

HIA REF: []

NAME: [RG 20]

DATE: [30/11/15]

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Final Submission RG 20

I, **RG 20** wish to make the following closing submission to the Inquiry.

1. I commenced work in Rathgael in [] I was employed as a Residential Social Worker in the Reception Unit. I qualified as a Social Worker in [] and worked initially in the Youth Treatment Sector and subsequently Care in []
2. The young people who were admitted to Care were made up of male, female non-school attenders and children beyond care and control.
3. The work in the long term care units was both challenging and rewarding. The occupancy for the unit was ten young people and staff therefore had to remain vigilant in terms of supervision and organising various activities and programmes.
4. The Centre provided excellent facilities in terms of a swimming pool, gym, sports hall and acres of sports fields.
5. Staff played an important role in engaging with the young people whether through sports activities, creative arts, music or specific key worker sessions with an aim of promoting family relationships, social skills or education/work prospects.
6. In [] I took charge of a Care Unit and managed a staff team of both qualified and unqualified personnel.

7. During this period the Unit organised several short trips to England, specifically to Blackpool, Manchester and Scotland.
8. The Staff team worked extremely well with the young people and each Resident had a key worker identified to work towards their placement within Rathgael and in the future.
9. Each Unit and an annual announced and unannounced inspection (SSI and RQIA). Inspectors would inspect Children's files, unit records; speak with staff and young people. These inspections were viewed as a positive thing and encouraged the Team Leader and staff in their belief in the validity of the work which was being undertaken in the unit.
10. Senior Staff in Care were proactive in visiting each Unit at various times through Senior duties, team meetings, young peoples' meetings or mealtimes.
11. Medical staff would visit each Unit two to three times a day to deal with ailments and provide medication. On a weekly basis a GP would visit the Centre to address any specific issues.
12. On admission to a Unit a young person would receive an induction pack outlining information regarding the Unit, school times, meal times, bedtimes etc. Attached to this was a postcard addressed to the Social Services Administrator. This was free-post and allowed the young person to contact an outside Department at any time if they had issues with their care in Rathgael.
13. In the weekly group meetings the young people had an opportunity to have their say in issues relating to the Unit or the Centre. Regular issues raised were bed times, smoking, food, activities and bullying. The minutes of the meeting were recorded, usually by a young person and the issues raised were addressed by staff for the next meeting. Staff could also raise their own issues and concerns for discussion and debate.
14. Education played a major role in the life of the young people in the Centre. I feel the young people benefited from their experiences there.

15. As a Team Leader of a Care Unit I had Senior duties to perform, usually one Senior duty per week and one week-end per month. This involved visiting other Units during the evening and responding to any incident or crisis.
16. My experience and memories of Rathgael Care are positive. It is unfortunate that the excellent work carried out throughout the Centre has apparently been tarnished by the isolated actions of a few bad apples.

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

Signed **RG 20**

Dated 1-12-15