

HIA REF: []

NAME: [RG 5]

DATE: [03/12/15]

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Final Submission RG 5

I, RG 5 wish to make the following closing submission to the Inquiry.

1. I commenced work in Rathgael in [] was employed as a Temporary Residential Social Worker on the Care side. I later qualified as a Social Worker in [] I continued on the Care side of Rathgael until I left in [] I have since moved on to work in []
2. The first Unit I worked in was all girls but this went mixed at some time in the 1980s and I would have worked mostly in mixed Units There was a mixed regime which was Social Work led and was about primary care, psychology, education and constructive leisure time. Within that there would also be elements of Arts and crafts and other pursuits which depended on the strengths of the various members of staff in each Unit. For instance we would have had a concert every year put on by the young people. Even the administrative staff would have contributed to such activities. I found it to be a very inclusive environment.
3. The work in the units was value based care. It was about respect and helping the young people to better cope with their environments and what had brought them to us and how to better manage that when they would leave again. It was all about

creating a warm and family atmosphere if at all possible. The buildings were themselves quite austere but there was normally a warm atmosphere within.

4. The Centre provided excellent facilities in terms of a swimming pool, gym, sports hall and sports fields. The staff would go the extra mile in addition providing training such as gymnastics and trampolining and five a side football. Also if a young person expressed an interest in an activity which was not available we would make every effort to take them to outside venues to participate, for instance in horse riding.
5. The focus of work would be agreed at the initial case conference in every individual case and specific tasks for each child would be based on the series of events which led to the young person coming into care in the first instance. This work would be undertaken or led by a primary worker but within a team setting with the team working to achieve the same end. I was a key worker for many young people at Rathgael and progressed to Team Leader however I had revised my role to pure Social Work before I left.
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, teaching, housekeeping, Senior staff, the matron or the visiting GP as well as the various external agencies the young person worked with or indeed some of them attended outside schools. It was made clear to me from the outset that if a young person wanted to complain we would help them. For instance I on occasions wrote out complaints for a young person and they were all dealt with expeditiously being passed up the line as far as was required for resolution. I am aware of one complaint made against me which was certainly properly investigated. In fact the young person involved retracted the allegation, but not before it was suggested to me I apologise to him to save the Centre any embarrassment.
7. I would like to say that that whilst there was support for staff on the Care side of the Centre from management certainly by the time I had left there was a weekly review of issues such as that, there was a problem with violent attacks on staff. I myself was assaulted on a large number of occasions being hit, bitten and spat on

8. I feel confident that the people I was working alongside were working to benefit the young people in our care and I am proud of the work I and my colleagues did in Rathgael.

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

Signed **RG 5**

Dated 9 December 2015