

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

FLP

Support person present: No

1. My name is FLP My date of birth is 1971. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Background**

2. I am a joiner and have a certificate in advanced joinery. I have an ONC in construction management and went on to attain further qualifications in construction management. I am continuing to develop myself by undertaking more studies in this area. I am a contracts manager for a building firm.
3. Previously I worked for the council as a joiner but I had to quit my job when my wife and I adopted a child as that was part of the requirements set out by social work. We were told that this was to allow me to spend time with our adopted kid. That was about 15-16 years ago. I don't know how long I had to stop working but two years is in my mind. We were still fostering at this time.

### *Becoming a Foster Carer*

4. My wife and I applied to become foster carers just before we got married which was about twenty years ago.
5. I was brought up with foster kids from when I was 15-16 years old so it seemed natural to become a foster carer. I would come home from work and would be handed a baby instead of a dinner. I was used to feeding a baby first so it made me want to foster kids. It was always something that was a nice feeling of achievement when you see

what they are like when they first come into the house to when they leave. It is good to see the big difference.

6. I don't remember clearly the process we had to follow when we applied but we went for meetings in a social work office and we had to attend a meeting a week for what was maybe three months. I also think we went in front of a panel for an interview type thing. We applied to Families for Children in Glasgow but I don't remember if we had to apply in writing first.
7. I don't think we were required to have any particular experience or qualifications to become a foster carer.
8. I think they would have done police checks and things like that for both of us. I am quite positive they done all that.
9. I think it was about a year to a year and a half to complete the process before we were approved. I could be wrong but I think it was at least a year.
10. After we were approved we did do some training courses and I think the link worker we had would come out and visit the house to check on things every so often. I would say every couple of months but I could be wrong as at that time I would be working.

### *Training*

11. I remember we were give some training about child abuse but I don't remember the other topics covered. I would say we did not receive specific training about dealing with children who had perhaps been physically or sexually abused, neglected, had disabilities or had suffered bereavement. My wife had a lot of professional child care experience and had worked with disabled kids before we started fostering. My wife
12. had a lot of qualifications linked to that work experience.
13. I honestly cannot now remember what child protection training was given.

14. I do not think we were given any training about disciplining children or managing difficult behaviour. Obviously you could speak to the link work about that and they would ask you things. I think at that time there was a woman called Supernanny on the TV. She would show parents how to deal with difficult behaviour and that could help us. I would say we could ask for advice if a situation came up. I would say though that sometimes when situations did come up it didn't mean you would get any training. We would always run things past social work though.
15. We could refuse to take a child however I would say that the social work put it in a way that was a guilt trip. They would tell us they just needed the kid looked after for a short time but we could have them for a year. We had a lot of difficult kids who came to us.
16. I don't remember if there was training in the different types of foster care but we were emergency and short term however we also had kids that were long term as well. We ended up having a wide range of different types of placements.
17. I do know that I had to get time off my work for a training course which was over ten weeks. We had to go for a full day each week and it was in a building in the centre of Glasgow which wasn't a social work office.
18. Other than a book we got with each child who came to us I don't remember any written guidance that was given to us.
19. Thinking about things now I think social work should give foster carers a lot more training. This should cover absolutely everything. I say that because I think we were under prepared for a lot of the children who came to us. I think because of my wife's background she had a lot of experience but I didn't have that kind of training. Say for instance a child with any health condition, maybe cancer or something, there should be training for carers to know how to cope and support the child. I don't think the training should cover one specific thing it has to be general as well to cover things children might have experienced like a recent bereavement or abuse.



