

HIA REF: FJ 7

NAME: FJ 7

DATE: [3 April 2014]

**THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995****WITNESS STATEMENT OF**

I, FJ 7 will say as follows:-

I worked in Fort James from 1975 until 1990. During the time in question, I was the Deputy in Charge. I was also doing my social work course CSS from 1979 until 1982. This meant that I was out of the Unit every other two week period.

**1. PEOPLE WHO VISITED THE UNIT.**

Social workers. These would have been planned visits both to see the children and attend meetings.

People arrived at the unit by car or taxi. Occasionally family would come by bus, therefore would walk to the unit.

Family members usually planned but there was probably some ad hoc occasions when parents would turn up.

Maintenance people, these would be at the request of the staff.

Delivery of foods, also planned.

Senior management, planned but sometimes drop in could occasionally happen.

Doctor visited routinely on a weekly basis

Tutors for staff who were attending professional courses. Observation of practice.

With the exception of social worker and family, all the above were planned with the staff.

Social workers and family visits would have been arranged with the children and key workers

2. Recording in the early days was done in the large day to day Diary. Any visitors or untoward incidents were logged there by management and key workers. This was then discussed at each hand over to the new shifts coming on. Around this time with the inspection units arrival, a more detailed account for each child was written up in their individual files by their keyworkers.
  
3. I have no recollection of any priests calling at the unit. Although I am aware that when young Catholic children were making their first communion and confirmation, this was done through the school. For young Protestant children making their confirmation this was done through their church at Sunday school. Key workers would have been involved in this.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

**FJ 7**

Dated: *3<sup>rd.</sup> April 2014* .....

HIA REF: [            ]

NAME:            **FJ 7**            |DATE: [ 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015 ]**THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995**

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**Witness Statement of            FJ 7**

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I,            **FJ 7**            will say as follows: -

1. I have previously filed a statement to the Inquiry in Module 1 dated the 3 April 2014. It is found at SND 16574-16575
2. As previously outlined, I worked in Fort James from 1975 until 1990. I was initially a houseparent and then later deputy officer-in-charge from in or around 1980. I obtained my Certificate of Social Services (CSS) in 1989.
3. **THE HOME**
  - 3.1. Fort James was first established as a Children's home in 1973 by the Western Health and Social Services Board now known as the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
  - 3.2. It was quite an old solid estate house that had three and half floors. This house was enclosed with a surrounding wall and sat in 1 to 2 acres of woodland and lawns. A bungalow was built beside the unit, which was intended to be accommodation for the officer-in-charge.

- 3.3. Bathrooms and toilets were on the newer wing, hence the half floor.  
This newer wing was added prior to the home commencing operation.
- 3.4. When I arrived in 1975, upstairs in the home there were four large rooms, used as bedrooms, which could have contained three beds. After about 1978 this was changed so that the shared bedrooms had two beds. The home also had a few smaller single rooms. For a time one of the single rooms was an office and later became sleep-in room for staff.
- 3.5. On the ground floor of the home there were 3 large rooms: 1 was a sitting room, 1 was used for activities and 1 was the nursery, which had 5 cots for babies. The nursery then ceased operation around 1978. Downstairs, there was also a separate kitchen and dining room with a hatch between them and some storage areas.
- 3.6. Outside there was an enclosed courtyard with closed off old stables, which were later converted into self-contained flats and offices. These opened around 1985.
- 3.7. When I arrived in 1975 the home had been operating for 2 years. I recall there were about 5 babies, 3 toddlers, a few primary school age and two teenagers residing there.
- 3.8. Supplies for the unit came from the hospital stores. This included food, and bed linen.

#### **4. STAFFING**

- 4.1. Again thinking back to the 1970's my memory is that there were approximately 10 to 12 child care staff, 2 cooks and 2 domestic assistants working in the home.

