

Name: SR 148  
Date: 29 December 2014

# THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

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Witness Statement of

SR 148

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I, **SR 148** will say as follows: -

1. I was appointed in 1980 as Team Leader to one group of children living in Nazareth Lodge Children's Home. I was assisted by a small team of lay residential staff.
2. I completed my qualification in Social Work in in at  
- now known as . I took up this  
appointment in Belfast in or about the end of 1980.
3. In paragraph 2 of **HIA 370** statement, she recalls a . This  
Sister could not have been me for a number of reasons:
  - a) I never worked in Nazareth House.
  - b) I was not living or working in Northern Ireland during the period 1966/67 – 1971. I  
was resident in at that particular time.
  - c) I had not entered the Order at that time.
  - d) Throughout the remaining period I was based.
  - e) I have never known, or currently do not know, anyone by the name of **HIA 370**  
**HIA 370**.
4. I refute the allegation totally. I can make no comments with regards to the remaining  
content of the statement as they are details beyond my personal knowledge.

## Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed **SR 148**

Dated 5 January 2015

Name: SR 148  
Date: 29 December 2014

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

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Witness Statement of SR 148

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I, SR 148, will say as follows: -

1. I was appointed in 1980 as Team Leader to one group of children living in Nazareth Lodge Children's Home. I was assisted by a small team of lay residential staff.
2. I completed my qualification in Social Work in in at  
– now known as . I took up this  
appointment in Belfast in or about the end of 1980.
3. I recognise the name of HIA 10 as residing in one of the other Children's units. However, I had no involvement directly or indirectly at any time in her care and/or management while in Nazareth Lodge. I would have simply known this name as one of the names of children on the register – nothing more.
4. With regard to paragraph 15, I deny the allegation that I was rough and would have slapped her. I would never have any direct or even indirect contact or supervision of HIA 10
5. I can make no comments with regards to the remaining content of the statement other than what I have already stated as they are details totally beyond my personal knowledge.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed SR 148

Dated 5 January 2015

HIA Ref: SR148

Name: SR 148

Date:

**THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 - 1995**

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF SR 148

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I, SR 148 will say as follows:-

**Personal Details**

1. I was born on the [REDACTED] I joined the Sisters of Nazareth in 1968 in Finchley, London. I stayed in [REDACTED] for a year and then moved as a novice to [REDACTED] where I stayed for two years. I was then professed in Hammersmith in 1971. I stayed in Hammersmith for two years which was in or around 1973. I then went to [REDACTED] and it was then that I began to work with children. After a year I moved from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] where I stayed for two years, again working with children. After [REDACTED] I moved back to [REDACTED] where I spent a further two years, again working with children.
2. In or around 1978 I left [REDACTED] and went to [REDACTED] where I completed a diploma in social work which took two years. After qualifying in social work I moved to Belfast in or around 1980 to Nazareth Lodge Children's Home on the Ravenhill Road.

**My Time at Nazareth Lodge**

3. I moved to Nazareth Lodge in or around 1980. There were four units at Nazareth Lodge and I was in charge of one of the units. When I began at Nazareth Lodge each unit would have had approximately between 15 and 17 children. In my unit there would have been 2 to 3 unqualified residential workers who would have assisted me.

There also were two housekeepers who would have come in the mornings between 9am to 1pm who would have helped with cleaning.