### *Foster Care Arrangements*

20. We were definitely not employed as there was no salary paid. It was an allowance that was paid. I wouldn't even class it as being self-employed. I don't think we had any rights such as an employed person would have and I didn't feel we were working for someone.
21. We did get to choose the type of foster care arrangement we wanted but it was a weird one because we could get an emergency placement which I am positive was only meant to be up to three months but which lasted a year. My times could be wrong but I think emergency placements were up to three months, short term was from three months to about a year and long term was a year plus. It never ever worked that way. We had a kid that was with us for about nine years who had come in as an emergency.
22. We did get a choice of the age range of the children as well as the number of kids we would take but then again it never always stuck to that. For instance the girl who ended up staying with us for nine years had come to us with her sister who was above the age range we had specified. From memory I think we wanted children up to the age of ten but I might be wrong. I know that we could have said no to social work when they asked us to take kids out with the age range we wanted but they were emergencies and we would be told that they had tried everyone else and we were their last hope. It is hard to say no when you have this kid who needs somewhere to go. It was like emotional blackmail.
23. We were allocated a link worker for our own support. They changed all the time and I couldn't even tell you any of their names now.
24. Other than the link worker there wasn't any other support offered to us. We asked for support for some of the kids we had and we never got it. As an example we had one girl who came to us aged about four years old who was wearing nappies and we constantly asked for support to try and get to the bottom of it. We got nothing and when she left us when she was nine she was still wearing them. We often had babies in and I didn't mind changing a babies nappy but I didn't feel it was appropriate for me to be

doing that for a four year old girl so everything got put on to my wife. Social work would say that they would try and get some help for the girl but nothing would ever happen. We also had another kid who came to us and he had a lot of attachment disorders and we asked for help. We were actually positive he had ADHD and the answer we got to that was that social work didn't want to send him to a doctor because they didn't want him being labelled with something.

25. We treated our role as a profession where we treated the kids like we did our own and took them on all our holidays and things like that. We didn't believe in sending them to respite. I do think that fostering should be considered a profession.
26. I don't know if it would be a good idea for foster carers to have child care qualifications as the problem with this is it would reduce the number of people who could become carers. There are a lot of good carers out there that don't have child care qualifications. Don't get me wrong it might be an idea that after someone becomes a carer social work put them through the qualifications if they don't already have them. I wouldn't say it should be a requirement to have it before becoming a foster carer so it doesn't exclude anyone. I think by putting them through qualifications and maybe stipulating it needs to be done within a year of becoming a carer would help get different people into fostering.
27. If I think of anything that could be changed about the foster carers work arrangements I would say definitely qualifications. I think they should have something in place to even give two weeks a year to give foster carers a break and it would be their choice whether they take it. You should be given holiday time because if it was a proper job you would be given holiday time. That is a difficult one as you want to treat the kids as your own family and we chose not to have a break without the kids. That was a matter of choice for us.



### *Financial Support*

28. You got an allowance per kid per week or fortnight and I think the amount differed depending on the age of the child. I am positive the amount was higher the older the kid was. I am not one hundred percent sure but I would say it was something like a couple of hundred pounds a fortnight per kid. It was the social work who would pay it and as it was an allowance it wasn't taxable. I think by the time we were finishing they were trying to make it that tax would have to be paid on it.
29. The allowance was all spent on the kids. At Christmas they would maybe give you £100-£150 for Christmas presents and the same for their birthday. We spent at least twice as much as the social work gave us. We would also take them on holidays and at one point we had a caravan and we would go there every weekend. Every single penny got spent on the kids. I think you do get carers who spend as little money as possible on the kids but it wasn't like that with us.
30. We weren't given any other financial support for other things like clothes or toys unless it was an emergency placement. When kids arrived they would give you £100 if they came with no clothes at all. Until the first payment of allowance you only had that £100 and we had kids arrive dressed in these forensic suits with just underwear on underneath. We would use our own money because that wasn't enough to get kids fully kitted and feed them until the first pay.
31. I did not feel the financial support was adequate. I think if you only had one kid it might be but at one point we were up to six kids and that means extra finances. We worked it out at one point and the pay was something like less than £1 per hour we got. We had a lot of kids who would wet the bed a lot and they didn't give you anything to help with things like that. We went through a lot of mattresses and bedding and there was no help for that. I do think that if the government was to pay foster carers a proper wage they would go bust.

