I got from the Aberlour Trust.
75. The doctor always came to see you at Aberlour, you never went to the doctor. I did, they took me to the village doctor but there is no record of that anywhere. I've asked for those records. All I seem to have is a record of an annual check-up.
76. I do have a dental card. I never saw a dentist when I was in Aberlour Orphanage but I did when I was in Keith and Dunfermline.

Running away

77. The orphanage didn't need to chase you or come looking for you if you ran away. You could only go towards Elgin, Keith or up towards Granton-on-Spey. Unless you physically climbed the hills there was nowhere else to go. So they simply telephoned the police stations in those areas and made them aware of any absconders.
78. After I was beaten by [REDACTED] BGG [REDACTED] my brother [REDACTED] and I ran away. We made plans and we had a tent and were going to take our blankets from our bed. It was November and it was freezing but we ran away. We got to Dufftown and skived into the cinema where we slept under the seats. The cleaner got us and took us to the police.

79. The policeman was a lovely man and his wife made us beans on toast. He asked us why we were running away and I told him it was because I was frightened and that I'd been beaten up.
80. He took us back to the orphanage in his car and Mr [REDACTED] BGF [REDACTED] was there, in his office. The policeman said to Mr [REDACTED] BGF [REDACTED] that he should listen to what me and my brother had to say but he wasn't interested. We had ran away because of what had happened to us there and he just put us straight back in to it. A few months later we were moved to Keith.

Bedwetting

81. When I was in Mount Steven House there was a boy, [REDACTED] who used to wet the bed. [REDACTED] BGJ [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] BGG [REDACTED] used to make him stand at the dormitory door wrapped in his wet sheets. Then we all had to file past him and the poor soul would be standing there greeting his head off.
82. Years later my wife [REDACTED] and I were in a garage in Edinburgh and this guy who was behind the till asked me if I was [REDACTED] I recognised him as [REDACTED] and introduced him to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] then went off to get something and [REDACTED] asked me not to say anything about him wetting the bed. I thought it was just so dreadful, that a grown man was still carrying that with him.
83. In fairness, we were allowed to go to the toilet through the night but I don't remember anybody really needing to go.

Discipline

84. Discipline was directly down to your house parents. However, I was [REDACTED] and did experience discipline from Mr [REDACTED] BGK [REDACTED] the music teacher. I would sing at church twice on Sunday and on Monday I had choir practice. It did depend on what was due to happen, for example, if we were going to Inverness Cathedral for baptisms, we might have additional choir practice.

85. Mr **BGK** would play the organ and repeat the notes over and over and if I didn't get the pitch of the note spot on he would strike me across the hands or shoulders with a wooden baton, until I got it right. I suppose he would call it incentive.
86. Most of the teachers were very fair but some were beltors. Mr **BGK** and **BGM** were beltors and would use the strap. It was allowed but you knew if you were in their class and displeased them you were going to get belted.
87. Mr **BGM** once belted the entire science class because we were laughing at a bull and some cows getting up to their antics in a field outside the classroom.
88. I don't think there was any recording of the punishments that were given to any of the boys.

Abuse at Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour

89. As I have said, our first house parents at Gordon House were Mr and Mrs **BGH/BGI**. They were paedophiles of the highest order, utter paedophiles. I am absolutely convinced that if other people are coming forward, and they shared the same house as I did, they will say the same things about the **BGH/BGI**.
90. At times it was like watching 'Pavlov's dogs' you could actually see Mrs **BGI** physically salivate. One of the boys had a particular trick he would use if he wanted to get on Mrs **BGI** good side. It was like a treat to her. who we called used to make himself erect and walk past her with his towel hanging from himself with his hands on his head. Everybody laughed and she thought it was marvellous. We knew something was so wrong with all that. I thought he was going to get hammered but quite the contrary, he got rewarded. It wasn't about reward though, he was just having fun in front of the other boys and she was just an old pervert.

