

HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE INQUIRY 1922 - 1995

Statement of SPT26

Date: 14th August 2015

I, SPT26 will say as follows;

1. I am the current [REDACTED]
2. I was born in [REDACTED] I qualified from [REDACTED] with a degree in Social Work in [REDACTED]. I was a trainee social worker in the Northern Trust (NI) between [REDACTED] when I qualified as a social worker. Thereafter I took up a post with the BHSST (West Belfast District).
3. In or about [REDACTED] I noted an advertisement in the papers for a role as a [REDACTED] at St Patrick's Training School and I applied for the job. I was interviewed by the [REDACTED] BR95 Wesley Donnell (representative of the NIO and chair of Social Work Advisory Group) and one, perhaps two, other lay individual(s). I was successful in my application.
4. As far as I recall I was employed by the Board of Management of St Patrick's Training School. I was paid by cheque from 'St Patrick's Training School'. On reflection I was probably not aware of the intricacies of the employment/pay structure at that time. However, I learned later that the school was funded by a block grant from the NIO. The level of funding allocated for staffing, I understand, was calculated by the NIO on the basis as what was referred to as the Castle Priory formula. In the late 1970s there would have been around 160 children in the school and while the level of funding at that time would have been commensurate with the numbers of children, the staff: children ratios were very much less than would be the case today. I later found out that the school could not raise funds in any other way. I discovered this while trying arrange funding for additional facilities/activities in the late 1980s early 1990s - an example of which would have been the 'Circus Project'.
5. When I arrived in St Patricks the school was divided into a Senior and Junior section. The children were separated in the two sections solely on an age basis. The ethos and policy surrounding Training Schools was changing at that time. Up to the early 1970s Training Schools were seen as the 'way forward'. The structure and ethos up to then was centred around educating and training young people for employment in

the formal sense. The understanding of the care concepts with which we are all so familiar today were only starting to develop.

6. The Black Report 1977 recommended that the 'routine mixing' of care and justice children was not good practice. From about 1980 onwards there was a slow implementation of the principles of the Black Report. Up to that point young offenders, children on care and protection orders and non-school attenders would have generally been housed and educated together and separated into the Junior or Senior School on the grounds of their age.
7. However, notwithstanding the contents of paragraph 6 above, in addition to the main school block there were 3 chalet units in operation when I started at St Patrick's, namely Slane, Donard and Slemish. Of these, Slane and Donard, were units accommodating children of different ages (10-17 yrs). They tended to house children on the 'care' side, for a variety of reasons some educational, some emotional/behavioural who it was felt would benefit from a more homely atmosphere. Slemish was a pre-release chalet reserved for older boys prior to their discharge and was designed to give them a bit more freedom as they worked towards independence.
8. Initially, I was essentially [REDACTED]. My role was primarily to make sure that the boys leaving the school could move safely and securely into the community – whether that be to their own family, or other accommodation and to employment/training schemes. As well as liaising with the senior management regarding older boys progress I would have engaged with potential employers. [REDACTED] In my experience the apprentices from St Patrick's were well regarded and in the earlier years many were able to find employment in trades such as bricklaying and painting and decorating.
9. My, and the schools, involvement with the boys often extended long beyond their actual release date. Under the licensing arrangements we were required to support young people to maintain themselves in the community and bring them back to the school if things weren't working out for them. As part of my job I had to maintain a relationship with the boys for many months, sometimes years after they left St Patricks'.
10. While I may have spent many hours each week out on the road I had an office in the school. I worked 9-5 and, as part of daily routine, I would have been regularly around the school liaising with residential care staff and teachers/instructors. Initially I was supported by two other staff – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. When I started I

was the [REDACTED] social worker in the school. Some of my colleagues would however have had certain qualifications in residential child care. The emphasis on professional qualifying training did not really begin until the late 1980s early 1990s. It was only around this time that the focus on 'care', as we would understand it in social work terms today, was becoming the predominant ethos of the Training School.