*Foster Home Household*

32. It was me and my wife who were fostering. My son lived at home as well and he would have been 12-13 when we started.
33. I think our son came along to a couple of the meetings at the start and spoke to social work. He was taken away from us so they could talk to him alone about things.
34. My son had been brought up around my mum and sister who fostered kids long before us so he was used to having foster kids around him.
35. When we first started we were living in [REDACTED] then we moved to another house which was also in [REDACTED] We then moved to [REDACTED] which is close to [REDACTED] Glasgow. When all the stuff happened with my father being accused of abusing a foster kid we moved to another house which was a fair bit away. That last move was sort of agreed but it was also forced because of the stuff against my father.
36. The first house was four in a block on the ground floor. It had three bedrooms so it was one for me and my wife, one for my son and one for the foster kid. We had two foster kids but it had to be siblings. We had a kitchen and living room and there was a back garden.
37. We moved to a bigger house which had a living room, kitchen, bedroom and toilet downstairs. Upstairs had three bedrooms and a bathroom. The attic had been converted which gave another bedroom. I don't remember how many kids we were allowed in that house.
38. I think social work had a ratio for the number of kids a foster carer could have but I think that changed if they were desperate. That meant the numbers of kids we could have were not set in stone in any of the houses we stayed in. Kids didn't all have their own room and siblings could share and I think we had times where it would be two non-related girls who shared but it wouldn't be mixed. You wouldn't be allowed to have a girl and boy in the same room.

39. The houses were in perfect condition. My wife has OCD when it comes to cleaning. Put it this way social workers were in and out all the time and not one of them mentioned anything about a dirty house.
40. We had heard that a lot of foster carers had got money of the social work for extensions and things like that and we did ask if we would qualify to extend the house at [REDACTED] but we didn't get anything.

#### *Children Fostered*

41. Over the 10-15 years we fostered I do not know exactly how many children we have fostered. It is definitely over twenty and possibly over fifty. The children who came to us were aged from new born to 17-18 years old. We could take boys and girls. I think the most we fostered at the one time was six but I could be wrong and it might be five.
42. We didn't know any of the kids before we fostered them and none of them were related to us. It was always Glasgow City Council who placed kids with us.
43. Other than my own kid who we adopted I didn't change any of the foster kid's names.

#### *Placement Preparation*

44. In general for emergency placements the amount of notice we got about a foster child coming really depended on where they were at that time. It was a phone call and however long it took them to drive to us. Some placements could be ten minutes to an hour notice. Other placements could have been as much as a few days but we didn't get notice that stretched into weeks or anything like that.
45. I do not think that children were matched with foster carers. I am under the impression it is just who they could get. I am not sure I can say as I don't know if the social work did try or not.



46. When I consider if I think if the other children were well matched to us it is hard to say but we still have one of our foster kids staying with us when she fought to make us her legal guardians.
47. Sometimes kids would arrive with no information given to us but most of the time I think we were told that parents couldn't look after them. Other than that we didn't get a lot of information. I mentioned the kid who came in wearing nappies and we didn't know about that until she was staying with us. We didn't even know if social work had tried to find out why she was still in nappies.
48. Each child arrived with a book which was either blue or red and it had medical things in it. I was working so it was mainly my wife who dealt with this.
49. When a kid comes in social work are not allowed to tell you anything about them. They just don't tell you anything about their history. That was hard to deal with. As an example back in those days AIDs was a big thing and we asked if they were allowed to tell us if a kid had it. Social work told us they would not tell us that. That didn't allow us to prepare and also prepare our household. They didn't go into any depth about kids so they would give some minor information but not a lot. In my mind they have to let the carers know a lot more.
50. I do not know what preparation was done with the kids before they got to us but we didn't get any. It was just a phone call. We met all the others when they got out the car and came to our front door. Don't get me wrong a lot of these kids came in the middle of the night but even with the non-emergency placements we didn't meet the kid until they arrived to stay.
51. It is hard for me to know what a child was thinking but I would say most of them settled quite quickly. Most of the time all the kids got on with each other. My son at that time and even when he was older sat in his room like a typical teenager playing video games if you know what I mean. Even now I can't get my two lassies out of their room, it is just an age thing.

