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HIA REF: 198

Witness Name: HIA 198

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 198

I, HIA 198, will say as follows:-

Personal Details

1. I was born on the [REDACTED] and lived with my family in [REDACTED]. I am the youngest of four children. I have one brother, [REDACTED] and two sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Both my parents are still alive.
2. I have suffered medical problems since an early age. I did not meet any developmental milestones as a child. A doctor diagnosed me as 'a very bold, disobedient child' and I was referred to the Royal Victoria Hospital due to hyper activity, disrupted sleeping patterns, delayed speech, poor co-ordination and mobility. When I was four I was diagnosed with hearing difficulties which had caused my developmental delay. Throughout my primary school years psychologists were involved in my care and often visited my home to offer help and advice. When I was thirty years old I discovered that I had been diagnosed with a minor degree of cerebral palsy when I was a child. This diagnosis was not disclosed to myself or my parents.
3. I attended secondary school but I struggled massively. I was always being told off and sent to the Headmaster's office. I seemed to spend most of my time in

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detention. I could never concentrate on my homework. I did not mean to be bad but no one understood the underlying problems I had. I was diagnosed with severe Attention Deficit Disorder when I was twelve. I never left my mother's side as that is where I felt safe and protected. I did not have any friends my own age when I was growing up as I did not know how to be around other children or how to communicate with them.

4. My mother contacted social services in August 1990 to report possible abuse of myself and my two sisters to Social Services. They closed their investigation after three weeks which exposed me to the abuse for another year. I was being abused by a friend of my brother's called [REDACTED]. He would make me perform sexual favours for money and he raped me. He was about five or six years older than me. [REDACTED] admitted minor abuse on me but he was never convicted. I never told anyone that he raped me because I felt awkward and embarrassed as there was a male social worker present during the interview.
5. My mother renewed contact with social services in October 1991 as she was not coping with me and I was placed in Orana House.

Orana House, Newry (25/10/1991 – 12/03/1992)

6. When I was initially placed in Orana House it was for an assessment period of three days. The period was extended to five weeks and then further extended to five months.
7. When I was in Orana I was throwing terrible temper tantrums because I didn't understand why I was being taken away from my mother. I would have been restrained a lot and held down by staff. Usually between three and six staff members would be involved and I would have had my arm forced up my back. I have problems with my back and shoulder to this day and I believe it is a result of the physical restraint.

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8. On one occasion whilst I was being restrained my mother was present. [REDACTED] and 4 other staff members held me face down. I believe [REDACTED] took delight in restraining me.
9. There was a member of staff called [REDACTED] who restrained me with so much force that I would have been sore afterwards. When he restrained me he always seemed to clamp my hands between his legs. After being abused I did not feel comfortable touching a man near that area. I complained about him to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
10. A man called [REDACTED] used to sit outside my room at night to stop me wandering as I did not sleep at night time. I believe [REDACTED] was specifically chosen as other staff knew he terrified me.
11. I threw a tantrum the day that I left Orana as I did not want to go home to be near the boy that had been abusing me. I was held on the floor by a psychiatrist and [REDACTED]. I can remember [REDACTED] lying on my back and thumping my head of the ground. I was just twelve years old.
12. Despite the fact that I was physically restrained a lot in Orana, I kept running back there after I left as it was somewhere I felt safe. I begged to go back in to care again as I could not live near my abuser.
13. While in Orana House, Dr McCune from Craigavon Area Hospital prescribed me with medication to help me sleep with and with concentration.

St Joseph's Training School, Middletown (05/05/1992 – 05/06/1992)

14. I was admitted to Middletown for a period of 5 weeks and then I was returned home.

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Kilnahalla House, Hilltown, Kilkeel (24/05/1993 – 01/12/1993)

15. I was then sent to Kilnahalla. It was a therapeutic community for young people and I loved it there. I was given independence and I was being listened too. I felt that I was wanted, however, my social worker was a trainee and my mother felt that she was inexperienced to deal with me. This trainee social worker stopped the medication that I had been prescribed by [REDACTED] without his knowledge. She also told my mother that all my problems stemmed from a lack of maternal bonding with me.
16. I was home schooled for 4 hours per day as I had been expelled from school due to my bad behaviour and no other school was willing to take me.
17. I left Kilnahalla, due to a lack of funding and I went home for a while but I always felt like a bad child that nobody wanted. I ran away from home and a man called [REDACTED] took me up to his house and sexually abused me. I reported it to police and social services but he was not prosecuted. I understand that he is now dead.

Bocombra Lodge, Portadown (15/03/1994 – 22/08/1994)

18. I was placed in Bocombra in March 1994. A Fit Person Order was made on 15th April 1994.
19. I just wanted out of Bocombra. I wasn't wanted at home or at school or in the children's home and I could not understand what was wrong with me. I just wanted to die. While I was in Bocombra I was admitted to Craigavon Area Hospital numerous times after overdose attempts.
20. I was placed in Middletwon on a Place of Safety Order following an overdose attempt in August 1994.