91. Mr [BGH] would also do things with his feet under the girls skirts while they were sitting watching TV, or sit with the girls on his knee for some time and it was absolutely obvious to anybody what was going on.
92. I remember very shortly after I had gone into the orphanage Mrs [BGI] showed me the system for towelling yourself dry after a bath. I was about ten years old and in those days had no real control over myself which used to amuse her. She was intentionally rubbing my privates dry with the towel and that happened on many occasions.
93. She would also come on her nightly visits. She would come into the dormitory, put her hands under my bed covers and call me her big little boy.
94. It got to the stage where I didn't sleep, I was afraid she was going to come in and petrify me. There was about thirty of forty kids in that dormitory and my bed was conveniently put beside the door. That went on nearly every week for up to about a year, it seemed like forever.
95. Mrs [BGI] did some strange things, she used to say things to all the kids in the house, things like "you love me, you all love me don't you?" She would make us buy her wee chocolate bars with our pocket money. She would put herself in such a position with a child that the child would owe her. Then she would sexually molest that child. Looking back, now that I'm older, it was like a game of cat and mouse to her.
96. Mr and Mrs [BGH/BGI] virtually disappeared overnight, we heard some rumblings that he was going back to run his old [] business but reading between the lines now, they left under a cloud and, personally, I think they were fired. I can't remember how soon that was after I reported them.
97. There was also a rumour that Mr [BGH] got one of the girls pregnant. I do know he was having a carry on with [BCO] who was a lovely young girl. She was desperate to see her mother and that was the way the [BGH/BGI] did things. He

would promise a visit for BCO with her mother to get something back in return. I was in the same house as BCO and she never had that visit.

98. The BGH/BGI returned to Aberlour village sometime later. They drove up to a group of us while we were out walking. It was the first time I had ever really heard children being abusive to adults. They pulled up beside us and some of the older boys were really abusive towards them.
99. There was a swimming pool at the school. I didn't like swimming and I couldn't swim, I'd never been in a swimming pool, but I was only ten or eleven. On our first day swimming, the gym teacher, Mr BGL lined me and my brothers up at the deep end of the pool. He asked if we could swim and we said we couldn't. Then he kicked all three of us straight into the pool. I remember that like yesterday.
100. There was also this game called British Bulldogs, which isn't particular to the orphanage but I do think is particular to residential homes. You have to run as a group past other boys with a ball, touch a wall then run back again. It's basically an excuse to settle old scores but I was just a child. Anything goes to stop you running past and some of the older boys would do anything to physically stop you. That was supervised by Mr BGL and there was always fighting. He did nothing, he was a sadist.
101. I mentioned that my brother [REDACTED] and I were moved from Gordon's House to Mount Steven House and the house parents there were BGJ and BGG
BGG
102. BGJ was in his early thirties, I think he'd been [REDACTED] in Aberdeen. [REDACTED] told me that, and he did always wear black trousers and shiny black shoes.
103. [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] who was a friend of mine at the orphanage and still is to this day. He told me that before I first spoke to the Inquiry.

104. [REDACTED] BGG [REDACTED] was an old man, he had problems with his sight and wore bottle stick glasses. He came from the [REDACTED] area, he was a bachelor and just a bitter old man. He had no empathy with anybody.
105. [REDACTED] BGJ [REDACTED] thing was to take you down to the baths and if he had the slightest excuse he'd make you drop your trousers and underwear and have you bend over the bath and place the palms of your hands on the base of the bath. Then he would beat your bare backside with this table tennis bat, with no rubber on it. At the same time he would make these utterances, and I'm being perfectly serious, they were all from the bible. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
106. [REDACTED] BGG [REDACTED] used to take you for bath time and after your bath he used to bend you over and look at your privates. He also used to carry a spoon in his pocket, and he would take the spoon out and put it under your towel. He would use the spoon as a mirror to look at the boys private parts. He would sit and laboriously shine up that spoon.
107. When I was about fourteen, towards the end of my stay at the orphanage, a boy, [REDACTED] came in from a weekend when he'd been out preparing for freedom. That's what we called it when you were getting ready to leave. It must have been a Sunday night and he came back in with a stink bomb. He threw it against the wall and of course that caused great hilarity amongst all the boys. There was about thirty of us, so everyone was laughing and making a noise.
108. Well [REDACTED] BGG [REDACTED] took us all out into the corridor and lined us up. He wanted to know who the offender was. He was walking up and down peering into all the boys faces. He had this extremely guttural voice and he was peering over his thick black glasses, asking boys if they'd done it. I've had this kind of nervous reaction all my life, that makes me laugh and I started to snigger.