52. I definitely think there should be a lot more preparation when kids are moving to a new foster placement. The new carers should get to know some background and what experiences they have had going from one care placement to the other. We had one where they went from one foster carer to us and the phone call we got was something like the wee boy had just hit another wean over the head with a spanner and social work were asking if we could take him. We were thinking that he had just assaulted a kid and they wanted him to move to a house with other kids. We agreed to take him on the understanding if he assaulted any kid in our house we would be calling them to have him removed. Don't get me wrong the wee boy turned out to be an absolutely fantastic kid. What we found out was that he was very small and the boy he hit had been making fun of him about his height. He was only seven or eight and he hit the boy because he was being tormented. He was an absolutely amazing kid.

#### *Fostering with a View to Adopt*

53. The child we adopted came in as a foster kid first with a view to adopt. We already knew she was going up for adoption when we took her in as a foster child. Timescales aren't my best so I am not sure how long she was with us for before we adopted her. She arrived when she was one or two and she is now coming up for seventeen.
54. I think social work did try to carry out a matching process with us and our adopted kid. They knew she was going for adoption so I think it was out link worker who thought she was a perfect match for us. We took her on what was called 'fostering with a view to adopt'. Social work were aware we were looking to adopt as we had gone through these processes as well.
55. The only child I met before they came to us was my adopted daughter. We went for a wee hour visit.

#### *Daily Routine and Sleeping Arrangements*

56. There wasn't such a thing as a normal day because there were no two days the same.

57. The kids would get up, wash and brush their teeth before coming down the stairs. They would get their breakfast and then go to school or nursery. When they came back they would have dinner and usually play in the garden or we would go to the park. That was good for burning off the energy. They would then have a shower or bath, whatever they preferred, brush their teeth and then it was bedtime.
58. All the kids had to make sure their own room was tidy. Sometimes they would help with the dishes and things like that but not really that often.
59. We did have kids come who wet the bed. We dealt with it depending on when we found out. If it was the next morning we would change the bed and we would make sure the kid was clean by having a shower. I think accidents happen especially when kids come to a strange house.

#### *Washing and Bathing*

60. In the bigger house it was two bathrooms and all the kids had full access to both. The bathroom doors had locks on them. I would help bath the babies but if the children were older then no.

#### *Clothes and Shoes*

61. We provided the clothes for the kids from the allowance we got. My wife and I washed and ironed the clothes.
62. None of the kids ever shared clothes.

#### *Mealtimes*

63. My wife did all the cooking and it was home cooked meals. It was food like mince and tatties, stew and chicken pies. It was either once a fortnight or once a month that we would have a treat night. Everyone got to pick what they wanted from a takeaway.



64. Sometimes my wife would make two or three different meals to suit what the kids did and didn't like. We would have kids who came in who didn't like certain kinds of food. A lot of kids were used to things like tinned food. We would have to work around the diet of the kid and try and add wee bits of different food in to see if they would like it. We never had any big problems with food as my wife was that used to making different meals for everybody.
65. Everyone ate together and we had a dining area but sometimes we just sat in the living room.

#### *Leisure Time*

66. A lot of the kids were not with us long enough to go to clubs. I don't think there were a lot of clubs for things like football when we stayed. I think a few of them went to Brownies and things like that. My oldest lassie was in the Cadets and I think the kids went to things that were running in local community centres.
67. The kids were able to play with lots of toys and there were books, magazines and the TV whenever they wanted it. There were no toys that everyone shared as every kid had their individual toys and when they left they took them away with them.
68. We had a garden and there was a park nearby. We enjoyed going for drives in the car as well. We would get to a junction and ask the kids left or right and they would just pick. You end up in parts of Scotland you never knew existed but it was fun. We had Historic Scotland passes and other passes like that.
69. I remember one time we went to Murdoch Country Park and it was absolutely teeming down. We said to the kids to wear old clothes and took new clothes with us. We told them to go and get as muddy as they wanted. That was one of the best days with the kids looking like something out the Fantastic Four with big clumps of muck. I think this is the sort of things we tried to do and what we thought fostering was all about. We enjoyed being more active with the kids rather than sitting about the house.