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St Joseph's Training School, Middletown (22/08/1994 – 03/11/1994)

21. Children who had committed criminal offences were sent to Middletown so I do not understand why I was sent there. Everybody smoked and used the cigarettes as a bargaining tool.
22. I ran away from Middletown quite frequently. On one occasion [REDACTED] caught me and slapped me across the face. If someone ran away the other residents were given a treat, like an extra cigarette, when the run-away was caught. After I ran away a few times I was placed in the secure unit in Middletown. I only got to see one staff member for one hour a day. The remainder of the time I was locked in my bedroom. I was just fourteen.
23. One of the times I ran away from Middletown I ended up at Daisy Hill Hospital. I was attracted by the lights as I knew I would be safe. I was hungry, tired and cold so I broke into a car looking for money. There was a key in the car so I started the car. I did not know how to drive and ended up crashing the car into a bollard. I was charged with seven separate offences as a result of this incident.
24. During my time in Middletown I was aware of the rumours that [REDACTED] slapped other residents.
25. After I left Middletown on 3rd November 1994 I spent nearly a month in Craigavon Area hospital Adult Psychiatric Unit and then three weeks in a secure unit in St Luke's Hospital, Armagh before I was admitted to Rathgael.

Rathgael Training School, Bangor (22/12/1994 – 20/08/1997)

26. I was initially placed in Rathgael under a Fit Person Order and then a Training School Order was made on 17th February 1995. When I was in Rathgael I was moved around several different houses.
27. Some of the staff in Rathgael were kind and others used to antagonise children to the point that the children required to be physically restrained. There was a

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member of staff called **RG 2** and I used to dread him working because he would flirt with all the teenage girls. As a result of everything that had happened in my life I had learned by this stage to keep my head down.

28. Three specific boys who were regularly pinned to the floor by staff members using chairs. When the boys wanted released the staff refused. This resulted in the boys getting angry and having to be restrained. A member of staff called **RG 2** was renowned for this.
29. A senior staff member called **RG 41** had a favourite female resident. She would punish and threaten to punish the other residents if this girl was annoyed in any way.
30. We were taken to the shop once by a member of staff called **RG 20** to spend our pocket money. I was mouthy to him in the shop and when we returned to Rathgael I refused to go into house 3. I was sitting outside on the grass. He came back out of the house and I told him to "fuck off". He grabbed me with both his hands around the chest area and pulled me into the house. I yelled for him to stop but he did not.
31. On one occasion I remember falling down the stairs in House 3. I was clumsy with stairs. I was fined some of my pocket money as when I had fallen I used bad language. Staff did not help me up nor check if I sustained any injuries.
32. The secure unit was called Shamrock House. I spent around six months in Shamrock House. In my bedroom I had a plastic mattress and a plastic cube to place my clothes on. I found the bed extremely uncomfortable to sleep on and the bed sheet would always slide off the mattress. When I was in Shamrock House the doors were locked and I had to ask for permission for everything. If I wanted to go to the toilet or get a drink I had to ask permission and a member of staff came with me, I always had to wait. We all had to stay in the one room and watch television. We were never allowed to be on our own. The only time we were allowed out of the unit was to have a cigarette. Our bedroom doors were locked at night time. During my time in Shamrock House I attended school, although at most I would have coloured in pictures, completed crosswords

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- puzzles and played games on the computer. I did not receive the same education as children in mainstream education.
33. The food I was received in Rathgael was disgusting; I do not believe the food was fit for human consumption. When I was in Shamrock House the meals I received were nearly cold and had a rubber texture.
34. There was no medical or dental care. There was a Matron called **RG 75**, but she just seem to dispense Strepsils for every ailment. On one occasion I had an injury to my foot and I was given a Strepsil.
35. I never received a hair cut during my time in Rathgael.
36. Despite all my problems I was not given any medication or any help. I had very little education as no-one understood my problems.
37. I did not receive any life skills during my time spent in Rathgael, for example, how to look after my appearance or respect myself. I was not prepared for life when I left care.

Life After Care

38. I left Rathgael when I was seventeen years old. I was deemed 'high risk' and discharged to the care of my father. My parents had since divorced and my father had no knowledge of how to manage me nor did he want to manage me. My father, brother and sister were drinking heavily. I contacted Rathgael and social services regarding this and I was told 'it's a good home', 'there is nowhere else for you to go' and that social services had no legal obligation towards me. I believe my family had a huge resentment for me as I was blamed for breaking up the family. To this day I feel consumed with guilt and find it very difficult to accept that I deserve a future.
39. I registered with a dentist when I left Rathgael. I required eight fillings as my teeth had been neglected throughout my childhood.