109. BGG saw me sniggering and he punched me in the face, he hit me so hard that I went straight through the doors behind me. Then he kicked me and other boys started jumping on him. My brother [REDACTED] was standing right next to me.
110. My face was all swollen and up like a balloon and I was taken to the infirmary. The matron that worked there looked after me. There are absolutely no records of that anywhere in the documents I've received from the Aberlour Trust. That was the hardest I've been hit in my entire life.
111. I remember how BGJ told us our father had died, it was at a mealtime and my brother and I were queuing up for food. The potatoes were being ladled out and he said something like "your father died this morning, next!" and that was it.
112. I have documentation that refers to us all being counselled by the children's unit after our fathers death, which was absolute nonsense. That department didn't even exist. We took it badly because they were so utterly cold about it.

Reporting of abuse at Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour

113. There were people in the orphanage who were really good to you. Peter Walker, who was an assistant house parent, I kept in touch with him, and my wife, [REDACTED] also got to know him over the years. Peter ended up very senior in the social work.
114. I spoke to Peter Walker about the sexual abuse from Mrs BGI I also spoke to Mr Leslie but quite simply, they didn't believe me and nothing was done. I was so surprised by that as I was a clever boy and did well at school. Then for some mysterious reason I was taken to see a doctor.
115. I quite clearly remember it was Mr BGZ who took me to see the doctor in the village, so it was definitely after the BGH/BGI had left. The doctor asked me if I knew why I was there and I said yes, thinking it was going to be about the abuse. He then said it was because I couldn't sleep and he gave me some arithmetic questions which I

answered. He said there was nothing wrong with my mind but I couldn't understand what was going on. I will always remember he told me that Winston Churchill never needed much sleep and that he coped well.

116. I was given Phenobarbitone, which they changed later to Mogadon sleeping tablets but I never knew why. I couldn't sleep at night but only because of these thoughts about Mrs [BGI] I think they saw me as a bit of a problem because I complained and they didn't particularly like that.
117. The most perplexing question I ask myself is why was nothing done other than placing me on such heavy medication, after I told them about the abuse.
118. I was given a prescription and Mr [BGZ] then told me to take these tablets. I asked what they were for and his exact words to me were "this will shut you up". I took the tablets and asked if I could change the position of my bed back beside my brother. I was told no as I was under observations. I was always given that medication under supervision, there was no way they were going to let me miss that.
119. Looking back and trying to make sense of it, it was as though they refused to acknowledge the fact that I'd made a complaint and that I never existed.
120. I also told Miss Talbot, our children's officer about the abuse from Mrs [BGI] and I told my brother [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was quite rebellious and tough and he created a lot of fuss. That settled down once [BBP/BGZ] arrived as they were different from the [BGH/BGI]
121. There were assistant house parents at all the houses and you could clearly see they were at odds with what was going on. You just knew they weren't in agreement. I also saw that in Peter Walker. When I spoke to him about Mrs [BGI] he did tell me that I needed to speak to somebody.

122. The **BGH/BGI** were discussed between the children, there was a general understanding between us all. **BCO** told me, and I knew what was going on with her, then she got taken away.