70. My wife would go out shopping with them if they needed clothes and things like that.
71. Every kid would get pocket money. There was always crisps and sweets in the house but obviously you wouldn't want a kid eating too many sweeties.

#### *Trips and Holidays*

72. I think we only managed to go abroad once or maybe twice in the whole time we fostered. It was really hard to get parents to agree to allow the foster kids to go. We had to get written permission from the parents for a holiday abroad. The whole time we fostered we never went any holidays without the kids. We didn't agree with respite for that purpose although we knew other carers who wouldn't take their foster kids on holiday with them. I am sure there was one foster carer who went away 3-4 times a year and her foster kids had to go into respite care. We wouldn't have left any of our kids with a family member while me and the wife went away and we still don't do that and they are seventeen and 21.
73. We went to Euro Disney twice and we went on holiday to caravans up north and took the kids with us.
74. We had a caravan for four years at Sandylands which is down at Saltcoats. We would go there near enough every weekend and spend the 6-7 weeks of the summer holidays there. It could sleep eight and had double glazing and central heating. We had this massive bit of spare ground out the front of it where we had a lot of activities with the kids like football and water fights.

#### *Schooling*

75. I think when kids first came to us they stayed at whatever schools they were at and for some of them the social work would actually put taxis on to get them there. I think social work wanted to see how long they were going to be in care for first before they decided to move them schools. If kids were going to be with us for a year or something

then social work would move them schools. I worked so my wife would take the kids to school.

76. I think it depended on where kids were placed after being with us whether they got moved school after they left us.
77. I never saw any of the kids in our care being at a disadvantage in their education. We wanted them to get as much of an education as possible. We had kids where they were really struggling at school and see by the time they left they might not have been geniuses but it was such a good feeling and there was a pride in what they had achieved. Most of our longer term kids were in the top ranges of their classes because they knuckled down and that was the greatest feeling to fostering. We did get children who had missed a lot of schooling and I think one had missed two out of three years at school. I think this kid put so much effort in when she was with us and she left having gained so much educationally.
78. It was usually me to help with the maths homework and my wife would do English and things like that. We split the homework because even my wife would admit herself she is useless at maths and I am absolutely useless at English. The homework was done in the living room. I am quite positive the school had certain days they would give homework. The schools were really good because we had a lot of kids and we actually knew what days they would have homework. They would never have homework on a Friday and I don't think they had it on a Monday. That would be something we would try and plan with the school. If they told us what days homework was given we could work around that.
79. The wee girl who was still wearing nappies had to go to a school that could accommodate her needs and she had to travel to get there. Not all schools can accommodate a child in nappies so the one she was in had somewhere for her to go so staff could change her.
80. None of the other children who stayed with us had special educational needs but we did try to get help for the boy we believed had ADHD because of his behavioural issues



but that never happened. We think social work could have done a lot more for him. I actually had to quit my job for a while because the number of phone calls we were getting from the school about his behaviour. Things like him assaulting a teacher. I don't know if the school was speaking with social work. I can't see that school letting that go. We had a lot of kids at that school and it was not the type of school to shy away from problems. I think this wee boy had to go for an assessment at a nursery in in a different area.

81. It was usually me or my wife who would attend parent's evenings.
82. We definitely did try to show the kids skills to help them in adult life. My wife would help them with cooking, not actually on the cooker but prepping things and just showing them what to do. She would get them to help her separate the whites from the blacks when doing the washing. We have had a couple of kids who have actually now got kids and houses of their own so we must have done something right.

#### *Healthcare*

83. My wife dealt with the health checks. The kids went to a place just past Parkhead every few months. Our health visitor knew the whole family for years so she could be in the street doing a check and just chap our door and would say she was just coming in to see how the kids were. As soon as kids came in we would register them with our doctor and dentist.
84. Social work would give you the health book and the records were kept in them. These were the red or blue books I mentioned previously. These were only for medical things. Either my wife or I would complete the book and if they went home or elsewhere the social work would have it. When kids arrived we would be given a blank book and it was a record for us to keep. It was mainly my wife who would deal with this though because I worked quite a lot. It was basically a record of how their health was when they were in our house.