4. The children mostly had shared bedrooms at this stage although there were approximately four single rooms plus my own room on the unit. There was a kitchenette where we could prepare breakfast, snacks and supper.
5. In the building where we were in there were two units and mine was on the second floor. On the ground floor was the main kitchen with reception and parlour rooms as well as conference rooms which would have been used for six monthly assessments in relation to the children's progress. The other two units in Nazareth Lodge would have been at either side of a quadrangle outside the main building and they would have used the facilities in the main building as described.
6. The unit I was in had a long corridor going from one end of the unit to the other. At the bottom of the corridor there would have been bathrooms with toilets, baths and showers. Also in this area would have been the dining room and kitchen. The bedrooms would have been in the middle of the corridor. At the top end of the corridor was a living room with a TV, music centre and soft chairs. There also was a library / study and a reception area for visitors and families where they could meet the children.
7. We would have prepared breakfast, snacks and supper in the kitchen in the unit and would have eaten in the dining room. The main meal would have been prepared in the kitchen on the ground floor and there was a lift in the unit which would have gone down to collect the food and brought it up. The main meal would have been served about 5.00pm. The children would have eaten in the dining room along with the residential staff. I would usually have had a cup of tea with them but I would not have had my main meal until about 7pm in the convent after I had finished my other duties.
8. The ages of the children when I started were generally between 5 to 15 years of age. Work was constantly being done in order to improve the workings of the home and the conditions for the children. We progressed by reducing the numbers of children

coming into the home and we renovated the bedrooms to create single bedrooms so that eventually all the children had single rooms. We were able to change the dining room and kitchen area so that we were able to cook and eat our meals in the one place.

9. Each child had a designated Social Worker who would have visited once a month. We also increased our levels of staff. We tried to increase our professionalism and all staff got further training and there was a designated Training Officer for the staff.
10. The staff who worked with me were all enthusiastic and dedicated staff. All I wanted was to give the children security and stability. The children all had a Key Worker who would have worked with them on a one to one basis. There would have been regular thorough external and internal inspections and we would have made all efforts to comply with any recommendations that may have been made.
11. Each unit worked on their own. I would not have had a say or input in relation to the other units. I was able to look after my own unit with more or less autonomy.
12. The building from the outside looked as if it was a big institutional building which appeared cold and uninviting. Inside the building and in my unit it was decorated and furnished to a very high standard with a carpet running throughout the corridor and bedrooms with matching duvets and curtains. We knew though that the building itself was always going to be an obstacle and in or about 1994 we made a decision to close the home down over a two year period. This work was carried out in conjunction with the North & West Belfast Trust in and about 1995 and 1997 and during this period I was the professional manager.

**Allegations Made:**

13. I have read the statement made by **NL 170** for the Inquiry dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015. **NL 170** was not a Social Worker in my group and to my knowledge she was never actually physically in my unit. **NL 170** mentions an ex-resident, **NL 165** **NL 165** who would have returned to visit the Home. I remember **NL 165** as being a young person in another unit but not my unit. The children from all the units used to

play together. **NL 165** was not on my unit and I had no responsibility for him. Some of the older children would have kept in contact with us and it would not have been unusual to see the children who had left the Home to come back to visit. I cannot say that I remember **NL 165** returning to the Home after he left but, as stated, this would not have been unusual.

14. I knew **SR 18** from when she came to work at the Home which would have been approximately in or around the mid to late 80s. I would have been friendly with **SR 18** as I would have been with the other Sisters who were also part of the community. We worked and prayed together. I can say though that I have absolutely no idea about the allegations that **NL 170** makes in relation to **SR 18** at paragraph 8 of her statement.

15. In relation to the comment at paragraph 9 of **NL 170** statement about graffiti on the outer wall of the Home, I remember an incident about graffiti being written. I was told about the graffiti but never saw the graffiti or told what had actually been written. I believe the graffiti was written by someone who had to leave the Home and struggled when he left as he had significant psychological issues. As stated I was aware of the graffiti being placed on the wall but was unaware of the content. I deny totally though the allegation that is being alleged to have been contained in the graffiti about me.

16. **NL 170** also talks about rumours that I was “grooming boys” at paragraph 9 of her statement. I have no idea why anyone would say this and I totally refute any such allegation. I note that also in paragraph 24 of **NL 170** statement she refers to the fact that apparently I “groomed girls” who controlled the unit in my absence. As stated, **NL 170** did not have any input nor did she work with anyone within my unit and I am unsure as to why or what basis she has said the things about me that she has mentioned in her statement.

