

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FHO [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My full name is FHO [REDACTED]. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1973 and my contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care

2. I was born in Stobhill hospital in Glasgow and then I was raised between being in care and at home. My mum was [REDACTED] and my dad was [REDACTED]
3. I was the third youngest of thirteen children. From oldest to youngest my brothers and sisters were [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] passed away last year.  
There must be a year or so between each of us.
4. [REDACTED] was the oldest, she's in her sixties now, and she's been through so much as well. I always remember a conversation between my mum, my dad, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], that [REDACTED] should have stayed in the house and [REDACTED] should have been taken out the house.
5. I didn't know what happened to [REDACTED] but I found out later in life that she was taken out the house and that she went to Edinburgh and Quarrier's to stay.
6. My earliest memory of my mum having a house is at [REDACTED] on the south side of Glasgow. I was always full of anger as a bairn. Everything was fine

when my dad was still alive but he died in 1977 when I was only four. My mum died in 2010.

7. I remember starting at [REDACTED] primary school, the annexe was at the top of the hill next to the bus terminus. I was always called 'the wean' and I remember when I had to write my name on my jotter, I had to ask my mum what my name was. She said my name was 'bastard' and, me being me, I wrote that on my jotter. My teacher was Mrs Campbell. She got my mum and dad in, and spoke to them about that.
8. I remember the first time my mum grabbed me by the hair and slapped me in the face. I had been making mud pies and throwing them at people walking by the house. I also remember my brother [REDACTED] got burnt all down his side once, when he was stepping over the cooker. I got the blame for it and my mum hit me. I don't know why that was.
9. I remember being put in this woman's house on the morning of my dad's funeral and I was looking out her window to try and see my dad being taken away. I remember screaming that I wanted my dad, over and over again, but I wasn't allowed out, I was told it wasn't something I shouldn't see at four years old.
10. All I remember after my dad dying is being battered by my mum all the time. That happened a lot and I don't know why. We ended up moving from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] in Easterhouse after my dad died.
11. It was a two bedroom upper house and there were ten of us staying there. I remember the [REDACTED] family were our neighbours downstairs and there was a family upstairs called the [REDACTED], who were a bunch of alcoholics.
12. We had involvement with the social work after my dad had died. I think it was because my um had so many weans. Claire Mullen was the first social worker we had and she was the one who took us away from mum.

13. When I was about seven or eight Claire Mullen came to the house with the police and we were taken away because my mum had left us without a babysitter. It was meant to be my sister [REDACTED] that was babysitting us all, but she'd left that down to my sister [REDACTED], and gone upstairs to the [REDACTED] house. That left [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] and myself. Someone must have phoned in and reported that and we all ended up getting taken away by the police.
14. We were all taken to Easterhouse police station and locked in a cell. My mum, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were there as well. It was me that opened the door to the police at the house and my mum gave me a beating at the police station for doing that. That was in the cell and I had to be taken out and put in another cell, it was that bad.
15. Then we were all sent to Maxton House children's home. We went in a minibus. My mum was with us to make sure we settled in okay and so she knew where we were going.

#### **Maxton House, Bridgeton, Glasgow**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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52. I remember my mum coming to Maxton and telling us all that she had a new house at [REDACTED], Glasgow and that it was a five bedroom house and we were all going back to live there.

**Life back at home – [REDACTED], Glasgow**

53. It was at the start of the summer holidays in 1980 that we left Maxton. I thought that would be a brand new fresh start for me and that things could get better. We got the house all done up and after the summer I went to [REDACTED] primary school, I was in primary 6 or 7.
54. I can't really remember what it was that happened but things just got worse for me, once we got home. Mum started battering me again. She was trying to get my brother [REDACTED] to hit me but he would come in to my room and tell me to kid on I was greeting. Between us we would pretend he was giving me a battering.
55. One time my mum gave me such a beating I was covered in bruises, my head was all lumps and my face was red raw. She would grab me by the hair, she would slap me and punch me and kick me and then she would whack me over the head with a brush. She hit me with the brush on my head, on my back and on my legs.
56. She would also hit me with the mop, the shovel and the poker for the fire. She just battered me all the time and I never knew why, I didn't do anything.
57. No one at school would have known, no one asked, and there was no one I could have talked to. I didn't think anyone wanted to help me and no one ever asked.

