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## HEADLINE

### **Inquiry told 'evil' carers could have abused thousands**

Children lived in fear due to the 'widespread abuse' of potentially thousands of boys and girls in care homes, an inquiry into child abuse has been told.

Decades of abuse at residential institutions, including the former Quarriers Village cottages in Inverclyde, is being investigated by the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

The inquiry has heard evidence of sexual, physical and emotional abuse inflicted upon children by employees at the village, which served as a child residential institution from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1980's.

Stuart Gale QC, on behalf of the Former Boys and Girls Abused in Quarriers (FGBA), described the abuse as 'endemic in certain cottages and was a part of everyday life'.

'In the relevant period, certainly hundreds – if not thousands – of children suffered abuse in Quarriers', he told the inquiry, urging judge Lady Smith to address the scale of the abuse in her findings. Mr Gale referenced the apology of the organisation and quoted the evidence of the chief executive Alice Harper accepting 'there was widespread abuse of children at Quarriers'.

He argued Quarriers 'must have known several decades ago about the scale and nature of the abuse'.

'It is known that the period since 1930 to date, in excess of 30,000 children were in residential care in Quarriers', he said. The majority of applicants who gave evidence made it clear that they were not alone in suffering abusive practices but that they observed and were aware that many of their contemporaries were abused'.

He added: “The nature and level of abuse that has been disclosed in this case study indicate that some of the house parents who were abusers were not just persons who were out of their depth – given the depravity of the abuse that we have heard of, the characterisation of some of the house parents and carers as “evil” has to be said”

More than 100 people have given either oral or written statements as evidence during the 42 days of the inquiry into three institutions – Quarriers, Banardos and Aberlour. The inquiry in Edinburgh continues today.