Leaving Aberlour Orphanage, Aberlour

123. I got the beating from **BGG** in November 1966 and then I went to Keith in **1967**. My brother **1967** had left in **1967** and that's how I remember that.

Aberlour Children's Home, Quarry Hill, Keith

General

124. I loved it at Keith. I was only there for about six months but I went to the academy in Keith and loved it. When I first went they didn't have a house parent and **BGN** **BGN** was there, she came from Aberlour Orphanage. To start with she did have trouble getting her head round being in a smaller unit, there were only eight of us, but I initially seemed to get along fine with her there.
125. **BGN** was permanently employed by the Aberlour Trust but was used to fill in at different houses like locum doctor I suppose.
126. Then it was Ken and Rhona Nicholson. The 'look after you' model then was that the woman would be the principle carer and would have an assistant and the husband would be working elsewhere but still have some say in the caring.

I loved the Nicholsons and we were friends with them until they died. **1967** **1967** It was like night and day the difference between Keith and the orphanage at Elgin.

Aberlour Children's Home, Bellyeoman, Dunfermline*General*

127. Ken moved on to another job and they left and [REDACTED] BGN [REDACTED] who had previously been at Aberlour returned to back fill for a while. She then started to not like me for some reason and used to say I was above my station in life. I think that was purely because I liked school and I enjoyed people telling me I was doing well. She wrote diary entries saying I complained about everything even the food and that I beat up other children at Dunfermline. That was rubbish as I had a wonderful relationship with all the kids in that house.
128. In [REDACTED] 1967 I went to Dunfermline. I travelled down with the Nicholsons.
129. During that time I walked in on [REDACTED] BGN [REDACTED] in a bedroom with a sailor. I just opened a door and saw her with him but she held a grudge about that from then on and wrote up many lies about my behaviour.
130. When [REDACTED] BGN [REDACTED] left Gordon and Lillian Burns came who were very good to me. There were about ten children and I was there for about a year.
131. My mum used to come and visit. The Burns' were lovely, really nice people. I kept in touch with them as well. Mrs Burns once told me that when she first met me she didn't know what to expect as I had a borstal report against me.
132. That was also rubbish and was only there because somebody, [REDACTED] BGN [REDACTED], had the freedom to write such reports.
133. The Burns' had a son called [REDACTED] who went to my school and told the headmaster I was a bright child and as a result I was allowed to do my 'O' levels.

134. I loved living in Dunfermline and I loved Mr and Mrs Burns and when my mum came to take me home I didn't want to go. It might sound awful but I was happy where I was. It had taken me years and years and I just didn't want to go home.

Leaving Aberlour Children's Home, Bellyeoman, Dunfermline

135. I had passed my fifteenth birthday while staying at Dunfermline so the City of Edinburgh had stopped paying for me. There was no more payment so I was out.

136. It was a horrible thing, all these kids had their lives mapped out. They were fed, they were clothed and they were told what to do every minute of the day. Then suddenly on their fifteenth birthday they had a small case, long trousers and it was cheerio. So many ended up in jail what else were they going to do. I remember my brother said the strangest thing he found was that he didn't even know how to use a phone.

137. I was taken home by our children's officer, Miss Talbot, in [REDACTED] 1968. She came for me and on the ride from Dunfermline to Brougham Street at Tollcross she told me my name was no longer [REDACTED] and that I was now [REDACTED] BCM [REDACTED]. She didn't say anything about me returning for a trial period, there was no explanation given about anything.

Life after being in care

138. I remember once I was home both my brothers, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and myself talked to my mum about what happened to us. My mum then went to speak to Miss Talbot about it but I never saw Miss Talbot again after that. She'll be dead now. I didn't speak to anyone else, I just didn't see any point. I went to Boroughmuir High School in Edinburgh, sat 'O' levels and started working.

