

HIA REF: [            ]

NAME: [ SPT 158 ]

DATE: [ 24 August 2015. ]

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

---

**Witness Statement of SPT 158**

---

I [ SPT 158 ], will say as follows: -

1. I am currently employed by the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust as [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. My career path is as follows :
  - January 2006 – present, [REDACTED]
  - 1999 – 2006 – [REDACTED], North & West Belfast
  - 1994 – 1999 – [REDACTED], North & West Belfast
  - 1988 – 1994 – Senior Social Worker, North & West Belfast
  - 1983 – 1988 – Social Worker, North & West Belfast
  
2. In relation to the Inquiry's Module Seven: Juvenile Justice Units, I am able to assist the Inquiry by explaining my involvement with St Patrick's Training School from two perspectives. One was as a Social Worker / Senior Social Worker for children placed there. The other was as an occasional member of an Admissions Panel which reviewed placements of particular children in the secure unit within St Patrick's. This was known as Slemish House.
  
3. In relation to my involvement in the placement of children in St Patrick's and Rathgael Training Schools, this was mainly in respect of children who were already in the care system but for whom our Children's Homes were no longer suitable or had been unsuccessful, despite staff efforts. This may have been because the child was displaying disturbed behaviours, aggressive / violent behaviours or because they absconded regularly, thereby placing themselves at risk. My role would have

been with children / young people, usually 12 years plus. I would work with staff in the Training School to assess the most suitable placement for the young person. In most cases this would have involved a return to original placement or a full time placement in the Training School.

4. Young people could also enter the Training School system directly from the community without first having been in a Social Services Children's Home or Foster Care Placement. This could occur if the young person was deemed to be presenting challenging, aggressive behaviours, involved in anti-social behaviour or criminal activity. A Place of Safety Order could be taken by the Social Worker and following discussion with the Training School, the young person could be placed. A Place of safety Order could also be taken by the Police if they felt it necessary to seek a training school placement for a child in an emergency. They should have informed Social Services when this occurred. However this would be in contrast to when a Training School Order was sought through the Criminal Justice system. Social Services would have no role to play in such circumstances – see paragraph 7 below.
  
5. In cases where Social Services placed a young person in Training School, the Social Worker in conjunction with Training School staff would make an assessment as to the need of the young person to stay in the Training School : this assessment was usually made over a 15 week period. The first five weeks would have been accessed by use of a Place of Safety Order. It was then possible to make a request to the Court for up to a maximum of two Interim Orders each for five weeks. The granting of a Full Training School Order was always the decision of the Juvenile Court. If a young person was admitted on a Place of Safety Order and subsequent interim orders Social Services would have been fully involved with the young person meeting alongside Training School Staff. In a significant amount of cases the young person would have had a Psychological Assessment carried out by Adolescent Psychological Research Unit, APRU. This was a resource available to the Training Schools via the Northern Ireland Office. To my knowledge, this may on occasions have involved Lisnevin.

Reports would have been requested from all relevant agencies, education welfare, schools, GP, before an overarching assessment and in most cases agreed

- recommendations were presented to the court,. During this period the Social Worker would be visiting the young person in the Training school on a regular basis and would have maintained contact with parents or previous carers.
6. When a Training School Order was made the Social Services would normally close the case in relation to that young person. All key decisions in respect of the young person's life such as home leave and contact with relatives were made by Training School staff. Social Service Records were normally closed at the point a Training School Order was made unless there were pressing reasons to maintain involvement with other members of the family. This is likely to have happened when there were significant concerns about the family, for example in relation to safeguarding issues about other children.
  7. Young People could also be directly admitted to Training School after appearing in Juvenile Court for non-school attendance. The Social Inquiry Report was completed by an Education Welfare Officer or a Probation Officer and there may have been no involvement from Social Services. Young people could also be made subject to a Training School Order if they were proved guilty of criminal offences or if their Probation Officer felt it necessary to request their admission to a Training School. Once again, unless they were previously known to Social Services, HSC staff would normally not have played a role.
  8. In relation to my role on the Secure Panel, I was [REDACTED] Social Worker employed in Antrim Road, North and West Belfast Trust at that time. I believe that this arose because St Patricks Training School requested an Independent person from Social Services to sit on their secure panel to ensure the young person was appropriately placed in Slemish House, was reviewed regularly and not kept in locked accommodation any longer than necessary. The Authority to place in Secure / locked accommodation was vested in the Training School. The decision to place a young person in Slemish House was mainly used in respect of young people who were regularly absconding from the Training school and partaking in severe risk taking behaviours such as solvent abuse. Thus I was not responsible for the child being considered as they could have come from any area in Northern

