

HIA REF: []

NAME: [Alan Chard]

DATE: [26.3.2015]

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of Alan Chard

I, Alan Chard will say as follows: -

1. I am a qualified social worker and I am a retired Programme Manager (Family & Child care) in Down Legacy Trust.
2. I hold B.S.S (Honours) and M.A. Degrees, a Diploma in Social Work, a Diploma in Advanced Social Work and an Advanced Diploma in the Management of Psychological Trauma.
3. I commenced my social work career in 1969 and retired in 2006. During that period I worked in Downpatrick and Lisburn in the fields of Mental Health, Community Development, generic social work and mainly and latterly in Family and Child Care.
4. In 1996 I was asked to be the Independent member of a Complaints sub-committee of the Management Committee of Nazareth Lodge to investigate allegations in respect of **SR 18** made by then residents **NL 164** and **NL 168** and by a former Residential social worker, **NL 170**. I do not recall the process by which I was nominated for the role. The other two members of the sub-committee were Mother Hilary and Mrs Frankie McNally, both of whom were members of the Management Committee of Nazareth Lodge. The sub-committee was chaired by Mrs McNally.

5. At or about the same time as my participation in the subcommittee I acted in a liaison role between the Trusts and St Joseph's Adolescent Unit, another Residential establishment on the same site. This role involved assisting communication between the Trusts and St Josephs and providing professional supervision and support to the Manager Mr Kieran McGorrian.
6. The allegations which the sub-committee investigated are outlined in a significant event report by Ms Judy Ferguson dated 27/11/95 (SNB 49386), a report (undated) written by **NL 170** (SNB 49382-SNB49385) and a letter dated 11/12/95 written by Ms Judith Chaddock from the Social Services Inspectorate (SNB 49392). These allegations were largely in respect of **Sr 18** actions in respect of **NL 164** and **NL 168** and some were of a more general nature in relation to **Sr 18** behaviour.
7. The sub-committee interviewed **Sr 18** **NL 170** and Ms Chaddock in respect of the allegations. I do not recall the sub-committee having interviewed any of the young people in respect of whom the allegations were made. There is however a note dated 27/2/1996 made by Barbara McDermott A PSW (SNB 49463) recording me as stating that we did interview two of the young people who made direct complaints. The sub-committee did not interview **NL 164** **NL 164** but there is a letter dated 1/3/1996 (SNB49464-SNB 49465) from his Social Worker having interviewed **NL 164** about the matters being investigated. I understand that this letter was drawn to the attention of the management committee with the sub-committee report.
8. The sub-committee compiled a report on the allegations. My recollection is that we found some of the allegations clearly substantiated; that we found that there was a considerable degree of substance in others and that we could come to no conclusion on a small number. The allegations which we found were substantiated were mainly those which were confirmed by **Sr 18** in her interview with the sub-committee. I particularly recall being concerned about the incident in which **NL 164** was put out of a minibus in Donegal by **Sr 18** and had to make his own way to where they were staying by

getting a lift from a stranger many miles from their accommodation. I recall also being concerned at **SR 18** reading aloud to a group of residents, details of a press report about the remand of **NL 168** brother on criminal charges.

9. The sub-committee were invited to present the report of our investigations to the Management Committee of Nazareth Lodge at their meeting on 4/3/1996 (SNB 49402). My recollection of that meeting was that the Management Committee members, especially the Chair and the Honorary Secretary questioned us in considerable detail about our conclusions and that they appeared to be reluctant to accept a number of these on the grounds that they appeared to require a higher standard of proof than was possible due to the nature of the allegations. I recall feeling that the questions of members of the Management Committee appeared to be defensive of Nazareth Lodge and of **SR 18**
10. When the sub-committee had presented our report to the Management Committee and when we had been questioned about our conclusions, I was asked to leave the meeting as I was not a member of the Management Committee. The other two members of the sub-committee, being members of the Management Committee, remained. I was therefore unaware of the decisions made and action taken by the Management Committee on foot of our report. I was not permitted to retain a copy of our report.
11. I have only recently had sight of the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee at which we presented our report. I have only recently become aware that **SR 18** accepted that she "made some error of judgement" and decided to withdraw from child care following our report.

- In summary I was the Independent member of a sub-committee set up to
12. investigate allegations in respect of **SR 18** We found many of these allegations substantiated and we presented a report to the Management

Committee of Nazareth Lodge. The Management Committee took whatever action they considered appropriate in respect of our report.

Statement of Truth

I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true

Signed

AL CR Clark

Date

26/3/2015



COMMUNITY HSS TRUST

RP/KMcS

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

1 March 1996

Mr Alan Chard
Principal Social Worker
Down and Lisburn Trust
Lisburn Health Centre
Linenhall Street
Lisburn
BT28 1LU

Dear Mr Chaid

RE: NL 164 - Fit Person Order - Dob
NL 164 is presently placed in Nazareth Lodge

I spoke to NL 164 on Wednesday 28 February 1996 after a request made on Tuesday 27 February by Mrs McDermott, APSW, Craigavon and Banbridge Health and Social Services Trust.