- 4.2. Some of the child care staff had an NNEB child care qualification (National Nursery Examination Board) but generally the rest had no child care qualifications. Others may have had some nursing experience, but at that time there were no social work trained staff. We worked together using common sense and life experiences.
- 4.3. In 1975 **HH 22** was the acting officer-in-charge. I recall the external manager being **TL 20** who was based in the Unit of Management at Riverview House. **HH 5** then took up the post of officer-in-charge and moved into the provided accommodation around 1978..
- 4.4. The foster care team was being expanded at this time so as to find alternatives to bringing babies into care, this resulted in a significant change to our work and the children that we were looking after as I explain below..
- 4.5. During these years staff worked 42 hours and covered three shifts, they also did the laundry for all the children. about 1978, staff still worked 42 hours as well as sleeping over in the unit ,one or two nights per week (for a nominal fee) The nursery was now gone.
- 4.6. I believe it was during the late 1970's that some of the barriers to institutional living were changed, for example, children got to help pick their own bed linen and wall paper. Progress was slow as there was no budget set aside for this.
- 4.7. **HH 5** left Fort James around 1979. I recall temporary managers for a short time until **FJ 5** was appointed in September 1980. It was around this time that I was appointed deputy officer-in-charge. **FJ 32** was also appointed around this time as senior Houseparent. Both **FJ 5** and **FJ 32** were qualified social workers.

4.8. At this time FJ 31 and I commenced CSS and NVQ Training was also being introduced to staff.

## 5. SCHOOL / WORK

5.1. Children went to the local schools appropriate to their religion and the older boys and girls went out to work.

5.2. Travel to school and work for the children and young people was by public transport. Fort James did not have a car at this time although we could access a small van from the hospital transport department on request. Our first car came in about 1983 or 1984.

5.3. When taking children out of the home, for example to go swimming, to the cinema or appointments, the staff used public transport or their own cars.

## 6. SOCIAL WORKERS / FIELD WORKERS

6.1. All children had access to their field worker, who called at the home to meet with them once a month or more often if requested by the child or staff.

## 7. HOLIDAYS / OUTINGS

7.1. Outings were to the swimming pool, cinema and when possible to the beach. Sometime staff would take some of the children out with their families. I did this occasionally myself on my days off and on Christmas Day. Some of the girls in Fort James were the same age as my daughter, then about 7 years old. They are still in touch today. Back then we were simply responding to the needs of the children and what we thought was best for them. Clear procedures and policy for such things were only implemented in the later 1980's.

7.2. Holidays didn't happen often but for a few years we went to Portstewart. I also remember another occasion around 1980 when we rented a car and took the older children to Cork.

## 8. CHANGE IN AGE GROUP AT FORT JAMES

8.1. In 1980 the assessment unit Harberton House was opened. HH 5 and HH 22 had both moved from Fort James to run this unit. From this time, Fort James was catering for primary and secondary school children with some older teenagers who went out to work.

8.2. At this time the unit would always have full capacity.

8.3. My memory is that the staffing levels remained the same.

8.4. There could have been 4/5 young people resident in the home who had learning difficulties and attended Belmont House School.

8.5. Children were admitted to care, via the courts, due to neglect or alcohol abuse. Back then sexual abuse was not talked about so no one asked the question.

8.6. Children came with a variety of issues which often was acted out in their behaviour. We did not have psychological help and the staff worked with the children in a very caring way.

8.7. It was more difficult to manage the teenagers who left the unit and returned with alcohol. We could not approve of them leaving to such venues and it was difficult to get a balance. Also it was a time when our troubles were at its height and they put themselves at risk. Unfortunately some of them went on to training schools.

## 9. PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

- 9.1. The first step was creating a make-shift bedsit in one of the top floor bedrooms to provide some experience for the young people before leaving care. The outhouses were later converted to flats, which were opened around late 1984 or 1985.
- 9.2. For the young people leaving Fort James to live independently, accommodation in the community was sought from the Housing Executive. Grants to assist them in setting up their first home were limited and the money usually only provided a bed, reconditioned cooker and a, usually second-hand, sofa. There was limited money for other essentials until a few years later when the DHSS considered leaving care children as in their special needs category.
- 9.3. It is hard to imagine this situation in comparison to the planned procedures now.
- 9.4. When a young person would be allocated accommodation in the community, it often needed to be thoroughly cleaned and sometimes decorated before the young person could move in. Staff from Fort James went to the flats that the young people were offered and helped wash and paint them as they needed this.
- 9.5. When young people were preparing to move in to their own home in the community, I do recall using bin bags to help them move their belongings. There was no money to buy anything else in the early years. They would have been expected to pack their own belongings, with help from staff if they wanted it. The only reason that I can think of that would have led to staff packing for them would have been if the young person was refusing or reluctant to do it themselves.
- 9.6. After the young person left Fort James, there were still occasions when staff would have visited them, particularly their keyworker, to see



how they were getting on. There were also groups of young people that had met within the home that would have continued to meet each other.