Ireland. I am conscious that other staff from North & West Belfast District also sat on the Panel which met as and when required. I attach as **Exhibit 1**, a sample copy of Minutes.

9. Training schools had staff who provided an aftercare service to the young person after they were discharged from Training School.

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

Signed

**SPT 158**

Dated 24 August 2015

Exhibit One

Minutes of Admission Panel Review held on Thursday 24 November 1994

In Slemish House, St Patricks Training School

MINUTES OF ADMISSIONS PANEL REVIEW HELD ON THURSDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER 1994  
IN SLEMISH HOUSE, ST PATRICK'S TRAINING SCHOOL

RE: **HIA 384**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr	[REDACTED]	St Patrick's TS - Chair
Br.	BR 90	(Care) St Patrick's TS
Mr	SPT 158	Antrim Road Social Services
✓ Br.	BR 50	Saul House, St Patrick's TS
Mr	SPT 87	Slemish House, St Patrick's TS
✓ Mr	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED], Saul House

APOLOGY: Mr Michael Lenaghan, Clinical Psychologist, Craigavon

Br. BR 90 informed the Panel that a Case Conference had been held on the 26th September 1994. He stated that the Minutes of that meeting were Confidential and could not be distributed. He reported that it had been agreed at the meeting that HIA 384, who was due to begin a course of medication, should remain in Slemish House during this time.

SPT 87 gave an update on HIA 384 progress since the Case Conference. He reported that a care plan for HIA 384 had been outlined as well as the role of identified persons to carry out specific work. SPT 87 stated that HIA 384 has developed positively to the care plan and has reached the point where he should be phased back to the open setting. He reported that HIA 384 medication has now been reduced to one tablet per day.

SPT 87 said that HIA 384 has gone through his work programme with Mr Lenaghan and Dr McCune. He had spoken to Mr Lenaghan on the 15th November 1994 about HIA 384 care plan and he was happy with the work carried out to date and he agreed that HIA 384 should be returned to the Open Unit. SPT 87 added that Dr McCune was also in agreement with this.

SPT 158 stated that he found it difficult to comment on HIA 384 case when he had not sat on the Admissions Panel in August nor was he party to the Case Conference held in September.

Br. BR 90 informed SPT 158 that a representative from the N.I.O. had attended the Case Conference and he was happy with the decision taken to return HIA 384 to the Open Unit. SPT 87 informed the Panel that Mr Lenaghan would be prepared to put his views in writing, if required.

SPT 158 wished it to be placed on record that he had not been included in any decision made to return HIA 384 to the Open Unit.

Br. BR 50 asked about family contact. Mr SPT 87 told him that HIA 384 sister had visited him in Slemish House and that these were supervised through her social worker. Br. BR 50 asked had there been any contact between HIA 384 and his mother and Mr SPT 85 told him there had been no contact whatsoever, but during counselling sessions with HIA 384 he now realizes that his mother has no part to play in his life.

It was agreed that HIA 384 should return to the Open Unit, the timing to be decided between staff in Slemish House and Saul House sometime in early January.

NB: Any serious inaccuracies or omissions in these Minutes should be reported to the Chairperson within seven days, otherwise it will be assumed that the Minutes are agreed.