11. In the early 1980s my role started to involve a lot of court work. I'm not sure how this arose. It may simply have been because we had access to cars and the responsibility for transferring young people to and from court had, since the outset of the troubles, fallen upon the school and the Brothers. I was often in court, giving evidence and presenting reports. I would also have taken the children home on family visits or to other community contacts.
12. I reported to the Director and the senior managers in the Junior and Senior Schools. I attended weekly meetings with residential care staff at which the circumstances and progress of individual young people and the issues affecting them would be discussed.
13. At that time, I had no role with the Board of Management but I would certainly have met one or two of them from time to time. I would have maintained fairly regular contact with Wesley Donnell at the NIO. I often meet him along with [REDACTED] Rathgael Social Worker and two representatives of Middletown and Whiteabbey Training Schools in a information sharing forum regarding the development of care practices in the schools. This would also have involved an interface with Lisnevin.
14. From 1990 onwards I took on a more proactive role in the development of social work practice at St Patrick's. My recollection is that this arose from a fairly damning Social Services Inspectorate Report in 1988. I recall BR98 asking to see me. He was very concerned about the criticisms contained within the report and recognised the need for improvements. He told me that we would have to address the staff training and development issues. The Assessment Unit and the Court Work were to be amalgamated with an additional remit for training. The post to lead the amalgamation of the units was advertised internally. There were 3-4 candidates. I cannot recall exactly who was on the interviewing panel but I think it was either BR98 or BR26 [REDACTED] and another member of the Board of Management. As a result of an internal reshuffle, designed to address the failings highlighted in the inspection report, I became [REDACTED] with responsibility, inter alia, for Staff Training and Development. Thereafter there was a gradual build-up of professional training. I prepared The Staff Training Programme at

SPT 11963 and Staff Training Strategy at SPT 11984. The later document is described as a 'proposal' but as far as I recall it was later 'adopted'.

15. In 1994 I became [REDACTED] with responsibility for the implementation of the Children's Order at St Patrick's and support [REDACTED]. I believe this came about as the result of an upgrading of my post. The appointment had the approval of the NIO but I don't recall any interview process.
16. I recall that I was spoken to by the RUC around 1994 about allegations made by a SPT136 against BR26. SPT136 had alleged that he had reported abuse to me while he had been a resident of the school. I recall telling the police that no such report had been made to me. I was mindful that SPT136's mother had told me her son had [REDACTED] against a local man who received a court penalty as a result. The penalty was subsequently rescinded when SPT136 confided in his mother that he had concocted the account. I believe I told the RUC about this matter at the time of my interview.
17. In 1996 I was appointed [REDACTED] on a temporary basis. BR26 had retired. There was a report commissioned from Price Waterhouse which was critical about a number of aspects surrounding the running of the school – both financial and child care issues. I'm not exactly sure of the internal politics but I do recall there was a certain amount of tension with the Order keen to appoint BR90 as [REDACTED] and the NIO equally as keen to see a 'lay' [REDACTED]. When the dust settled my temporary position became permanent.
18. In all my time at St Patricks I can confirm that I have no recollection of hearing any allegation being made against a member of staff, De La Salle Brother or otherwise. As I reflect on St Patricks I conclude that, while it was not the sophisticated system of care that one would insist upon today, the staff were 'child centred'. In my opinion the relationships between staff and young people were caring and there was always a great rapport between staff and the boys. In my view it was certainly not a hostile or violent environment. Some of the older staff may have been a bit 'paternalistic' in the 'I know what is best for you style' but that is the way it was back then.
19. In terms of peer abuse I can accept that there was a lack of awareness in general and particularly around the complexity of some children's experiences and needs. The accommodation in which the young people were cared for was large, sparse and did not have a homely atmosphere. The ratio of staff to young people was very much less than is the case today and staff training, if in place at all, was inadequate. All these factors would, in the current climate, give rise to child protection concerns.