17. I cannot comment in relation to the other allegations in the statement made by **NL 170** **NL 170** or what she states in relation to **SR 18**. I did not witness any incidents nor was I aware of anything as suggested. If I had have been aware or thought something was going on I would have taken action.

18. In relation to the allegations contained in the statements made by **HIA 10** and **HIA 370** I had previously made statements denying these allegations dated the 29<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and again deny that these incidents took place.

**Matters for the Inquiry:**

19. I can say that I loved the children I cared for and if I had children of my own I would not have done anything more for them. The people in my unit worked so hard to keep the children connected with their families and to give them a life. We tried to look at their individual strengths and to help them reach their potential. I never regretted a day working with them. It was challenging but it was rewarding.

20. I was very proud of the contribution I made to the children under my care but would say that the process of the Inquiry has caused me deep upset when I know I did my very best.

21. When the unit closed each member of my staff in the unit were qualified Social Workers and they were all absolutely brilliant people who did so much more than was required from them to look after the children and I could not have done the work without the Social Workers involved.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed:

**SR 148**

Dated:

1 May 2015

HIA Ref:

Name:

SR 148

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 - 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF

SR 148

I, SR 148 will say as follows:-

1. I have not seen the Statement of HIA 363.
2. I would have known her as HIA 363. She was not in my Unit. I went to Belfast in 1980.
3. I do know NL 243. He and his two sisters NL 278 and NL 280 were in my Unit. I remember them very well. They were extremely good children. They would have said I was like a mother to them.
4. I deny any inappropriate relationship with NL 243 totally. I know of no rumours concerning me and him and deny any inference that I was going to leave for him. I can make no comment about him meeting up with HIA 363 in September 2014.
5. I deny ever abusing him. I deny that he got everything he wanted.
6. I have not seen or heard of him for several years and deny totally that I would meet up with him for tea and coffee.
7. I understand NL 243 went to . I have not seen NL 280 in years and his sister NL 278 rings infrequently. She rang four months ago to tell me she passed her driving test.



8. I have not had any contact from **HIA 363** since she left in 1988. She was not in my Unit. I deny her allegations totally.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed:

**SR 148**

Date:

14 May 2015

CONFIDENTIAL

A2272/92 HIA1(39)C

## NAZARETH LODGE CHILDREN'S HOME

The Home was inspected by Mr Chambers and Mr McElpatrick on 10-12 October 1983. All Child Care staff who were available were interviewed. A sample of case files was examined and all statutory records were examined. Those parts of the building used by the children were inspected. [SR 143] (Mother Superior) has responsibility for all aspects of the home and for the Sisters of Nazareth who live there. In addition to the sisters who work in Nazareth Lodge there are some others who work in the local schools and a few retired nuns.

[SR 143] is accountable to Mother Regional who is based in Dublin. The latter visits the home approximately 3 times a year. The Headquarters of the Order of Nazareth is in Hammersmith and Mother General visits the Home every 3 years. There is no committee of management and full responsibility for the staff and children is vested in [SR 143]. Mother Regional appoints 2 [SR 143] "councillors" who meet with her monthly to discuss the affairs of the home. These are 2 sisters one employed in the Home ([SR 46]) and another who works in the nursery school ([SR 29]). Their meeting is referred to as the Council for the Community but its function appears to be more advisory and consultative than executive.

The Home is divided into 3 functionally autonomous living units with approximately 12-14 children in each. Responsibility for day to day affairs is delegated by [SR 143] to the 3 Sisters who run the groups. It is possible for the Sisters to be self determining in a wide range of issues and we found that the regime in the 3 groups differed markedly. Only one of the Sisters is social work trained and this was evident in her approach to the residential task. It is fair to say that [SR 121] had only recently been appointed to the home and, while she is not social work trained she has considerable experience in working with adolescents in [ ] and she may in time contribute to raising professional standards.