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40. I had no coat and my mother had to buy me a new coat and new underwear. This task was undertaken by my mother when I was in care otherwise I would not have received a properly fitted bra or decent underwear.
41. Throughout my childhood I felt as though I was always being punished. I was not a bad child. I was an abused child who was placed in the care system and left to feel vulnerable and exposed to further physical, mental and sexual abuse.
42. I left the care system with mental health issues. I felt that anyone could do anything to me and it didn't matter if I complained as nothing would be done about it. I was promised after care services on leaving the care system. I had to make a complaint as I had not received the relevant forms. It took six months for me to receive these forms.
43. Feelings of not being wanted, not being normal and not being good enough extended into early adulthood. I began to use alcohol as a means of coping. I attempted suicide on numerous occasions. On one occasion I jumped off a bridge and was sectioned under the Mental Health Act.
44. In 2008 my sisters disclosed that they had been sexually abused. This was during the time my mother had reported possible abuse of us to social services in 1990. Social services closed their file three weeks after my mother had reported this. My sisters did not want to report the abuse as they did not want to be put in care having seen how I had been treated. My sisters were subjected to a further year of sexual abuse because of this.
45. It has taken almost five years to obtain all my files from the Department of Health and Social Services. I spent a further five years reading and trying to make sense of the neglect and failures of the department. I found it heartbreaking to read that a psychologist who had assessed me when I was around nine years old had written in a report that I had wanted to be sexually abused.

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46. I entered into correspondence with social services, highlighting their failures in my care, however they refused to accept this and stated 'I received the best care'.
47. I want social services to apologise to my mother for making her feel like a bad mother and for ruining her life.
48. I truly believe that my experiences in care will haunt me for the rest of my life. I believe there is no recovery for me as the past cannot be changed.
49. I struggle to have relationships with men as I have issues with intimacy, trust and authority. I have a problem with asking for help. I have a two daughters and I own where I am today to my mother.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

HIA 198

Dated

20th April 2015

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

**RESPONSE BY DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO
WITNESS STATEMENT OF [REDACTED] HIA 198 [REDACTED] (HIA 198)**

I, Karen Pearson, have been authorised to make this statement on behalf of the Department of Justice. I am the Deputy Director for Criminal Justice Policy, a senior civil servant in the Department. The information contained in this statement is based on a review of files undertaken by staff under my supervision.

The Department of Justice will say as follows:

1. The Department notes that the case file for HIA 198 cannot be found. The information provided in this statement is based on NIO and psychology files. Available records show that [REDACTED] HIA 198 [REDACTED] HIA 198, DOB [REDACTED] HIA 198 [REDACTED] was committed to Rathgael School on 22 December 1994 on a Place of Safety Order (see Exhibit 1). She was further committed to Rathgael on a Fit Person Order on 17 February 1995 (see Exhibit 2). Her exit date is not known. Said history can be found at Exhibit 3. Background information on HIA 198 can be found at Exhibit 4. Medical records reveal numerous entries for HIA 198 during the period 1995 – 1996, the last known entry is dated 30 December 1996 (see Exhibit 5).
2. The Department, to the best of its knowledge, has supplied all relevant information that it could find in its possession in relation to HIA 198. If additional information is discovered by the Department, it will be drawn to the attention of the Inquiry immediately.
3. The Department has not received a civil claim in respect of HIA 198.

4. The Department has not received a request for disclosure of personal data (Form 81) from PSNI.
5. The Department notes the allegations of physical abuse at paragraph 30 and neglect at paragraphs 31, 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37 of the statement made by HIA 198. To the best of the Department's knowledge and belief, the Department had no knowledge or record of such complaints prior to the receipt of HIA 198's statement to the Inquiry. The Department has also noted that HIA 198 alleges that she witnessed physical abuse at paragraphs 27 - 29.
6. The Department condemns without reservation any act of abuse which may have been perpetrated against any individual at Rathgael Training School. Those who were placed in that facility had every right to expect that they would be cared for with dignity and respect, treated compassionately and protected from abuse. Those who operated the Rathgael facility on a day-to-day basis or who were responsible for its management, ought to have been fully aware of the high standards expected for them when caring for young people. They should have known that acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse were unacceptable. They ought to have known that allegations of abuse, where they were raised, should have been reported to the appropriate authorities. The Department accepts that the evidence available to the Inquiry suggests that these standards were not always complied with in every case. The Department regrets any abuse which did occur and condemns the perpetrators of any such abuse as well as those who may have ignored the abuse or tolerated its occurrence.

Statement of Truth

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

Kamen

Date: 28 August 2015

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

**SUPPLEMENTARY RESPONSE BY DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO
WITNESS STATEMENT OF [REDACTED] HIA 198 (HIA 198)**

I, Karen Pearson, have been authorised to make this statement on behalf of the Department of Justice. I am the Deputy Director for Criminal Justice Policy, a senior civil servant in the Department. The information contained in this statement is based on a review of files undertaken by staff under my supervision.