139. My mother died about a year later and I wasn't yet sixteen so I was living on my own. If it hadn't been for [REDACTED] I would have had nowhere to stay. They were living in

Dunfermline but had another house in Pilrig Edinburgh which they offered me, so I lived there as a guest for a short time. [REDACTED] would come and visit me there.

140. I then lived between Dunfermline and Edinburgh, staying on my own, with the [REDACTED] and with my brother [REDACTED] in a bedsit in [REDACTED] Edinburgh. I worked many long hours in a restaurant which was a fantastic experience. I went to Stevenson College and I met my wife, [REDACTED] one of the best moves I ever made. We went out together and although I was a waiter and loved it I wanted a more responsible job because I was getting serious about [REDACTED]

141. I went for an office job and I started off at the ground floor and worked my way up, I really did. I ended up as a director and eventually took early retirement. In between times we had our own children.

Impact

142. As I have said to my wife over and over again, over the years, you don't know what I would give for a good night's sleep. I've never slept well at night, and as you get older the impact becomes greater. People say that and it's true. I love my wife with a passion, the same as when I first met her but now we sleep in separate rooms just so she can get some sleep. I border on hysterics in my sleep and sweat in my bed. The visions I see, are as clear as day, of that old bag, Mrs [REDACTED] BGI

143. I've suffered from anxiety and nervousness since my time at Aberlour orphanage. Don't get me wrong, I cope very well, I'm not some kind of dysfunctional vehicle, but these memories will be with me for the rest of my life.

144. I have had counselling at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. I became so anxious when I first met [REDACTED]. The whole trigger of it was my son [REDACTED] being born and I was going back to my previous experiences in life. It should have been a happy time, and I love my children, but I was extremely anxious and I have just never been able to sleep. That is all entirely down to Aberlour Orphanage, without question.

145. I would like to say that I am grateful to the Aberlour Trust for the foundation they gave me in life. I am talking about the trust here and the members of the small houses, so that was purely down to Ken and Rhona Nicholson and Gordon and Lillian Burns.
146. I am also very grateful for all the friends I made and still have. If somebody said to rate Aberlour Orphanage out of ten I would give it three. That would be for the food and some of the care you got from people who were not principle carers. My experiences seem to have been with people that simply shouldn't have been there and should never have been working with kids.
147. I went to seventeen different schools throughout my life and I made a point of ensuring my children all went to the one same primary and secondary school. We used to drive them in from Broxburn to make sure because that was so important to me. My children have never been in any trouble with the police, they've never been abused, never used drugs, and in short, are just great kids. It is so important to me that, after the horrible things that happened to me in my life, none of it happens to anybody else.
148. The disturbing thing is that they managed to get away with it, they just walked away from it. The people that could have made all the difference just brushed it all under the carpet and didn't want anything to do with it. They were thinking about the reputation of the establishment rather than the child. At the end of the day, whichever way you look at it, it was a business.

Reporting of abuse

149. [REDACTED], [REDACTED] BGF [REDACTED] knew what was going on. I told him what was going on with me, other people complained and he saw what happened with the [REDACTED] BGH/BGI [REDACTED] He must have wondered what was going on there.

Records

150. I have some records that were provided by the Aberlour Trust but there are huge omissions, many untruths and many disparities between what they gave me and what there must surely be. There is no record of anything I told Mr BGF where was that recorded? Where is that now? There are records missing in relation to many of the things I want to know.
151. I contacted them about the lack of records but they wrote to me and said there were so many children in the house that it was very difficult. They said I had been given all the records they held but, as was the norm for the time, they were not very extensive. They also said there may be further records available through Edinburgh Council.
152. I have a letter in which Mr BGF is discussing my return home on a trial basis. He refers to me 'proving exceedingly difficult' and that I was 'much concerned in bullying'. These comments are simply untrue, this was when I was with Ken and Rhona Nicholson who have been lifelong friends, so that would not have come from them.
153. I spoke to the people at Aberlour Orphanage and told them I wasn't happy with what had been said in that letter and in my records. They told me they wouldn't have used some of the comments that were made. I asked them to give me the names of those who had recorded the comments. I wanted to contact those people and follow it up as it wasn't true but Aberlour wouldn't tell me. I know it would have been BGN BGN She had it in for me since I walked in on her with that sailor.
154. I also have it on record that I was given medication at Aberlour orphanage but I have no record to say what the doctors findings were.