20. As referred to above, I would have maintained contact with many of the boys after they left St Patrick's. In addition to confirming I never received any complaint I can confirm that I never once noted any vibes or suggestion of resentment/annoyance or dislike of individual staff. From 1978 to 1996 I was line manager to a number of very experienced and qualified staff at St Patrick's. I worked very closely with staff such as [REDACTED] men with vast years of experience in residential child care. None of them ever said or suggested to me that they had encountered any complaints/allegations against Brothers/staff whether of a sexual or physical nature. I can say that I never came across anything that would suggest sexual or physical abuse albeit the condition of the accommodation, the poor staffing levels and lack of staff training would not have been conducive to good safeguarding arrangements.
21. I have never witnessed any incident of corporal punishment of a young person although I understand that, under the Training School Regulations (1953) slapping with the cane was a permissible form of punishment.
22. I was [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] when two former residents, HIA227 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] SPT112 brought Civil Claims against St Patrick's alleging they had been abused by DL137 [REDACTED]. As a result of the schools investigation into the allegations at that time I learnt about the circumstances surrounding DL137 [REDACTED]'s 'resignation' from the school. Because of what I learned then, in 1996, it is difficult to determine what exactly, if anything, I knew about his behaviour while working as [REDACTED] in St Patrick's. The departure of [REDACTED] would not have been something which as [REDACTED] would really have come to my notice or attention but it is just possible that I did hear some suggestion of allegation/misdemeanour. I certainly didn't have any idea of the extent or nature of the behaviour until 1996.

Signed: SPT26 [REDACTED]

Date: 25/8/15

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF: SPT136
Name OVER 21 Rank
AGE OF WITNESS (If over 21 enter "over 21"): _____
OCCUPATION OF WITNESS: _____
ADDRESS: _____

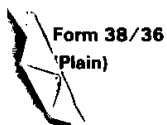
TO BE COMPLETED
WHEN THE
STATEMENT HAS
BEEN WRITTEN

I declare that this statement consisting of 2 pages, each signed by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence at a preliminary enquiry or at the trial of any person, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated this 21 day of September 19 93

SPT136 SIGNATURE OF MEMBER by whom statement was recorded or received
SPT136 SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

As a result of a court decision at the Juvenile Court when I was 16 years old I was detained at St Patrick's Training School, Glen Road, Belfast. I can't recall the dates that I was kept there but I was in the school for about one and a half years. I was in the senior wing of the school. There were four sleeping areas in the senior wing and I would have slept in two of them but I can't recall the names of the sleeping areas that I was in. I was in the school for about three and a half months when one of the brothers named BR26 started to sexually abuse me. I don't know his surname but he was _____ of the school. Then he was aged about _____ and he always wore the black robe and white collar. The sexual abuse included him feeling my penis and him forcing me into him having oral sex with me. These incidents happened to me in my own bedroom on a Monday night when BR26 was doing the comic round. BR26 used to take boys to _____ on a Sunday to assist in wheeling ill patients to and from Mass in Chapel. It was after I had done this task on Sunday for about three weeks that he started to abuse me. The first night that it happened I was sitting on the bed in my pyjamas when BR26 came in with the comics. He talked to me and then he started to rub the inside of my thigh with his



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hand. I did not know what to do I just froze. He continued to rub my thigh and then he put his hand inside the opening of my pyjamas trousers. He then started to feel my penis and testicles through my underpants. I remember him saying that if I objected that he could make my life a misery. I did not know what to do so I done nothing. After that first night he continued to abuse me for about three to four months, maybe two or three Monday nights per month. When I was moved to the chalets this stopped because [REDACTED] BR26 had us responsibility there. After the abuse started BR26 started to give me a 'blow job' on I think the third occasion that he was feeling my privates. He would suck my penis until I came in his mouth. During the three or four months that this was happening, some Monday nights he done nothing and the rest varied from him feeling my privates or having oral sex with me. After the first time that he felt me he would always insist on me masturbating him on the nights that he was abusing me. I did not know what to do so out of fear, I would masturbate him during these Monday nights that he was abusing me. He never had sex with me and he never suggested it, and never suggested that I should have sex with him. No one else ever abused me in St Pats. The first weekend that I got home from St Pats after the abuse started I told my mother what had happened but she did not do anything about it. I also told my [REDACTED] in the school, SPT26 I told him this during one of the visits I had with him at the school. He told me to my face that he did not believe me and he done nothing about it. I know that BR26 was promoted to [REDACTED] and I think was later transferred somewhere else. My mother is since deceased but I know that she told my father, [REDACTED] about what I had told her about being abused. My father now lives somewhere [REDACTED]

Certified a True Copy of the Original

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS: SPT136
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STATEMENT OF WITNESS

STATEMENT OF: SPT26
Name Rank

AGE OF WITNESS(If over 21 enter "over 21"): 'Over 21'

To be completed when the statement has been written.