The Department of Justice will say as follows:

1. The Department has submitted a separate statement relating to HIA 198's allegations about her time in Rathgael Training School.
2. The Department notes the applicant's comments at paragraphs 28, 29 and 30 in her statement to the Inquiry. Records show that [REDACTED] RG 2 was offered an appointment as a Relief Residential Social Worker on 25 July 1990 and is listed on Rathgael staff lists (see Exhibit 1). Rathgael staff lists also show that [REDACTED] RG 41 DOB [REDACTED] 1981 and a [REDACTED] RG 20, DOB [REDACTED] RG 20 1956 were also employees (see Exhibit 2).
3. The Department notes HIA 198's comments at paragraph 31 in her statement to the Inquiry. Records show that she attended the Rathgael Medical Unit on 17 January 1996 after falling down some stairs the previous night and received treatment for a sore knee, She had full movement of the knee (see RGL-40908).
4. The Department notes HIA 198's comments at paragraph 32 in her statement to the Inquiry. HIA 198 had a history of self-harming and overdosing (see RGL-40794 and

RGL-40765) and was placed in Shamrock House, a secure unit, on 19 January 1995 (see RGL-40765). Her placement expired on 18 July 1995 (see RGL-40769 and RGL-40791). In relation to education, at Case Conferences on 10 May 1995 and 14 June 1995 it was stated that she was doing well in the unit and in class (see RGL-40766 and RGL-40768).

5. HIA 198 made numerous visits to the Rathgael Medical Unit examples include: 15 February 1995 (see RGL-40895), 7 March 1995 (see RGL-40901), 20 March 1995 (see RGL-40904), 10 April 1995 (see RGL-40871), 12 May 1995 (see RGL-40874), 2 June 1995 (see RGL-40875), 15 June 1995 (see RGL-40876), 22 June 1995 (see RGL-40877), 27 June 1995 (see RGL-40878), 21 September 1995 (see RGL-40879), 2 October 1995 (see RGL-40882), 13 October 1995 (see RGL-40885), 17 October 1995 (see RGL-40886), 8 November 1995 (see RGL-40889), 16 November 1995 (see RGL-40891 and RGL-40892), 8 February 1996 (see RGL-40911) and 8 July 1996 (see RGL-40932).

HIA 198 was treated for various ailments including: a sore throat, dry skin, headaches, colds, grazes, infected toenail and superficial self-inflicted cuts. Mention is also made of hospital visits on 3 April 1996 (see RGL-40943), 17 December 1996 (see RGL-40956) and 23 December 1996 (see RGL-40959).

The Department would state that the records show that health issues of residents were taken seriously and that health care was arranged when required.

6. The Department, to the best of its knowledge, has supplied all relevant information that it could find in its possession in relation to HIA 198. If additional relevant information is discovered by the Department, it will be drawn to the attention of the Inquiry immediately.

Statement of Truth

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

Kamen

Date: 9 October 2015

HIA REF: [198]

NAME: HIA 198

Response by HSCB

DATE: [18 August 2015.]

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of the Health and Social Care Board

Marian Hall, Children's Services Project Manager, assisted in the drafting of this statement.

The Health and Social Care Board will say as follows: -

1. HIA 198, born HIA 198 was admitted to Rathgael Training School on 22 December 1994 under the terms of a Place of Safety Order, see **Exhibit 1**. The Applicant was made the subject of a Training School Order on 17 February 1995 which then expired on 17 February 1997, see **Exhibit 2**, and the Applicant remained in Rathgael (known as the Lakewood Centre by this time) on a voluntary basis from February 1997. The Applicant was then placed in the care of her Father in June 1997, see **Exhibit 2**.
2. The Board notes paragraphs 2 – 5 of the Applicant's statement where she details her early medical problems and her family's initial contact with Social Services. Social Service contact with the Applicant's family dated from September 1989, when her parents were experiencing difficulties with her behaviour which included temper tantrums and abusive outbursts, see **Exhibit 3**. Social Services worked with the family to introduce parenting methods that would assist them in dealing with the Applicant's behaviour. In paragraph 2 of the Applicant's statement she details her early contact with the Royal Victoria Hospital due to developmental delays. **Exhibit 4** records that the Applicant's family were referred to Social Services by both an anonymous referrer and an Educational Psychologist. Social Services subsequently liaised with the Clinical Psychology Department at the Royal Victoria Hospital to see if there were any medical or psychological reasons for the Applicant's behaviour. The

report further details that the Applicant had initially been referred to the Royal Victoria Hospital due to concerns regarding her developmental process but that these were allayed and that there were no lasting problems. Royal Victoria Hospital staff stated that they believed there were no medical or psychological basis for the Applicant's behaviours and that these could be dealt with through 'consistent, supportive and sympathetic parenting.' **Exhibit 3** details that as the Applicant's parents felt that the issues had to be resolved within their own household, Social Service contact with the family was discontinued.