58. My social worker then was Marie Valente and she knew what my mum was doing. She even told me I could go back into Maxton. I didn't tell her anything but she knew what was going on at home, so maybe people in the street were reporting my mum or phoning in. I didn't want to go back to Maxton and I told Marie Valente that.
59. I went on to [REDACTED] secondary school in [REDACTED] in the east end of Glasgow and I remember going in to school one day and we had to go to swimming. I remember getting ready and my towel fell off and all my class mates looked at me and saw all the bruises all over my body.
60. One of my class mates went away and alerted one of the teachers. Then a teacher came and told me I wasn't allowed to go home after school that day. I just went home anyway.
61. I remember that was the [REDACTED] 1986, and we were watching the Bill in the house later on that night when two police officers and two social workers came to the door. I was taken away from my mum that night.
62. They took me to Glasgow Royal Infirmary where I was placed in a cubicle. I remember they had a blue book with writing in it and I didn't understand it all but I remember there was pictures of a body, in the book, and they marked down all the parts of the body where I had bruises. All of them, old ones, new ones and fresh ones.
63. I was then taken to Ailsa Children's Home, in Partick, and I stayed in there that night. The next day, Marie Valente told me I was being kept in care under a place of safety order because my mum had been battering me, and she took me to Inver House children's home. I told Marie that I would take as many battering's a day as my mum wanted, because, at the end of the day, she was still my mum.

#### **Inver House Children's Home, Glasgow**

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Foster Care – FHL-FHU ██████████ ██████████ Glasgow

*General*

83. I stayed with FHL-FHU ██████████ at ██████████ in Glasgow. Their sons, EMG ██████████ and ██████████ also stayed there. EMG ██████████ was in his mid-twenties, and had a big nose, we called him 'beaky'. ██████████ was slightly older, I think, and he was totally blind.
84. There was also ██████████ and ██████████ staying there. She was a toddler about a year and a half or two years old, I remember she had long red hair. ██████████ was just a wee baby. They were both fostered by the FHL-FHU ██████████.
85. The house was an old tenement close with three bedrooms, it was all on the one level. FHL-FHU ██████████ were in one room, EMG ██████████ and ██████████ in another and I think wee ██████████ was in the third room. ██████████ was in a cot in the livingroom. I remember she got taken away when I was there.
86. I was in foster care with the FHL-FHU ██████████ for about two months in 1987, but I can't remember all the dates exactly, because I just kept getting shipped about. I didn't get a chance to meet pals or anything like that, because as soon as I met anybody, the next thing I was getting taken away again.
87. I just stayed on at ██████████ secondary school when I was with the FHL-FHU ██████████ family. I just went there to take the piss out the teachers, I just wanted away from the place.
88. FHU ██████████ did wash my clothes, make me something to eat and give me my pocket money but I more or less brought myself up in that house.
89. They all said things about me all the time. FHU ██████████ would say things like 'no wonder your mum didn't want you' and 'no wonder your dad's dead'. Then FHL ██████████ started saying those things as well.

90. I think my mum was telling them things when she visited, because I just stayed outside when she did visit. She didn't come round often but she did come in taxi's sometimes and I would stay away. My mum was a horrible wee woman, and I wasn't going near the house.
91. My mum accused me of having sex with other bairns and was telling FHL-FHU FHL-FHU all things like that, saying I was a "wee midden" whatever that was back then. EMG told me all that.