9.7. While initially young people would have left Fort James immediately, later we would have had phased discharges from Fort James to offer them support in making that move.

#### 10. HIA 60

10.1. I am aware that this Applicant has raised an issue about the circumstances in which he left Fort James. I do not have an immediate recollection of him, although the surname used when he was in the home was familiar to me.

10.2. I have no recollection of the incident he has alleged.

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

Signed\_

**FJ 7**

Dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

HIA REF: [            ]

NAME:            **FJ 7**DATE: [ 4<sup>th</sup> June 2015 ]**THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995**

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**Witness Statement of      FJ 7**

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I,      **FJ 7**      will say as follows: -

1. This is my third statement to the Inquiry. This statement is filed to set out my knowledge of and involvement with      **FJ 5**
2.      **FJ 5**      was employed by the Western Health and Social Services Board as the officer-in-charge of Fort James from September 1981 until August 1983. I worked with him during this time, holding the position of deputy officer-in charge.
3. At that time I was in my second year of training for my Certificate in Social Services (CSS) which I undertook from October 1979 to March 1982. This meant that I was out of the unit for two weeks each month during the college year.
4. When I started my course a senior houseparent post was created to ensure cover in the unit while I was studying, as a senior person had to be on duty at all times.

5. FJ 5 would work long shifts, for example working from Friday at 2pm straight through until Monday at 3pm. I would then take over and do the same so he could have time off.
6. On occasions during his time off FJ 5 would return to He did not socialize here. Being did not lend itself to this in our turbulent times.
7. I recall that on one of his return trips to that a few young people from the unit accompanied him. My memory is that he had friends leaving the country and had offered their furniture for the young people leaving the home to independent accommodation. He hired a van and drove over to collect it. I do not have a recollection of him taking young people from the unit away on any other occasion.
8. While he worked in Fort James, I had no contact with FJ 5 outside the home. The only exception to this would have been if a member of staff was leaving, when we would go out for a meal as a team.
9. After he left Fort James we did not keep in touch, save for meeting him once in September 1983. I had applied for a Child Care Conference in London and had received approval to attend before FJ 5 left Fort James. He said he would meet me off the plane as he knew I was apprehensive about going on my own. This he did. We had lunch and he helped me find my booked accommodation.
10. That was the last time I spoke to him.
11. I then heard that allegations had been made by FJ 30 against FJ 5 no other detail was provided. I believe it was management that told us.
12. One day, without warning, his solicitor arrived at my home requesting me to act as guarantor for his bail. My husband was also part of the

discussion. The solicitor assured us that there was no foundation to the allegations and that FJ 5 would be contesting it. I was aware that FJ 5 FJ 5 knew very few people in I agreed to act as a surety for him.

13. I did not see FJ 30 complaint then, nor at later time. I was only aware that an allegation had been made, no details were disclosed to me from the solicitor or from my managers.

14. The first time I read FJ 30 statement was on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

15. During my time working with FJ 5 I had no evidence to suggest that such incidents occurred hence I committed to acting as guarantor.

16. I recall informing my senior manager at the time, but cannot remember who was then in post. My memory is that they advised me that I could withdraw my agreement to act as a surety as the Board would not approve. I wasn't told that I must do so. I discussed this with my husband. The outcome was that I felt I had given my word and couldn't withdraw it.

17. The Board then informed all staff that they were not to be in contact with FJ 5 during the investigation.

18. I was called as a witness in the trial, but have no recollection of the detail.

19. I had no direct involvement with FJ 5 after September 1983 and have never heard from him since.

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

Signed

**FJ 7**

Dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 2015

NOTES

WESTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD  
LONDONDERRY LIMAVADY AND STRABANE DISTRICT

Notes on Review into the Management of Fort James (Internal/External) During the Period that **FJ 5** was Officer-in-Charge To examine the Details of **FJ 30** Period in Care.

Membership of Review Group:-

Mr. T. Haverty, District Social Services Officer  
Londonderry Limavady and Strabane District

Mr. P. Newman, Assistant Director of Social Services,  
Child Care

Mr. L. Thompson, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer  
for Personnel and Management Services.