155. I remember a newspaper photographer taking pictures when I was dux of the primary at Aberlour. I have records of that, yet there is no mention of it anywhere in my records. Surely such an important thing should have been recorded.
156. I used to [REDACTED] yet there's no mention of that or any of the good things. I was [REDACTED] at Aberlour, Keith and Dunfermline yet that isn't recorded anywhere. There is nothing to say I was doing well [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
157. It's like I ceased to exist in a positive way, once I made my complaint about Mrs [REDACTED] BGI It's like they've taken my life and written a few really negative comments which are entirely untrue. There is nothing positive in my records and I can only put it down to the fact that I complained and they didn't want to open a can of worms.

Lessons to be learned

158. One thing about Aberlour Orphanage was that someone could have been in there at the very same time as me and had a wonderful time. It was purely dependent on the house they were in and who was looking after them. There was too much freedom for the house parents.
159. The house parents didn't talk to one another or encourage visits from other house parents. It was totally self-contained and the discipline was purely dependant on the house parents. You will find from speaking to other people that most of the children who speak of abuse will be confined to Gordon House or Mount Steven House at Aberlour Orphanage. Those were the rank houses to be in, it was that simple.
160. There was no vetting or selection process, that was the whole problem. If there had been a process, policy or requirement where previous experience was essential for the post then they would never have had the [REDACTED] BGI in that place.

161. Mr [REDACTED] was such a cold man and totally lacked empathy, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] should have been a figure you could have gone to and had support from, that could provide some emotional need. Instead he was a complete stranger to all the children and the only time he ever spoke to the children was to tell you what a waste of space you were.
162. He would never talk to the children about achievements and everything he said was absolutely negative. Even [REDACTED] staff were terrified of him, he was so sharp and cutting and abrasive with his staff, so how could the children hope to have a chance.
163. We have been foster carers now for eleven years, [REDACTED] is the principal carer. We have to be so meticulous with every aspect of the children's lives, as we should be. If something happened to a child in our care and we couldn't account for it sensibly and realistically we would be in serious trouble.
164. Yet the Aberlour Trust have no record of a serious sexual allegation I made and an assault on me by a house parent. How can they get away with saying that because there were so many children and reports in those days they cannot expect to have all the records? They must have known. Edinburgh Council were paying for me so surely Aberlour were responsible to Edinburgh Council for my welfare and should have told them.
165. There's also Miss Talbot where does she fit in with all this, what was she reporting? She had ample opportunity to say something about it. My mother asked to see her then she just disappeared of the face of the earth.
166. I take my experiences in Aberlour Orphanage, with the dreadful people that were in that institution and I turn their thinking and practices on their head. I find that then gives me a pretty good foundation for looking after children.
167. If I ever had the inclination or thought to behave towards a child in the same way those people behaved towards me, I would never have volunteered to become a carer. I did it to provide a child with something they were missing. We have had

173. I did go back to the orphanage with my girls many years later. We took photographs and went down to the tea rooms, which used to be the old railway station. It's been turned into an Aberlour Orphanage shrine. I heard some people talking about how they didn't have all that good a time but nothing of any great significance.

174. I then started talking to this chap who was telling me what a wonderful place it was, not realising I had been there. He talked about them looking after all these children and making such a difference to their lives. I told him I couldn't agree and the best thing they did was to pull it down. Which is exactly what they did.

175. 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.

BCM
Signed.....

Dated..... 14th July 2018