

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

John DEENEY

Support person present: No.

1. My name is John Dominic Deeney. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1967. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. My partner is [REDACTED], but I am in the process of [REDACTED]. I have [REDACTED] grown up daughters. I have the following qualifications – "O" level in Technical Drawing, SVQ/JNC in Social Care, HNC4 in Management, A1 Assessors Award, BENOSH Accredited in Management of Health and Safety, Forest School Practitioner, Foster Carer. I am currently care of HMP Glenochil.
3. I left home in April 1984 to start an apprenticeship in Pattern Making (2/3 years). I went on to van delivery when I was 19 or 20 and continued that until I was then 21. I then started driving buses. In 2004 I started in Social Care and attending college. I spent fifteen years as a Team Manager/Addiction Worker with people with drugs and/or alcohol dependencies. Training is too much to mention, but I have included most of my educational activities undertaken since 2004 above. I have worked with over 20,000 vulnerable people.

Life before sharing home with foster children

4. The first address I had was at was [REDACTED], Wishaw. My second address was [REDACTED], Wishaw.

5. [REDACTED] myself, two brothers and two foster children lived within the household. [REDACTED] are MTD [REDACTED] (deceased) and [REDACTED].
6. The property at [REDACTED] had three bedrooms upstairs, a living room and kitchen downstairs and the property at [REDACTED] had a living room, kitchen and one bedroom downstairs and three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs.
7. I have some good memories and some bad memories depending on the children that were placed with us.

MTD/SPO [REDACTED] *foster carers*

8. I don't know exactly when MTD/SPO [REDACTED] started fostering children, but I may have been about 4 or 5 years old. I didn't know they were going to foster.
9. With regards the rest of the questions in this clause, I am simply unable to answer. As I said I was only around 4 or 5 years old and I cannot remember them discussing this with me.

Foster carer arrangements at home

10. MTD/SPO [REDACTED] didn't get to choose who was placed with us as they were Emergency Carers and short term carers. MTD/SPO [REDACTED] must have fostered over 150 children from babies to 14 year olds.
11. MTD/SPO [REDACTED] could have up to 11 or 12 foster children at any one time – [REDACTED] and 4 or 5 foster kids at any one time. Due to being Emergency Carers children arrived out of the blue.
12. They would foster siblings. I wouldn't say we were related to any of the foster children but I did know a couple of the children that stayed in the same scheme.

Placement preparation

13. Neither my siblings nor myself had any warning or notice of when foster children were coming. We knew nothing of their background.
14. No preparations were made to help us to adjust to the new living arrangements. We never met any of the foster children before they came to live with us.
15. Some settled easily and some were very difficult as it was a very busy household for as long as I can remember

Daily routine and sleeping arrangements

16. Our home was always well kept, clean and tidy. Daily routines varied dependent on how many were in the house.
17. Everyone had chores to do when old enough, but I can only remember my own chores as there were too many children came through the house.
18. Some of the foster children wet the bed, but this was managed by [REDACTED] washing and bathing them.

Washing and bathing

19. As far as I can remember, siblings were bathed separately from the foster children.
20. Everyone had access to the bathrooms, the doors had no locks.

Clothes and shoes

21. [REDACTED] MTD/SPO provided the clothes and I can only speak for my own clothes.

22. [REDACTED] did the ironing, clothes were handed down at times as a lot of foster children came with nothing.

Mealtimes

23. At mealtimes everyone sat and ate together.
24. The food was good as far as I can remember. MTD/SPO [REDACTED] both prepared and cooked the meals.
25. I really don't know what happened if a child did not like, or eat the food. Everyone ate the same meals and that's really all I can remember.

Leisure time

26. We all had access to toys, television, music.
27. We often went out shopping with [REDACTED] and had many days out with us. Some had their own stuff like clubs, Brownies, dancing, etc.
28. Some had their own personal possessions when they arrived, some did not. When they were in foster care with us they all had their own possessions as far as I can remember.

Trips and holidays

29. Everyone went on trips and holidays, including the foster children and myself and siblings.

Schooling

30. My own schooling was good. Foster children sometimes went to the same school and would have changed school when they came to stay with us.

31. [REDACTED] attended parents' night and supported many children with learning difficulties.

32. Homework was done in the kitchen under [REDACTED]'s supervision.

33. Most of the children went to Church. I really feel that I was too young to remember anything in any great detail, but these are the basics of what I can remember.

Healthcare

34. Healthcare was dealt with by [REDACTED] MTD/SPO who were the foster carers. I really can't tell you anything about this because I was so young at the time.

Christmas and Birthdays

35. Everyone was treated the same at Christmas and Birthdays. No one received more or less than others.

Discipline

36. Discipline was firm but fair, bad behaviour would result in being sent to your room without television, pocket money might be stopped or you wouldn't be allowed out to play.

37. I can't say if there was any physical punishment towards the foster children as I don't remember.

Contact with family

38. As far as I can remember, some children did have visits from their family or they would go to visit their family.

Visitors

39. Many visitors came to the house, we had Social Workers, Nurses, family members, Doctors. These were all to do with the foster children.
40. Social Worker visits were two to three days per week as MTD [REDACTED] was a chronic alcoholic. I really couldn't tell you what was spoken about when any of these people were in attendance.

Moving placement

41. I don't know why children were moved on, or what preparations were put in place.
42. I did keep in touch with a few children after they left home and up to four years ago. Two children came to stay with me in later years, one was 18 years old and the other 23. We stayed with my Grandfather. The other 15 years and myself and [REDACTED] had to go through foster parents assessment, which took about nine months and was carried out by Wishaw Social Work. ^{ACCUSER} lwa

Relationship with foster children

43. My relationship with the foster children was mostly good, but there were a few disruptive children.
44. Foster children were better protected and not punished as much as me and my siblings. Foster children knew this and played on it.
45. You have asked the question, how do I think the foster children's experience of being with your family might have been different from my own? I would say I was too young to answer this. I have no idea how their experience would differ to my own with my family. We all seemed to get on as one big family unit as far as I can remember.

CONVICTIONS

46. I have one criminal conviction for an alleged offence against a foster child. I was found guilty in the High Court, Glasgow and was sentenced to four years. I was convicted of an offence that could never have happened and did not happen.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Awareness of abuse

47. I was not aware of any abuse within the household towards foster children or my siblings. There was a few very damaged foster children that came through the house that were physically abusive and very disruptive (one in particular was docket witness in case).

Reporting of abuse

48. Absolutely no abuse occurred apart from docket witness who was found behind the couch with [REDACTED] (no underwear on and three years old).

Allegations of abuse for which there has been no criminal conviction

49. No allegations of abuse apart from one boy, a twin who said he had been abused in a Children's Home. He was 14 or 15 when he told me this. The incident of the docket witness behind the couch was investigated by Wishaw Social Work.

Reporting to police/criminal proceedings

50. No criminal procedures to report.

Prior statements

51. I gave statements to Police Scotland and my solicitor. Family and friends also gave statements in my defence. Information from these statements was passed to the accuser.

Helping the Inquiry

52. I think the question that should be asked is, what support should be given to foster families that are good enough to take damaged children into their homes, then face ludicrous allegations?

Other information

53. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

[REDACTED]

Signed.

[REDACTED]

Dated

8/9/22