Mrs McDermott outlined that NL 164 had been mentioned by another child as having been the subject of a number of untoward incidents within Nazareth Lodge.

Given the circumstances and the time constraints I have only managed to speak to NL 164 on the one occasion in regard to these alleged incidents. When spoken to he was initially asked to describe life in the Unit and to feel free to discuss anything which caused him distress or concern. He stated that he liked the Unit and had no complaints. When pressed further about his relationship with SR 18 he replied that he got on alright with her but at times they have had arguments.

Given that NL 164 was not forthcoming about any incident, he was asked in a more direct manner about the allegations raised by NL 168 although he was not informed of the source of these allegations.

NL 164 did state that NL 165 who had previously been a resident in the Unit did go on holiday with the Unit and that he had driven the Unit minibus and that children from the Unit had been on this bus. NL 165 was not always accompanied by SR 18 while driving this vehicle. NL 164 can also recall NL 165 having taken alcohol while on holiday and on one occasion when he visited the Unit.

NL 164 can not recall any incidents whereby any child slept in bed with Sister SR 18. NL 164 states that one small child, SR 18, would have gone into her room and fallen asleep on the bed. He also states that residents would have gone into SR 18's room and talked to SR 18. The children would have sat on the bed during these conversations according to NL 164.

In regard to the food, NL 164 stated that there would be little choice but that he thought it was fine. He did state that if food was unfinished it would be left over and reheated later. He also informed me that he was aware of food being retrieved from the bin by SR 18 but he did not elaborate on this only to say he was not forced to eat such retrieved food.

In regard to allegations of physical assault, NL 164 did state that he was asked to get out of the front seat of the minibus on holiday. When he refused, he stated that Sister SR 18 asked another resident to move him. He states he resisted and his hair was pulled by both SR 18 and the resident.

He can also recall being put out of the bus and having to walk ten to twelve miles back to the accommodation in which the Unit were staying. He tells me this happened when the Unit were staying in Donegal a few years ago. NL 164 stated that he got a lift from a man back to the accommodation. This individual was a stranger and not a staff member.

When asked why he did not speak to staff or myself about such incidents, NL 164 replied that every time he went to make a complaint SR 18 was "nice" to him and he felt guilty about complaining.

When asked about why he did not report the incident when he was left to walk the ten to twelve miles, he stated that after the incident, SR 18 came to him and was crying and asked him not to speak to Social Services.

When spoken to about these incidents, NL 164 thought they were now humorous and a "laugh" and "messaging about". He was unaware of the reasons why SR 18 was not at the Unit and stated that he was not frightened of her.

Given the limited time available, this is the only information I was able to obtain from NL 164 and his memory of events is not clear, as can be established by the fact that he could only recall incidents after direction and assistance. I do not feel that NL 164 was deliberately evasive in his answers but that given the time lapse since the incidents he had genuine difficulty in recalling events.

Yours sincerely

NHB 137

Social Worker

We the panel, appointed by the Management Committee of Nazareth Lodge home, interviewed a number of people about allegations made in respect of **SR 18** in connection with her role as Head of Unit in Nazareth Lodge. We have concluded that many of the allegations have a degree of validity. The allegations and our conclusions are outlined below.

1 *Forcing a young person to eat food retrieved from the waste bin in front of other children.*

We accept that there is some validity in this allegation.

2 *Striking a young person in the course of a violent argument, then dropping him off in the countryside in Co Donegal at night leaving him to make his own way back to the holiday home.*

We accept that there is some validity in this allegation.

3 *Undermining of staff who had voiced concerns about the effects of such behaviour on the young people.*

We accept that the complainant felt undermined on occasions.

4 *Refusing to speak to a young person for almost two months before the inspection.*

We accept that there is some validity in this allegation.

5 *Treating him unfairly in relation to her treatment of other children within the group.*

We accept that he was treated differently to other children but not necessarily unfairly.

6 *Was reluctant to give him his clothing allowance.*

This allegation is not substantiated.

7 *The capacity of the minibus was regularly exceeded on occasions.*

We accept that there is some validity in this allegation.

8 *The minibus was driven (in Donegal) by non insured drivers, including Mr NL 165 (ex resident, 20 years).*

We accept that there is some validity in this allegation.

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF
THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF NAZARETH LODGE
HELD ON 4 MARCH 1996 AT 8.00pm IN NAZARETH LODGE**

PRESENT: Mrs M Sim, Chairman
Mother Hilary
SR 121
SR 148
Mrs F McNally
T Cahill
M Murphy
P Kinder
J Patten

APOLOGIES: An apology was received from Ms E Nicholl.

**1. REPORT OF AN INVESTIGATION BY THE APPOINTED COMPLAINTS
SUB-COMMITTEE**

The members of the Sub-Committee, Mrs McNally (Chair), Mother Hilary and Mr Alan Chard of Down & Lisburn Trust, were all present when making their report to the Management Committee.