3. In paragraph 4 of her statement, the Applicant recalls her Mother making a referral to Social Services in August 1990 regarding the possible abuse of her and her sisters. The Applicant states that Social Services closed the case after three weeks which exposed her to further abuse. Records in the possession of the Board note that a referral was received by a neighbour of the Applicant's family detailing that on 25 August 1990, the Applicant and her sisters were left unattended in the family home, see **Exhibit 5**. The letter alleges that boys aged sixteen or over were present in the family home and that sexual activity potentially took place. Records also indicate that additional letters, detailing the same incident, were sent to the local priest and the Applicant's Father's place of work.
4. **Exhibit 6** records that upon receipt of the letter sent to [REDACTED] workplace, the Applicant's mother contacted Social Services and reported that on a Saturday night when she had been out, there had been boys in the family home. **RG 275** was concerned that there was something going on in the area and that her children had been sexually abused. The exhibit notes that **RG 275** had questioned her children individually and all they had admitted to was playing with two young boys in the garden. The Social Worker spent an hour with **RG 275** during which she admitted to hitting the Applicant with a belt although she had not marked her. She further stated she was very depressed. The Social Worker left word for **RG 272** **RG 272** the Social Worker allocated to the family at the time, to contact the [REDACTED] family when he returned from leave.
5. **RG 272** SW subsequently visited the family on 3 September 1990, see **Exhibit 7** containing the relevant contact sheets, where he discussed the events with the

Applicant and her sister. The record notes that the girls were adamant that the boys were not aged fifteen or above but were rather aged around ten or eleven. They acknowledged the use of foul and sexualised language but stated that the boys were then directed out of the garden. A further record details that the family felt that the anonymous referrals were malicious or exaggerated to some degree, see **Exhibit 8**.

RG 272 subsequently invited the family's neighbour to an appointment to discuss the matter which then took place over the telephone. **RG 272** records in **Exhibit 7** that he would discuss the matter with his Team Leader although at this stage it was developing into a 'he says, she says' scenario.

6. In November 1990, **RG 272** recorded that there was no scope or substance for further Social Services contact but that there was an open invitation for the family to contact Social Services as necessary. In paragraph 4 of her statement, the Applicant recalls that she never made any disclosures regarding the abuse as there was a male social worker present and she felt awkward. The records in the possession of the Board do not detail any disclosures of abuse and do not record any mention of **RG 273** at this time. **RG 273** is referenced in later notes, see **Exhibit 4** above.
7. The Applicant's family then renewed contact with Social Services in October 1991 after her behaviour deteriorated further and her parents felt they were no longer able to cope with her, see **Exhibit 9** containing a case conference of 4 February 1992. As a result, the Applicant was voluntarily admitted to care on a short term basis and placed in Orana Children's Home on 25 October 1991, see **Exhibit 10** containing the Admission to Care form. **Exhibit 8** above contains the minutes of the Admission meeting to Orana Children's Home and notes that the Applicant was initially admitted for assessment / time-out purposes as detailed in paragraph 6 of the Applicant's statement.
8. A review meeting held on 20 January 1992 noted that since admission to Orana, staff there had experienced the full range of difficult behaviour that the Applicant exhibited at home, including temper tantrums, verbal abuse and physical aggression sometimes necessitating restraint, see **Exhibit 11**. It further details that work was being undertaken with the Applicant's family to improve the lines of communication

and that the Applicant visited home every weekend with the aim of these visits progressing to overnight stays.

9. Records in the possession of the Board indicate that Social Services' initially became aware of the Applicant's disclosures regarding [REDACTED] RG 273 whilst she was resident in Orana. **Exhibit 11** notes that the Applicant disclosed that she was sexually abused by a local youth in the neighbourhood on a number of occasions over the previous 18 months. It further notes that the matter had been reported to the Police, the Applicant had made a statement and the RUC were subsequently carrying out their own investigations. A case conference was also scheduled for 4 February 1992. **Exhibit 9** provides further details of the circumstances, noting that after the disclosure, the Applicant was interviewed by the RUC Care Unit on 23 December 1991 where she reaffirmed details of her allegations. It notes that [REDACTED] RG 273 [REDACTED] RG 273 was to be interviewed by the Care Unit on 10 February 1992 and that whilst the Applicant had some individual counselling work, no formal agreed work had been decided upon at that stage.
10. The Child Protection Case Conference was then held on 4 February 1992, minutes of which are at **Exhibit 12**. The minutes detail that the allegation was initially disclosed to Sister [REDACTED] of Orana on 19 November 1991 and that Social Services were concerned as a date for the Applicant's return home had been set but the alleged perpetrator had not yet been interviewed and also lived in close proximity to the Applicant. **Exhibit 12** details that Orana staff were of the opinion that the Applicant was not telling lies as her accounts to Orana, the RUC and Social Services had been consistent. It further details that the Applicant had seen [REDACTED] RG 273 since her placement in Orana but had no contact with him and did not seem concerned about potential contact should she be returned home. The decision was taken to forward a memo to the RUC Care Unit expressing concern regarding the delay in interviewing [REDACTED] RG 273
11. [REDACTED] RG 273 was then interviewed during the week of 18 February 1992 and the Police informed the Applicant's Social Worker that he stated the abuse was 'of a more minor nature' and that the Applicant was willing to provide 'favours' for cigarettes, see **Exhibit 13** containing the relevant contact sheet. The RUC then

wished to re-interview the Applicant however Social Service and Orana staff were of the opinion that this would have a negative effect on the Applicant. The minutes of the Discharge Review of 10 March 1992 note that the Applicant's mother had agreed to a second interview, see **Exhibit 14**. A letter of 25 June 1992 to **RG 272** details that the RUC referred the matter to the Director of Public Prosecutions who directed 'no prosecution', see **Exhibit 15**. The Board is not able to provide any further information as to why the DPP did not prosecute **RG 273**