85. It would have made more sense that the book followed the child wherever they were and that was something that was brought up several times. Social work said it was because of the rights of privacy but I questioned how we would protect any of the other kids in the house if needed or how we properly looked after a child not knowing the medical history but we were not allowed to know. The incident with the kid wearing nappies which we didn't know about highlights why this is important.

#### *Christmas and Birthdays*

86. We spent the same amount of money on all of the kids and got them things that they wanted. Birthdays were the same and we always spent more than the money social work gave. We would be talking roughly about £300-£400 on each kid for birthdays and Christmas. We would have the usual cake and parties at birthdays.

#### *Discipline*

87. It depended on what the kids done when it came to discipline. We tried to follow the methods shown by Supernanny. When you went into our house the living room and stairwell were all in one as there wasn't any hallway. We could put the kids on the naughty step for two minutes which was the step at the bottom. When they came off it we would talk and find out if they wanted to apologise for what they had done. We had an egg timer we would use to check the time. It was usually when a kid hit another kid type of behaviour we would send them to the naughty step. They would apologise and that was it. Most of the time that worked. I don't think anyone was ever grounded so maybe the older kids would be sent to their room to think about things and half the time they would come down after a wee while apologising for whatever it was.
88. It would be either me or my wife who would deal with discipline. Whoever had witnessed the behaviour dealt with it. We would have times when one kid would say another had done something but you can't discipline if you haven't witnessed it. That was how it was in our eyes. We didn't have to discipline the children very often.

89. Children were never physically punished ever. I have never physically done anything to any kid in my care.
90. There wasn't any advice or guidance given to us from social work about managing children's behaviour. Every social worker had a different view of discipline and things like that.
91. We didn't have to keep any records of any discipline we used for the children.

*Relationship with Foster Children*

92. I think I had a brilliant relationship with the kids who I cared for and we still talk to a lot of them. I think I had a good and fun relationship with the kids.
93. The way my wife and I behaved is we treated the kids as our own so any holidays we went on were the kids' holidays as well.
94. The boy who came to us who we thought might have ADHD was actually very well behaved with me and my wife. He did have a lot of attachment issues but he took to us. Don't get me wrong we did have some mishaps. He was hard work but he was manageable. We did ask if we could get some respite but social work refused. We actually still get birthday and Christmas cards from the girl and it is actually why we ended up going to holiday homes in Argyle forest as her family had a holiday home in Arrochar. We went up there and had lunch with them.
95. The wee boy who came to us after he assaulted another child in a different foster home was an absolutely fantastic kid. He was a cracking wee football player even at his young age. I used to take him to the park and play football and his skill was phenomenal. He would be constantly out the back just playing football. I think he ended up in a home and I have heard he is on drugs now. It is such a waste.



96. One of our foster children took social work to court to fight to stay with us when we quit. She is now 21. She chose to change her name when she was eighteen and did it all herself and we are basically mum and dad to her.
97. We actually had a kid who went up to another carer and he has just sought us out. I think he added us through Facebook. He thanked us for the time he had. Things like that are absolutely fantastic. Don't get me wrong when you hear when kids have gone back home and it hasn't worked out it's absolutely heart breaking.
98. I did try to give emotional support and show emotion but a lot of the time the social workers would say we were not allowed to. I wouldn't have any of the kids sitting on my knee or anything like that but one of the wee boys would love to come up and just sit beside us on the couch watching cartoons. I was brilliant at watching cartoons. He would just love that. Some social workers would have an issue with this. When we went to the meetings to become a foster carer they would tell us we must treat kids like they are one of our own. They drilled that into you but then they started tying your hands behind your back telling you when you were fostering what you were and were not allowed to do. We tried to never be alone with a foster child as that was something we were always taught but see if a kid wants to snuggle in watching cartoons with other kids there what is wrong with that? Some social workers told us we were not allowed to do that and some were okay with it. You really didn't know what was and wasn't allowed. I used to play a game where I would just lie on the floor and the kids would all jump over the top of me. They loved it but I had one social worker who asked what would happen if one of them was to say I had hit them. I said I could be sitting on the couch and someone could say that happened. I told her I don't move they use me as a bouncy castle.
99. I would say the relationships with the foster kids and my own children were fine. They even went on holidays with us so that says something. My boy was there for Euro Disney as well and there were a few foster kids there. They all had a ball.
100. My wife had a fantastic relationship with the foster kids. There were actually an awful lot of the kids asked if they could call us mum and dad in front of people. We would