7TH DECEMBER 1983 - Interview with **FJ 7**, Acting Officer-in-Charge.

At the beginning of the interview Mr. Haverty explained to **FJ 7** that this review into the management of Fort James during **FJ 5** period as Officer-in-Charge, was being set up following his recent appearance in Court as a result of an allegation made against him by a boy who is now discharged from care.

Mr. Haverty explained that the review was concerned with management issues, in order to identify any weaknesses that may exist, so that these could be put right and that lessons may be learned during this exercise, which may be of help in the management of other Children's Homes throughout the area.

He further explained that whilst the group would examine details relating to **FJ 30** period in care, they were not investigating the accusation made against **FJ 5** as this was in the hands of the Police and the Legal System.

The group first discussed with **FJ 7** the nature of records kept in the Home. She explained that a staff rota book was maintained which records staff on duty, staff on leave and sick leave and staff on courses. She also explained that a repeat rota system existed for staff, whereby they could <sup>protect</sup> protect periods that they were on and off duty. The rotas were normally made out by the Deputy Officer-in-Charge, **FJ 7** but if any problems arose in relation to this, she normally shared them with the Officer-in-Charge.

NOTES. PART. ;

REVIEW INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF FORT JAMES CHILDREN'S HOME DURING  
THE PERIOD THAT FJ 5 WAS OFFICER-IN-CHARGE

FOLLOW-UP ACTION TO BE TAKEN

1. Under-staffing in the Home especially lack of management of staff during this period. Although the staffing situation has improved recently, it is still necessary to review the staffing levels, especially in the light of the Independent Living Units coming into operation.
2. Decision-making within the Home by Management Staff. - Changes in the systems for management of the Home and changes in the routine in respect of the care of the children were not shared with District Management, one example being the changes in the bed routine introduced by the Officer-in-Charge and reading to children in bed. It is important for Middle Management at District level to be kept informed of change in practices in the Home.
3. FJ 7 in particular, said that Management Staff in the Home felt isolated. In particular she referred to the fact that Middle and Senior Management did not have any residential care experience and this in some ways added to this sense of isolation. This raises the degree and quality of support offered to Management Staff in the Home. Currently TL 4 visits Fort James regularly, about three times a week, but it is necessary for more frequent visits to be carried out by TL 20 and we should carefully monitor practices and standards of care in the Home. In addition, it would be helpful if at least an annual review on Children's Homes was carried out by T. Haverty, P. Newman and TL 20
4. Staff in the Home, in particular FJ 7 felt that TL 4 role was not clear. Action needs to be taken to clarify his role and ensure that it is seen as a management one.
5. Practice of returning Diary Cards to children thereby depriving the Home and Management Staff of on-going records on the children. Action has been taken to rectify this.
6. Reappraisal of recording system kept in the Home. Action has already been taken in respect of this. It is now necessary to review the effectiveness of the new system that has been set up.
7. Staff should write frequent progress reports in the child's file. This now takes place.
8. FJ 32 indicated that her role in particular, was not clear when she first started. District Management Staff should ensure that new members of staff appointed to Children's Homes should be clear on their responsibilities and authority. A period of induction training is essential.