The management style in the home is rigidly hierarchical. The Sisters do not consult the staff on matters of policy and practice and an atmosphere of [their] authoritarianism prevails. In only one of the groups has staff had access to children's records though in another the Sister has recently told the staff that they may have access to the children's files. In only one group do staff attend case reviews; they have all limited, if any, contact with social workers. Just as the Sisters do not consult with the staff nor involve them in decision-making, so the lay staff do not acknowledge the Sisters as being members of the caring staff. They perceive them as authoritarian background figures who absent themselves from the group, particularly during periods when their help is needed. The

Sisters do not socialise with the staff, they eat separately and have their own living quarters. The need for the Sisters to attend to religious duties throughout the day is considered to be intrusive, and while it is understood that they may occasionally be late for Offices, their religious duties are considered to be paramount.

#### RESIDENTIAL TASK

The residential task undertaken by child care staff is described by them as being primarily the physical care of the children and a range of domestic duties. The latter includes clearing up after meals, sweeping and hoovering the floor, keeping bedrooms tidy and attending to all of the younger children's laundry. In one group the emphasis on cleanliness and routine domestic duties appear to be excessive if not obsessional, but all child care staff complained about the amount of time spent on domestic work.

The staffing complement in the Home is such that staff have little time to spend with the children beyond ensuring their physical care. No group activities are undertaken, other than escorting children to the swimming pool and no individual work is undertaken with them. In only one group did any activities resemble residential social work. This included weekly meetings to discuss the children. However, this group was short staff during the inspection and it has not been possible to roster all of the staff to ensure full attendance. In the same group a system of primary workers has been started and one staff will be responsible for groups of children from the same family. The range of discretion which the staff have is such that a system of primary workers could be developed to only a limited extent.

Children are encouraged to participate in outside activities and one formed the impression that the children had rather more freedom than the staff.

We were told that parents are encouraged to visit their children in the Home, but that very few avail of the opportunity. However, a considerable number of the children go home at weekends and this type of family contact is encouraged. Child care staff have no contact with parents, who speak to the Sisters if and when they visit the Home. Arrangements for parents to spend time with their children in Nazareth Lodge is very unsatisfactory. When they arrive they must speak to one of the Sisters and they are then permitted to spend time with their children in a small sitting room. A cup of tea will be provided for them. One of the Sisters encourages parents to assist the children with their homework as she feels they

## STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF [REDACTED] NL 86

AGE OF WITNESS [If over 21 enter 'over 21'] : OVER 21

I declare that this statement consisting of 1 pages, each signed by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence at a preliminary enquiry or at the trial of any person, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated this 11 day of December 1995

WILLIAM NIBLOCK DCONST

SIGNATURE OF MEMBER

by whom statement was recorded or received

[REDACTED] NL 86

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

I am the above named person and I reside at an address known to police. In 1978/79 I was placed in Nazareth Lodge Childrens Home in Belfast along with my brother [REDACTED] and sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I remained in the home until October 1981. It was a very unhappy time of my life during my stay in Nazareth Lodge. I was beaten with a metal ruler by [REDACTED] SR 148, one of the nuns. I was also beaten by another nun who was small, old and wore glasses. We were also made to sit down on concrete floors in the chapel during the weekends. They made us say prayers.

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

[REDACTED] NL 86

CHECKED AND CERTIFIED A TRUE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL SIGNED :

STATEMENT OF MARGARET ROBERTA MARTIN

I declare that this statement consisting of      pages, each signed by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence at a preliminary enquiry or at the trial of any person, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

by whom statement was recorded or received

Q. What positions have you held.

A. I am a qualified social worker and  
I am a team leader.

Q. What does that entail.

**Ref. No.**

C61/92/86

**TITLE:** Indecent assault at Nazareth Lodge, Belfast between  
early 1984 and 6/5/86.

NL 137

# NL 136

[illegible]

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