35

9. After the completion of the new units, Chalets 1 and 2 will be next in line for refurbishment. The ground floors of Chalets 1 and 2 are in a reasonable state of repair and decoration but the 3 bedded rooms are in need of redecoration. Chalets 1 and 2 were very clean and tidy which reflects well on the domestic staff.
10. Slemish House, the close supervision unit, is in a good state of repair and new living room furniture has recently been acquired. The ground floor is due for redecoration and the unit is bright, warm and has a pleasant feel to it.
11. Every effort has been made to make the units in the main building as comfortable and pleasant as possible. Each unit has accommodation for up to 13 boys in single rooms plus a games room, TV room and lounge. The unit also has staff office accommodation and a night supervisor's office. It has not been easy to create a sense of unit identification within the school building as the sleeping accommodation, toilets and recreation areas are located some distance from each other and in some cases on different floors. All of the staff are looking forward to occupying the new units when they become available in 1994.

#### **Slemish House Close Supervision Unit**

12. At the time of the inspection there were 8 young people on the roll of Slemish. Three were in residence, one was working out, one was on a flexi-care programme and there was one absconder. Admission dates showed that the young people on roll have been accommodated for periods ranging from one month (Place Safety Order) to 10 months. One boy was first admitted to Slemish House on 10 September 1992. This young person was charged with assaulting a member of staff and at the Juvenile Court on 13 October 1993 was placed on Probation for a period of one year with a Fourth Condition that "he continues to attend the behaviour modification programme as directed by his supervising officer". It seems that due to some administrative oversight the court made a Probation Order whilst the Training School Order was still valid. Probation Orders and Training School Orders are not permitted to operate in tandem. This matter was raised with the Director and the Northern Ireland Office with a view to regularising the situation and applying for the discharge of the Training School Order.
13. There were no young persons in separation at the time of the visit. A scrutiny of the separation record shows that this method of control appears to be used sparingly; the last removal having taken place on 10 November 1993. It is noted that the option is now being used less frequently and periods of separation are much shorter. The records are being monitored regularly the most recent scrutiny having been carried out by Brother BR 90 on 5 December 1993. The records show that the school nurse makes frequent checks on hygiene in the unit. In addition to the waking night supervisor a member of care staff also sleeps in the unit nightly.
14. Reference has been made earlier in paragraph 12 to the length of stay in Slemish House. Research clearly demonstrates that excessively lengthy periods in security tends to have a negative effect on young people. The time spent in security should concentrate on reducing the risk factor in the behaviour that led to



examined in an effort to increase the throughput in short-term Care (Reception).

33. Brother BR 90 is taking a more direct interest in the operation of the educational component at the school. He feels there has been an improvement in the running of the school and generally morale is now much higher. It is Brother BR 90's view that behaviour in the classroom has also improved as has the performance of some of the boys.
34. The Independent Representation Scheme, which was launched in December 1991 is not functioning at present. The Scheme which was launched in association with the West Belfast Parents Youth Support Group, has been experiencing operational difficulties of late. It is being suggested that the main problem is the inability of the WBPYSG to effectively carry out the co-ordinating role which is crucial to the success of the Scheme. The original scheme was perhaps over ambitious with the independent representatives being made available to all the young people in the school. Nationally independent representation tended to focus more on young people in secure units. The St Patrick's scheme drew on a range of people, some of whom have connection with the Management Board and their ability to be seen to be totally independent may have caused some confusion for the young people. Discussions are currently taking place to reactivate the scheme jointly with Save The Children Fund. It has been pointed out that NIACRO is operating the scheme for Lisnevin Training School and thought should be given to using the service of that organisation who have developed expertise in the field. At present no decision has been taken on the future direction of IR in the school.
35. Reference has been made in Paragraph 12 of this report to the periods that young people are spending in Slemish House. It is the view of the Inspectorate that the periods are too lengthy. Whereas it is not possible to be definitive about the time a young person should spend in secure accommodation research tends to support the view that lengthy periods are likely to produce negative patterns in the behaviour of the young people.
36. Examination of the records in the residential units clearly show that regular visiting of the units and the monitoring of records by senior management is taking place. With the building of the new units well underway there is the sense of expectation among staff who, understandably, are looking forward to the opening of the new premises. Generally the morale of staff appears high and management reported favourably on the present operation of the school. Nothing untoward came to notice during the course of the inspection and the attention of management is drawn to the recommendations in the following paragraph.