*expand →  
management staff  
O/T ins*

*Proffl  
supervision  
to be  
provided by  
managers.*

*Confusion  
TL 20*

*Contd CSS: Sept 77 - Feb 82  
Feb 82  
FJ 32  
Cliz Home ↓ July 81.*

Contd./

9. Communication between Management Staff - During the period in question, communication was very limited owing to the staffing problem. This has now improved, but steps should be taken to ensure that a system is set up whereby Management Staff have an opportunity to meet on a regular basis, at least once a week, to examine care practices in the Home and to identify and modify strategies for the care of the children in the Home.
10. **FJ 32** in particular, felt it was necessary to clarify the role of Board Members. For example, one Board Member visited the Home on a Saturday morning and she found this visit stressful.
11. Support/Training for Staff outside the Home. At least one member of Junior Staff in the Home felt it would be a good idea for counselling opportunities to exist from outside the Home. This could possibly best be done by training sessions away from the Home where Junior Staff would have the opportunity to meet with their counterparts in other Homes. In addition to this and in our discussion with <sup>a recognised</sup> it was recognised that it was important for all new staff entering Residential Homes to have an adequate period of induction training, whereby their role and responsibilities would be clarified with them and whereby the responsibility of the Board towards children in their care, would be clearly understood. We should consider producing a Procedural Manual or an Instructional Booklet for staff in our Homes.
12. Permission for Children leaving the Home. - Although action has already been taken on this particular issue, we should review how effective it is and whether greater authority should be delegated to the Officer-in-Charge.
13. Reviews - Although reviews are regularly carried out, it would seem that absences of children from the Home are not normally considered, this should now take place. *Names of those attending*
14. Action has now been taken for **TL 4** to examine records in the Home on a regular basis and sign log books. There is an urgent need for secretarial support at Fort James.
15. It was evident during our review that staff were not receiving the level of supervision they required. With the improved staffing establishment this should now take place. It is however necessary to monitor on a regular basis, the level of and effectiveness of this supervision.

*Who should seek approval*

*All older should have a keycard at all times*

T Haverty  
27th April 1984.

WESTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD

MEMORANDUM

From..... T Haverty ADSS (Group).....

To..... Mr E Watson Acting GA.....

Ref.: TH/ID Date: 30th April 1984

Ref.:

You will be aware that a review into the management of Fort James during the period **FJ5** was Officer-in-Charge was recently carried out by Mr. Newman, Mr. Thompson and myself. This review identified a range of difficulties created in the Home due to lack of secretarial/clerical staff. I am aware that we looked at the possibility in the past of appointing a part-time secretary to Fort James, but unfortunately due to lack of resources, this was not possible. I now wonder if there is any possibility of making monies available towards the appointment of a part-time secretary in this Home.

  
T Haverty

cc : TL 20

FJH-30988



STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF [redacted] FJ7  
AGE OF WITNESS [if over 21 enter "over 21"] : Over 21  
OCCUPATION OF WITNESS: [redacted]  
ADDRESS: 70 Knockswellan Park, Londonderry

TO BE COMPLETED WHEN THE STATEMENT HAS BEEN WRITTEN

I declare that this statement consisting of 2 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 20 day of January 1984.

P.N. Thomson  
SIGNATURE of MEMBER by whom statement was recorded or received.

Catherine O'Neill  
SIGNATURE of WITNESS

I am [redacted] Fort James Children's Home, 15 Ardmore Road, Londonderry. I have been in this position since 1980. On 2 September 1980 a [redacted] FJ5 took up the position of [redacted] the Children's Home. He stayed in that capacity until 1 August 1983. The home functions as a residential unit controlled by the Western Health and Social Services Board and receive children into care but tend to specialise in adolescent admissions. We normally have 16 residents at any one time. The building consists of a 3 storey victorian house in its own grounds. There are 12 bedrooms and staff rooms, kitchens and bathing areas on the first floor. The normal procedure for the period around 1980/1981 was that a member of the management, which is defined as Officer in Charge or his deputy, plus one house parent would be resident in the building at all times on call. Until Christmas 1980 a system of duty night staff was in operation which in practice meant that a person would be employed on waking duty whilst the manager slept in the unit. Whenever the Officer in Charge slept in the unit he would occupy a room on the third floor known as the sleeping in room. After Christmas 1980 a house parent always slept in and the room used would be on the second

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS: [redacted] FJ7

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STATEMENT CONTINUATION PAGE

STATEMENT OF: **FJ 7** CONTINUATION PAGE NO: 2

floor and the west end of the passage. I have been in the Fort James Home for eight years and prior to my appointment **[REDACTED]**. One of the residents was a young man called **FJ 30** who came to us on 17 April 1980 leaving on 11 May 1983. During his occupancy here he was mostly living in his own room on the second floor at the east end of the passage. At various times Martin was placed in a group of rooms known as the 'flat'. This was a training scheme for children leaving the home for an independent living. This would give them experience on self catering and a certain amount of independence. A day to day log of events are normally kept recording unusual events. There is no set pattern as to what is recorded and it is left to the duty officer to decide on what entries are made. I produce the log books covering the period from 2 September 1980 to September 1983. Each child in residence has a set of day cards. A member of staff would record something on each child and the child would be encouraged to also record anything using this document.

Certified a true copy of the original

*[Handwritten signature]*

SIGNATURE OF STATEMENT MAKER: ..

**FJ 7**