12. The Applicant was discharged home on 12 March 1992 but continued to avail of weekly therapy sessions in Orana, with **RG 272** supervising the home placement, see **Exhibit 14** above. In paragraph 12 of her statement, the Applicant says that she kept running back to Orana as she felt safe there and could not live near her abuser. **Exhibit 16** contains an Out of Hours report of 16 March 1992 where the Applicant returned to Orana and was refusing to leave as she did not wish to go home because she did not like it there, although she did not give a reason why and said she wished to go to Training School. The Applicant eventually agreed to return home when she was told that a further meeting would be held to discuss the possibility of a placement in Training School.

13. A court report of 3 June 1992 notes that following the Applicant's discharge home, **RG 272** and Sister **██████** made fortnightly visits to the family home to 'monitor and support the placement', see **Exhibit 17**. The report notes that although the placement worked well for a period, by May 1992 it had deteriorated with the home atmosphere characterised by shouting, verbal abuse, physical confrontation and restraint. The Applicant's parents then requested that she be removed into care and following consultation, it was decided to admit her to Middletown Training School for a period of assessment. The Applicant was then admitted to Middletown on 5 May 1992 under a Place of Safety Order, see **Exhibit 18** containing the Order. The report finally notes that the Applicant's behaviour within Middletown had improved and that Social Services wished to discharge the Place of Safety Order so as to pursue a Care Plan in the community. The Applicant returned home on 5 June 1992, see **Exhibit 3** above. The Board notes that the Applicant makes no complaints regarding her initial placement in Middletown.

14. **Exhibit 3** details that in a similar manner to the March to May 1992 period at home, the Applicant's behaviour was initially settled but eventually became problematic again with the Applicant and her mother engaging in physical and verbal abuse. As a result, the Applicant was placed with foster parents in [REDACTED] from 28 July 1992 until 18 August 1992 wherein she displayed no behavioural difficulties. The Applicant was discharged home on 18 August 1992 where she remained until 24 May 1993 when she was placed in Kinnahalla Children's Home after a further period of physical and verbal abuse at home culminated in the Applicant's Mother's request that she be removed into care. **Exhibit 3** records that as Social Services believed the Applicant to be at risk of violence they secured a place in Kinnahalla and the Applicant was voluntarily received into care. The Applicant was to remain in Kinnahalla for six months and was to be reviewed thereafter.
15. In paragraphs 15 to 17 of her statement, the Applicant details her time in Kinnahalla and states that she 'loved it there'. **Exhibit 3** notes that the Applicant thrived in Kinnahalla and that she displayed none of the behavioural problems that she had at home. The Board notes paragraph 15 where the Applicant describes a Trainee Social Worker stopping the medication she had been on. The Applicant had previously been prescribed Melleril and Dexedrine by Dr Noel McCune in 1992 to assist her with sleeping and for hyperactivity. Records in the possession of the Board note that the Applicant stopped taking her medication whilst in Kinnahalla as it was felt that she did not need them anymore, see **Exhibit 19**. Exhibit 19 further details that the Applicant was schooled at Kinnahalla from March 1993 but was to return to St Paul's Secondary School in September 1993.
16. In paragraph 17 of her statement, the Applicant states that she left Kinnahalla due to a lack of funding. As detailed in **Exhibit 3**, the Applicant was scheduled to remain at Kinnahalla for six months after which the position would be reviewed. Upon review, **Exhibit 3** details that it became clear to Social Services that a return home would not be in the Applicant's best interests owing to her parents' attitude towards her and their unwillingness to work towards her returning home. **Exhibit 3** further details that on 20 October 1993, the Applicant's Mother announced at a family meeting that they did not want the Applicant home as she would never improve and that she should be placed in foster care, as a result of which Social Services explored the options of

wardship and foster care. The Applicant's parents then changed their view on 12 November 1993 stating that they did want the Applicant home. The Board notes the remarks of the Social Worker that 'this Department has exhausted every possible form of intervention, assistance service, help available to enable Mr and [RG 275] to allow [HIA 198] to live at home with them on a long term basis.' The Applicant was discharged from Kinnahalla in December 1993 after Mr and [RG 275] made the commitment to try and care for the Applicant at home.