### **Abuse in Foster Care – FHL-FHU**

92. FHL-FHU both liked to drink a lot of alcohol. They drank every weekend in the house or sometimes they went out to the family. They were related in some way and they lived in the next close and were foster carers as well.
93. EMG was just a pure beast. He asked me if I knew how to kiss a boy then said he would show me. I said I didn't want to be shown, but then he started to kiss me. He started touching me. Everyone else was out the house and it was just me and EMG
94. He kissed me and touched me in places I didn't want to be touched. He tried to have sex with me but I didn't want that. He had his hands inside my clothes and he asked me to strip down but I didn't do that. He had all his clothes on when he was doing it.
95. EMG did that in the house and he also took me to Anstruther caravan park and touched me up in a caravan there. We were at the caravan park for a week's holiday. He tried to have sex me with there as well, but I told him no. I wasn't like that, I wasn't brought up like that. He kept forcing himself trying to kiss me but I wasn't having it and I kept pushing him away.

## Reporting of abuse in Foster Care – FHL-FHU

96. I told FHL-FHU about EMG touching me after we came back from Anstruther caravan park, but they didn't believe a word of it. They didn't want to believe it and called me a liar. EMG denied it and kept on denying he did anything to me.
97. After that FHL-FHU were always telling me my mum didn't want me, and no wonder as I was just a born liar, stuff like that. They started to be like that because of me telling them about their son.
98. I went round to see Marie Valente, my social worker, and she was the only one who believed me. I had a man social worker at that time, Tony Brannan, but I didn't want to tell him in case I wasn't believed, so I walked round and got to speak to Marie Valente.
99. I told her EMG had sexually assaulted me twice and she believed me. Marie got me moved out that house and that was when I got put into Fairfield.
100. I was too embarrassed to say anything to any teachers or anyone at the school, because of the stigma and the comments people would have said.

## Leaving Foster Care – FHL-FHU

101. I went back to stay with the FHL-FHU family for about two weeks after I had told Marie Valente about the sexual abuse. I was scared to be back there. I was scared to go to sleep in case EMG came creeping into the room. Nothing else happened though.
102. Marie had said to me that because she wasn't my social worker that she would need to contact Ruckazie social work department to get me moved. I don't know what happened about that, no one ever came and asked me any more about it.



103. Marie was writing things down at the time I told her. I said it had been sexually abused twice, in the house and in the caravan at Anstruther Caravan Park near St. Andrew's, and she was writing that all down.

**Fairfield Children's Home, Sherbrooke Avenue, Pollockshields, Glasgow**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### **Life after being in care**

165. After Fairfield I moved to a flat that the Independent Living Project got for me in [REDACTED] I was getting battered about by a boyfriend I met called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I actually met him on my last ever holiday when I was at Fairfield.
166. He was brilliant for the first few months then one night he came in and something just wasn't right. He was on drugs or something and he started punching me and kicking me. After that I didn't want anything more to do with him.
167. He stayed in a hostel called [REDACTED] in Partick, Glasgow. He was on drugs and constantly full of drink and he physically abused me several times. He was sleeping with other women as well.

168. I was removed from my Independent Living Project flat because of him and the only place I was told I could go was the Hamish Allan Homeless Hostel. I had never been in any place like that in my life and I broke down crying when I was told that.
169. I was still under the supervision of the social work at that time and a panel of social workers sent me there, that was Linda Lygate, Francis Gylar, Monica Feeney, Mary-Kate McMillan, Tony Brannan, Pat McNeil, who was a senior social worker and Jim Hood. They all met in my flat in [REDACTED] and said it was the only place they could put me.
170. That place was full of prostitutes, alcoholics and drug addicts. The panel of social workers said I would fit in nicely there, that was their exact words. I couldn't believe it. I had to get out of there after that and the council eventually got me my first ever house in 1992. That was a flat [REDACTED] in Greenfield. After that I didn't have any social work contact.
171. I worked in an Indian restaurant in Dumbarton [REDACTED] for a while, that was before the bairns were taken from me.
172. I had my first child, [REDACTED] in 1997, when I was twenty five. I have four children, [REDACTED] who's now twenty one, [REDACTED] who's twenty, [REDACTED] who's sixteen and [REDACTED] who's twelve now.
173. We stayed in [REDACTED] for about a year then we were thrown out by the council as my brothers broke into my house and a house downstairs from me. They took my television, videos, my cooker and tumble dryer and I ended up going to my mum's and causing a riot with my brothers.
174. I slept rough after that until I met up again with [REDACTED], he's [REDACTED] dad. [REDACTED] took me in for a while and we started a relationship but he became very violent and very abusive and controlling as well. I was with [REDACTED] for about two years but eventually, because of his violence, I had to move in to a woman's refuge place with [REDACTED]