I declare that this statement consisting of _____ pages, each signed by me is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence at a preliminary enquiry or at the trial of any person, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Dated this 28th day of September 19 93

[Redacted]

SPT26

SIGNATURE OF MEMBER by whom statement was recorded or received

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

I have worked in St Patrick's Training School, Glen Road, Belfast, for the last sixteen years. I recall an inmate in the school namely SPT26 from [Redacted]. He was in the school in 1983. During any period that SPT26 was in St Pats he never complained to me about any sexual abuse within the school either involving a member of staff or any inmate. If he had the matter would have been fully investigated, but at the same time I would have treated with great suspicion any complaint that he made. Through my dealings with SPT26 I know that he is not a truthful person. I was a [Redacted] in St Pats at that time and I had alot of involvement with him and his family.

Certified a True Copy of the Original

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS: SPT26

[Redacted]

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he had no knowledge of cells being used during his detention at the school which lasted for 4 years.

[REDACTED] was unable to recall SPT134 even though he was shown a photograph of him.

COMPLAINT BY SPT136

SPT136 was one of the 155 inmates that were interviewed who was in St Patrick's at the same time as SPT134. During the interview with SPT136 on 21.09.93 he made a statement of complaint against a member of staff known to him as BR26. His allegations are of gross indecency and indecent assault. Statement of SPT136 at Part II, pages 106-107 refer. In his statement of complaint he describes BR26 as then being aged, [REDACTED] and that he always wore the black robe and white collar, that he was in charge [REDACTED] at that time and was later promoted to [REDACTED] and that he believed he was later transferred somewhere else. SPT136 was not aware of his surname.

In his statement SPT136 pointed out that he had told his mother about the sexual abuse but that she was now deceased. He added that he knew that she had told his father about it. He also said that he had told his [REDACTED] in the training school about it, namely SPT26 [REDACTED]

On 27.09.93 [REDACTED] interviewed [REDACTED] the father of SPT136 at his home at [REDACTED]. SPT136 denied that his late wife or his son SPT136 had said anything to him regarding sexual abuse at St Patrick's. Statement of [REDACTED] at Part II, page 108 refers.

On 28.09.93 [REDACTED] interview SPT26 [REDACTED] by [REDACTED]

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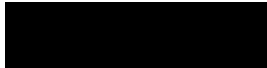
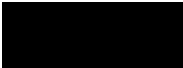
arrangement at Dunmurry RUC Station. SPT26 denied that SPT136 had ever reported to him that he was the victim of sexual abuse at St Patrick's Training School. Statement of SPT26 at Part II, page 109 refers.

During the interview with SPT26 he said that if SPT136 had made such a complaint that he would have had the matter fully investigated but at the same time would have treated the complaint with great suspicion. He explained this by adding that through his dealings with SPT136 that he knew he was not a very truthful person. This remark is reinforced by the fact that SPT136 was convicted on 19.12.83. Copy of SPT136's criminal record is attached at Part IV, pages 102-106.

Enquiries with the Northern Ireland Office, Royston House, Belfast revealed that there was only one at St Patrick's Training School while SPT136 was there, namely BR26 who is the

The physical description supplied by SPT136 of BR26 does not fit BR26 in that SPT136 describes him as having To this day BR26 has a The other particulars supplied by SPT136 is that BR26 was in and was promoted to are correct. He also put him in the age bracket of at that time. BR26, DOB

If what SPT136 alleges did happen, he may have put the wrong name to his alleged abuser. It is worthy of note that the physical description supplied by SPT136 is very similar to the description of BR4 as described at the bottom of page 2 in the statement of HIA227 Part II, page 30 refers. As previously



ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

Convictions of SPT136

78/03477

Date of birth [REDACTED] MALE [REDACTED]