17. The Board notes paragraph 17 of the Applicant's statement where she says that a man named [HIA 274] sexually abused her after she had run away from home. **Exhibit 3** records a 'recent allegation of assault' but notes that it had not been dealt with yet. The matter initially came to the attention of Social Services after the Applicant had reported it to the RUC. The Applicant was interviewed by Social Services in relation to this allegation on 24 January 1994 where she detailed the abuse she suffered, see **Exhibit 20**. Exhibit 20 notes that the Applicant's mother would not cooperate with Social Services and so a Joint Protocol Investigation could not be completed however one was eventually held on 15 April 1994 wherein the Applicant repeated her allegations, see **Exhibit 21** containing the relevant contact sheet. Records in the possession of the Board detail that the man the Applicant named as her abuser admitted the offence, see **Exhibit 22**. The Board is unable to provide further insight as to why the offender was not prosecuted.

18. After the Applicant's return home from Kinnahalla, the placement deteriorated once more; the Applicant attempted two overdoses and was admitted to Daisy Hill Hospital after one and further continued to run away from home, see **Exhibit 3** above. The Applicant stated that she would continue to do so and sleep on the streets until she was taken into care. On 14 March 1994, the Applicant's Mother contacted Social Services as a last resort, stating she was not willing to have the Applicant home and requesting a long term placement. As a result the Applicant was admitted to Bocombra Children's Home under a Place of Safety Order on 15 March 1994, see **Exhibit 23** and a Fit Persons Order was granted on 15 April 1994, see **Exhibit 24**. A post admission meeting was held on 29 March 1994, the minutes of which are contained at **Exhibit 25**. Exhibit 25 notes that the Applicant's mother wished to cut off all contact with her but Social Services felt this would be punitive

and as the admission to Bocombra had not been solely the fault of the Applicant, suggested contact once a month. It was further commented that the panel did not wish to see **RG 275** and the Applicant lose their mother-daughter relationship.

19. As detailed in the Applicant's statement at paragraphs 18 to 20, the placement in Bocombra was characterised by absconsions, self-harm and overdoses, see **Exhibit 26**. Following two consecutive overdoses on 12 and 13 August 1994, the Applicant was admitted to the Early Treatment Unit in Craigavon Area Hospital. **Exhibit 26** records that she was not diagnosed with any psychiatric illnesses but rather her actions were due to behavioural difficulties. The Applicant was discharged on 19 August 1994 after which she again overdosed. It was concluded that given the Applicant's intent to commit suicide, a placement in Bocombra was no longer suitable. As a result, the Applicant was removed to Middletown Training School on a Place of Safety Order on 21 August 1994, see **Exhibit 27**. The report at **Exhibit 26** concludes by commending all Bocombra staff who gave the Applicant a great deal of help and support during her placement.
20. The Applicant was initially placed in the Assessment unit at Middletown, see **Exhibit 28**, after which her behaviour is noted to have stabilised. The report at **Exhibit 28** notes that the Applicant had on-going contact with her parents and that she continued her sessions with Dr McCune and began work with Michael Barbour of the Adolescent Psychology & Research Unit. At the time of the report, Social Services were pursuing an independent living facility for the Applicant whilst Dr McCune was recommending that she return home. The staff at Middletown were of the opinion that further assessment was needed before the best option could be ascertained.
21. **Exhibit 29** records that an Interim Order of Detention was granted on 19 September 1994. Over the month of October 1994 the Applicant absconded four times and was admitted to Daisy Hill Hospital and Craigavon Area Hospital as a result of overdosing. On 17 October 1994, the Applicant was apprehended by the RUC where she was questioned and finger printed regarding a stolen car and burglary, as detailed in paragraph 23 of her statement. After her return to Middletown on 18 October 1994, the Applicant was held in secure accommodation. **Exhibit 29** notes that staff at Middletown were concerned that the Applicant was being deprived of the

company of other young persons but that Social Services were not willing to risk giving her freedom, owing to her ability to cause severe self-harm. It also records that Michael Barbour recommended that the Applicant be admitted to the secure unit in Rathgael Training School.

22. An application for a further Interim Order of Detention was heard on 21 October 1994, see **Exhibit 30** containing the court report and **Exhibit 31** containing the court order. The court report notes that whilst professionals acknowledged the Applicant's history of abuse and family relationships as inherent factors in her pattern of self-harm, there was agreement amongst all parties that the Applicant would continue along a path of self-destruction until she accidentally killed herself, unless she was placed in a secure unit. The report also details the wish of Social Services to work towards placing the Applicant in a Community Home.
23. The Applicant was admitted to the Early Treatment Unit of Craigavon Area Hospital on 3 November 1994 in order to trial new medications aimed at stabilising the Applicant's hyperactivity and impulsivity, see **Exhibit 32**. The Applicant had been due to return to Middletown on 1 December 1994 but on the evening before return, absconded and overdosed and was admitted to the secure unit at St Luke's Hospital on 1 December 1994 as it was the only possible placement for her, see **Exhibit 33**. An Admission Panel for the secure unit at Rathgael, named Shamrock House, had been held on 25 November 1994 and the Applicant was transferred to the unit on 22 December 1994 under a Place of Safety Order, see **Exhibit 34**. A further interim Order was granted on 20 January 1995, see **Exhibit 35**. Exhibit 35 details that the Applicant had settled well into Shamrock House and that it was agreed by all professionals involved with the Applicant that she would benefit from a long term placement in the unit. Social Services consequently applied for a Training School Order which was granted on 17 February 1995, see **Exhibit 2** above.
24. After the Training School Order was granted, responsibility for the Applicant transferred to Rathgael Training School and it is likely that Social Service contact would have decreased as a result of this. The Board notes the Rathgael internal Case Reviews in its possession which detail that the Applicant chose not to avail of psychological work with Mr Barbour whilst resident in Rathgael and that family

