

HIA REF: []

NAME: [RG 48]

DATE: [02/12/15]

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Final Submission RG 48

I, **RG 48** wish to make the following closing submission to the Inquiry.

1. I commenced work in Rathgael in [] and I was employed as a Temporary Residential Social Worker in the [] on the Care side. I later qualified as a Social Worker and during my time in Rathgael, which ended in [] I worked in various Units in the Centre although mostly on the Youth Treatment side.
2. I was a key worker for many young people in Rathgael and eventually progressed to []
3. The work in the units was focused overwhelmingly on the care and wellbeing of the young people we were looking after. I have no doubt a caring and stable environment was the foremost concern of all the staff I worked with throughout the Centre. If an issue, for instance bullying or a sudden change in temperament in a child was noted it would have been acted on without delay. We were conscious of the background and history of each child and we never regarded those in our care as persons to be contained but rather children to be cared for.
4. Sport and physical activity was encouraged and the Centre provided excellent facilities to keep the children stimulated including a swimming pool, fitness gym, sports hall and sports fields. In addition the children would regularly have been

taken on field trips and other types of diversion and entertainment such as the cinema or local swimming pool.

5. Despite sometimes challenging situations, staff worked on a daily basis to help the young people whether it be in education or social interaction and were constantly seeking new ways to expand this interaction through team meetings and meetings with the young persons themselves.
6. The complaints procedure during my time was extremely easy to access. Young people could have made a complaint at any time to any member of staff, senior staff, key worker, team leaders, chaplains, matron or the visiting GP. I am not aware of any complaints made against me by any child resident in Rathgael during my time there.
7. In 1998 a complaint was made against me by a past resident and this was properly investigated progressing from Senior management to the PSNI. I was suspended during this investigation which eventually cleared me of any suggestion of wrong doing.
8. I would like to say that this experience highlighted for me a major failing in the system at the time. I have no difficulty with the system being as child centred as it was however there were times when staff were subject to verbal abuse, violence and occasionally serious physical assault. Dealing with difficult children was demanding and to my knowledge counselling sessions were not offered to staff. When the false allegations were made against me the total lack of staff support weighed heavily even after I was cleared. I feel staff were left vulnerable and exposed to patently false claims. [REDACTED]

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

Signed

RG 48

Dated

3/12/2015