The Sub-Committee presented their conclusions in respect of the 17 allegations which had been made as attached. They explained that the process which they had adopted had been to interview the complainants, SR 18 and Judith Chaddick. They had not carried out any further investigations. The members of the Sub-Committee agreed that SR 18 should be advised of those conclusions.

The members of the Sub-Committee invited questions from the Management Committee.

- 2.** A number of questions were raised by all the members of the Management Committee and the principal issues involved were related to clarification of the comments in respect of allegations, views on the extent to which there appeared to be validity in some of the allegations and the degree of co-operation afforded to the Committee by SR 18. The Sub-Committee members made clear that SR 18 had co-operated fully with them and that her comments had enabled them to indicate where there was some validity in the allegations.
- 3.** The Sub-Committee members produced two further letters which they had recently received following the conclusion of their investigations.

25th March, 1996

Mr. Alan Chard,
Principal Social Worker,
Down Lisburn Trust,
Lisburn Health Centre,
Linenhall Street,
Lisburn.

Dear Alan,

Re:- Nazareth Lodge

Following our telephone conversation regarding the above, I write formally to you as involved member of the enquiry team seeking formal written communication regarding the outcome of the above investigation. Obviously in terms of maintaining accurate records on both NL 164 file and the need for the Trust to have an outcome regarding the above, it is essential that we have some form of written communication in respect of the above. I appreciate that this has been a difficult and indeed lengthy period of assessment but bearing in mind that Craigavon/Banbridge Trust became aware of this the week before Christmas 1995, I feel that the time lapse is now crucial in terms of a formal response.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

.....
Barbara McDermott
Assistant Principal Social Worker

*Lisburn Health & Care*

REF: AC/JM/NL

4th April 1996

Mr Barbara McDermott
Assistant Principal Social Worker
Craigavon & Banbridge Community Health & Social Services Trust
Child & Family Care Office
2 Old Lurgan Road
Portadown
BT63 5SQ

Dear Barbara

Nazareth Lodge

Thank you for your letter of 25/3/96 re the above. The enquiry team reported to the management board of Nazareth Lodge on 4/3/96. As I was the only member of the enquiry team not on the management board I was not present for their discussion of any action on the basis of our report. I am however surprised that you have had no information about the decision of the management board yet either directly or via David Gilliland.

I have taken the liberty of forwarding a copy of your letter with a covering letter of my own to Nazareth Lodge in the hope that this will prompt a reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A Chard'.

Mr Alan Chard
Principal Social Worker Monitoring & Inspection

PRIVATE

think all the staff were looking for other jobs. My complaints about Nazareth Lodge included the working conditions such as hours and pay but Sister SR18 created a difficult working environment. In September 1995 I got a new job in a field office in [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] Trust.

34. While I was sitting at lunch talking with new colleagues I happened to discuss my experiences from Nazareth Lodge. I think I was still reeling from the shock of it all. The other social workers told me that I should do something about it. I think I then spoke to my senior social worker who escalated it to Alan Chard. I had a meeting with him and I gave him a copy of my report which I had prepared for SR52 in September 1994. This started an investigation. I don't recall being contacted further after my meeting with Alan Chard. I did hear later that SR18 was removed from Nazareth Lodge following the investigation.

35. Staff who worked in Nazareth Lodge before I came told me that there were rumours going round the home that people were sexually abused by Sister SR18. However I did not know any details. I remember Father Brendan Smyth being on the news at the time and SR18 saying in front of the children that he was a wonderful man and that if he was free she would have him back at anytime.

36. When I left Nazareth Lodge I also did shifts as a residential social worker in [REDACTED] which was run by the Belfast Trust. It was a very different children's home from Nazareth Lodge. In my view Nazareth Lodge was an oppressive system. It was very hard for staff to work in that environment and hard for staff to do anything to change it. How children survived in it I don't know.

37. I always wish I did more at the time. I didn't know enough as I was only newly qualified and I tried to work within the system as I thought that was what I had to do. I wish I fought harder at the time to get people to listen. You don't get taught in college how to fight the system.

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27 February 1996**- Telephone Conversation to Alan Chard, Principal Social Worker, Lisburn**

Investigative Team have concluded an Interim report and spoke only to the two other young people who have made a direct complaint. It would appear that the issue re: **NL 164** had been overlooked and according to Alan Chard had not been brought to his attention. He subsequently consulted with the Chairperson, Frankie McNally re: the comment possibly made by **NL 164**. It was agreed to proceed in the following way:

- 1 **NHB 137**, Social Worker, would approach **NL 164** having had sight of the complaints made on his behalf by others and provide him with an opportunity to confirm, deny or extend and expand on comments made.
- 2 A report would be prepared and forwarded to Alan Chard prior Monday, 4 March, 1996, when the Management Committee would meet to assess the interim report.

NL 222**Assistant Principal Social Worker**

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Yours sincerely

NHB 137

Social Worker