#### Recommendation

37. i. Management should examine the length of time being spent in Slemish House and examine the means of reviewing and overseeing the length of placements. (Para 14)

## C O N F I D E N T I A L

MINUTES OF CASE CONFERENCE HELD IN AISLING HOUSE, ST PATRICK'S TRAINING SCHOOL  
ON MONDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 1994

RE: HIA 384

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr [REDACTED] [REDACTED] St Patrick's - Chair  
Mr Michael Lenaghan, Clinical Psychologist, Craigavon Hospital  
Mr [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Training Schools Branch, N.I.O.  
Br. BR 90 [REDACTED] (Care) St Patrick's TS  
Ms SPT 166 [REDACTED], S.W. Brownlow Social Services  
Mr [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Saul House, St Patrick's TS  
✓ Mr SPT 87 [REDACTED] (Keyworker) Slemish House, St Patrick's

In opening the meeting, Mr [REDACTED] informed those present that there have been a number of developments since the last review held on 8th July 1994. He invited Mr [REDACTED] to give an update on these matters.

Mr [REDACTED] said that since the 8th July meeting, HIA 384 had absconded on the 11th July, taking a younger peer with him. His peer telephoned Saul House to inform staff that he had been to various places and he returned to the Unit on the 12th July. On his return he informed staff that HIA 384 had told him he was not coming back to St Patrick's. However, HIA 384 did return a few hours after his peer. HIA 384 had told Br. BR 50 and Mr [REDACTED] that even though he did have sexual urges towards his peer whilst sleeping rough in bushes, he assured them that nothing untoward happened.

Mr [REDACTED] reported that when HIA 384 returned to the Unit, he settled well and had begun working on the Woodlands Project, a horticultural project within St Patrick's. Being involved on the project entailed staff having to collect him at break-time, lunch-time and at 4.00 p.m. Mr [REDACTED] also reported that whilst working in Woodlands, HIA 384 had made allegations of being bullied by fellow workers from the Justice Unit of the school. On investigation, it was found that these allegations were unsubstantiated. Mr [REDACTED] added that HIA 384 tended to blow things out of proportion.

It was also reported that during the first week in August, HIA 384 sister [REDACTED] returned from England with her boyfriend. HIA 384 sister got an Exclusion Order against her boyfriend and she ended up living in a Salvation Army Hostel on the Cliftonville Road. Mr [REDACTED] said, in not knowing a lot about [REDACTED], he did allow some freedom between them when she visited HIA 384 i.e. one hour unsupervised together. Mr [REDACTED] now believes that it was during this unsupervised time that they planned to go away together.

Mr [REDACTED] said that when HIA 384 absconded he had later found out from the Hostel that [REDACTED] had arranged an appointment for that afternoon, the same time as HIA 384 left. Saul House received a telephone call the following day from a Social Worker in Dundalk who had recognised [REDACTED]. HIA 384 and his sister stayed one night in Dundalk and moved on to Galway. Following various telephone calls from staff in a night shelter in Galway HIA 384 and [REDACTED] identities were established. When HIA 384 had previously gone to the Republic of Ireland he normally gave himself up to the Garda who would accommodate staff from St Patrick's by escorting him as far as the border before handing him over. This time it was a different scenario in that HIA 384 was in the care of social services in the Republic; the Garda were not involved. Mr [REDACTED] and another member of staff travelled to Galway to pick HIA 384 up.