contact continued to be problematic as did the Applicant's anti-social behaviour, see **Exhibit 36**.

25. The Applicant's Training School Order expired on 17 February 1997 after which the Applicant was accommodated in Rathgael (now Lakewood) on a voluntary basis. The Applicant was then placed with her Father on extended leave from 20 June 1997, see **Exhibit 2** above. A discharge meeting from Lakewood was held on 20 August 1997, see **Exhibit 37**. The minutes of the meeting note that since the lapse of the Training School Order, the Applicant had been accommodated by Newry and Mourne Trust and that all appropriate services were made available but at that stage, the Applicant was refusing the assistance of a Social Worker. The report also notes that the Applicant was placed with her Father as her Mother had become exhausted by her behaviour over the previous years and did not want to take on the responsibility of caring for her.
26. The Board notes paragraph 38 where the Applicant describes being told by Social Services that a placement with her Father was 'a good home' and that they had no legal obligation towards her. **Exhibit 37** details that Social Services chose not to pursue a Care Order after the Applicant's discharge from Lakewood as it was felt that this might alienate the Applicant rather than encourage her to work with them. There were no concerns regarding the Applicant's Father's ability to care for her and it was not thought necessary to place her name on the Child Protection register. Social Services continued to assist the Applicant with Independence Training and a Setting Up Home Allowance and offered after care services until the Applicant was twenty-one years old. Complaints were made by the Applicant and her mother regarding the placement with her Father however upon discussion, it was noted that **RG 275** stated that the Trust could not have managed the situation differently as the Applicant always moved around and never settled. **RG 275** also stated if she had known the implications of being in care, she would never have allowed the Applicant to be admitted but that she did not blame Social Work staff but 'the system', see **Exhibit 38**.
27. In paragraph 43 of her statement, the Applicant details an instance where she jumped off a bridge and was sectioned under the Mental Health Act. **Exhibit 39**

provides detail regarding this incident; the Applicant was admitted to St Luke's Hospital on 14 August 2000. The Applicant's Aftercare Worker visited her in hospital, liaised with the relevant psychiatrist and brought her clothes.

28. The Board notes paragraph 45 of the Applicant's statement where she says that a psychologist, who assessed her when she was around nine years of age, remarked that she had wanted to be sexually abused. The Board has reviewed the records in its possession and has not come across that remark. If such a report is highlighted at a later stage, the Board may be able to provide further comment.
29. In paragraphs 46 and 47 of her statement the Applicant states that she entered into correspondence with Social Services highlighting their failures and that she wants an apology from Social Services for making her Mother feel like a bad Mother and for ruining her Mother's life. Social Services were involved with the Applicant from 1989 during which time they undertook work with the Applicant's family to ensure the stability of her placement in the family home. Social Service involvement ceased whenever the Applicant's family withdrew and was re-initiated only when the family felt it to be necessary. The Applicant was initially voluntarily received into care and as demonstrated above at paragraphs 12 to 16, Social Services continually encouraged and supported the Applicant's placement at home and only removed her into care due to both verbal and physical abuse in the home or at the request of her parents.
30. Whilst in care, Social Services encouraged contact between the Applicant and her family, often whenever the Applicant's family were refusing to see her, see paragraph 18 above. During her time in care, the Applicant exhibited extremely challenging behaviour and the Board notes that Social Service staff continuously tried to work with the Applicant to find a solution to her problems. The Applicant was also assessed and treated by a number of medical professionals in an attempt to find a resolution. The Board notes that the Applicant was only placed in Rathgael Training School when it was the unanimous decision of all professionals involved that she was no longer safe in an unsecured unit and that up until that time, Social Services were committed to finding the Applicant a placement in the community.

31. Having reviewed the Applicant's records, the Board is of the opinion that the decisions taken by Social Services were taken in the Applicant's best interests to protect and safeguard her.

32. The Applicant was discharged from the Aftercare services of the Trust on 20 December 2001 when she had reached the age of twenty-one, see Exhibit 40.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

Handwritten signature of Roger Hall in black ink.

Dated

18 August 2015