175. After that, I got [REDACTED] and I a house [REDACTED] in Scotstoun. It was called the [REDACTED] because everybody was alcoholics and drunk wine, except me. I was the only sober one in the street and I would find needles when I was walking down the street with [REDACTED]
176. I was there for about two years and I met [REDACTED], [REDACTED] dad when I was there. He was a Buckfast drinker and a gambler but he turned violent as well, that was during my pregnancy with [REDACTED]
177. I brought up the two weans myself because [REDACTED] started getting more abusive. He stole money, kicked in the doors and urinated on the bairns clothes. I was petrified and ended up back at the women's refuge place.
178. I wanted my two bairns to be safe, then [REDACTED] mother, [REDACTED] found out where I was. She started putting stuff out about me being a prostitute, a junkie, a gambler and that I was battering my bairns.
179. The social work and West Dunbartonshire Council then took both my bairns, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], from me on the back of what [REDACTED] and her husband and daughter had said about me. That was all a load of crap.
180. My two bairns were taken from me in [REDACTED] 2001 when we were staying [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Dumbarton. [REDACTED] was coming up for three and [REDACTED] was just starting school. My life was just misery after that, not having my kids and all the false allegations being made against me.
181. I didn't get them for visits or overnight stays. I blame West Dunbartonshire social work and people like James O'Neill, the area manager, Claire Carthey who was a senior social worker and Alison McGeeghan, who was a social worker.
182. [REDACTED] was born when I was at [REDACTED] but she was taken from me after I gave birth to her. I didn't even get a chance to take her home after she was born.

183. [REDACTED] was the same, he was in intensive care and on a life support machine for nearly six weeks because of a lung condition. I wasn't allowed to visit him and I was warned not to go near the hospital. He went straight into care of his father once he was discharged.
184. [REDACTED] dad is [REDACTED] he's [REDACTED] dad as well. I was in a relationship with him from about 1993 or 1994 for a long time but it's deteriorated now.
185. [REDACTED] went into foster care from the hospital and [REDACTED] went to his dad but I fought for them. I got [REDACTED] back after about five and a half months after a judge made a ruling in court that I should get her back. She was taken from me again at the age of three and went to her dad.
186. When I left the hospital I got postnatal depression. I was getting visits from social workers, health visitors and the midwife and I wouldn't open the door. I ended up on anti-depressants but they didn't make me feel any better. All I wanted was my bairns.
187. I remember [REDACTED] had been coming for visits, when she was staying with the [REDACTED] and she kept telling me that her flower was sore. She would describe her flower as her private parts, that's what I would call them. I ended up getting an appointment with the doctor to have [REDACTED] seen to. [REDACTED] kept shutting up and wouldn't open up and speak about it to anyone.
188. Then when I was coming from a contact visit with [REDACTED] she told me proper that she was being sexually abused in the [REDACTED] household. [REDACTED] would have been about five or six then. The Home Support day Care Worker, Elaine McGuiness, was there as well, and she was useless, she did nothing.
189. When [REDACTED] was with the [REDACTED] family she was physically abused by [REDACTED] brother, [REDACTED], and by their son-in-law, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] has since said that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have both sexually abused her. [REDACTED]

was doing that from about the age of fourteen and he was being left alone with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in their house.

190. I had been doing my utmost to keep my two girls living in a clean and happy house and they were taken away and dumped with [REDACTED] to live with a bunch of paedophiles.
191. That's what happened to my [REDACTED] when she was four and a half years old. It was all denied by the [REDACTED] and the police were involved. A female detective officer, Marcyleen Carr, and her colleague, Michael, from Saracen Street Police Station were dealing with it, but nothing happened.
192. I was round at the social work telling them to get my bairns out that house. Every room was filthy, there were beasties running about and my two kids were expected to live there with those paedophiles.
193. It was years later, in August 2014, that two police officers, a DCI Hughes and a DCI Jackson, came to my door. They spoke to me about allegations of abuse against Mrs [REDACTED]. They told me that she had been slapping my two weans, when they had been staying with her.
194. There was no mention of anything to do with any abuse by me, that had always been a pack of lies. My bairns lived in a clean house with me and were all looked after and fed and cared for and loved.

### **Impact**

195. I've just had a life of abuse. My time in care was horrendous and it all started with my mum doing nothing but telling me lies and other people nothing but lies about me.
196. Everyone ended up believing her lies and then I ended up in care. I lost my four children because of it and then I saw history repeating itself with my kids as well. I

think that's happened because I was in foster care and I was in children's homes and hostels. I think my kids were taken from me because of me being in care.

197. Two of my lassies never come near me now and I'm missing out on contact with my grandson.
198. I had to learn everything myself, I wasn't going to school but it wasn't because I didn't want to go and learn, it was because my mum was in one ear and staff from the home and social workers were in the other ear, it sends you off track. I couldn't concentrate with all the things they were saying about me.
199. I can't count and I'm dyslexic, so my education has suffered. I can't write things down either. I didn't get help at school. I can read but I'm no good at writing things down. I think the teachers knew my abilities and just saw me as having no hope.
200. I had my own ambitions but having no help with my education stopped that, it's really affected me with things like getting a job. I wanted to get a flat, settle down, get a job and then get engaged and married and then start a family. It didn't work out like that.
201. Everybody seemed to have a better life than me. I had nobody, I was the black sheep of my own family. I just wanted somebody.
202. I have had a couple of flashbacks since I've been thinking more about my time in care. I think of my mum and dad and I'm not sleeping well, I feel broken down emotionally.

### **Treatment / support**

203. I've never had any counselling or support. It was offered by the social work but I wouldn't do anything they suggested. I did ask my own doctor but all she did was keep giving me tablets. She said that because it was all historical, counselling wouldn't help, so all I got was pills.

204. I do think counselling would help me and I have now received a pack from Future Pathways and I'm doing something about that thanks to them.

### **Records**

205. I've never applied for any records, I really wouldn't know how to go about doing that. I would want to see my records, and my children's, if that was ever possible.

### **Lessons to be learned**

206. Things just get worse. I've not long found out at a meeting for my son [REDACTED] that he was being taken out of class at school and asked all sorts of things about me. He was asked by his head teacher and deputy head teacher, if I was a junkie, or an alcoholic, or a prostitute, did I help him with homework, did I shout at him and did I batter him?
207. It was all about me, nothing about his dad, [REDACTED] They didn't ask him anything good, it was all horrible things about me. If they did that with my boy how many other kids have they done that with.
208. You shouldn't judge a book by its cover just because that person's been in a children's home or in the care system or in foster care, through no fault of their own.
209. They shouldn't use people's past against them and they should give these kids each and every chance and opportunity they get to do something.

### **Hopes for the Inquiry**



- 210. People need to be held liable and accountable for what they have done to children in care. You need to get to the truth and get people to admit what they've done to young people.
- 211. They have to do proper checks with the police, to stop these monsters working with kids. I don't care what it takes, they should all be investigated, even if they've kicked a dog, they need to be investigated before they can work with children.
- 212. People working with kids need to be up to scratch and they need to start stripping kids down in front of people, to make sure there's no marks or bruises.

**Other information**

- 213. 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.

Signed FHO .....

Date 20/11/2020 .....