say that it had to go through social work because everything like that had to be approved by them. We didn't mind at all but some of the parents would not want this.

- 101. The foster kids were treated the same as our kids, no-one treated them any differently.
- 102. I think there are about three or four kids who still keep in contact with us. A lot of them were babies so I doubt they would be able to remember us.

*Contact with Family (other than siblings)*

- 103. Social work tried to force us to have some parents of the kids we were fostering have contact with their child in our house for access visits. We sometimes had to say no. I remember one where the father had been accused of abusing the wee boy and they wanted us to have the access visit in our house. We said no. There were times they would get us to do things without us knowing the parents and we would refuse because we had other children to protect.
- 104. We did allow this at times like when the kid was in rehabilitation to go back to their parents and when we had got to know the parents. That makes a big difference because we got know them if they came to take the kid out for a trip to McDonalds or somewhere like that.
- 105. Foster kids having contact with their parents really depended on the situation. It varied for every kid. Some would have no contact, some weekly contact and some would go and stay with their parents a couple of nights a week. It was social work who organised all of this contact. We wouldn't know any of this when the kids came to us but we would get updated at some point.
- 106. I have taken kids to contact centres and we would also be in meetings with some of the foster kids' parents in the social work office. What we would be prepared to do would depend on each situation. For instance the parents of the wee boy I have spoken about that we think had ADHD and his sister, wouldn't get anywhere near our house because they were too aggressive. We were threatened with violence by them



at a meeting early on when the kids came to us. This was done in front of the social work but nothing came of that. I am sure that wee boy's visits happened in the social work office so they were supervised.

107. The kids in our house weren't allowed to phone parents or family members unless social work said they could but I don't think a situation like that ever arose.
108. I don't think any of the kids ever got any letters but obviously any information that came for the kids would have to go to the social work.
109. I think social work should think more about the contact kids have with their parents. I think it would be good to have set places for the contact. I think there was a contact centre in Pollockshaws but having the contact in the social work office was not fair on the kids. These places are not normally the brightest places and are not child friendly. I always thought the children would view that building as the place where they were removed from their parents. I never ever thought that was the greatest of things. I think somewhere neutral would have been better. They could use an old school or something like that and do it up so each classroom was used for different things. Maybe one room could have the wean's social worker and the others for visitations.

#### *Siblings*

110. I think one of the boys who had older siblings did get to see them. Something is telling me that some of these visitations took place when we were at the caravan and we would supervise it with the other carers. I can't think if there was anything else in place for him to see his older siblings.
111. We did have other kids who would get to see their siblings but I think it all depended on what the situation was. I think some of our kids got to see their siblings separate from any visits to parents.

#### *Visitors*



112. The social workers for the kids would visit quite regularly at our house. They would speak to me and would ask me things like how their behaviour had been, how they have been doing in school, any problems and just general chit chat. They would also speak to the kids without us being there. If you had three or four kids you would have three or four social work visits. I don't think there was a week that we didn't have social workers visiting. The kids' foster carers didn't speak to our kids. There would be no need to.
113. When everything happened with my father all my kids were spoken to by social work.
114. Our link worker would visit quite often doing planned and unplanned visits. We would have chitchat and just asked how things were going. They would ask if there was anything they could do and if you said they would just ignore it anyway. They would ask general welfare things but I don't think anyone ever asked me or my wife about our welfare. I do think they probably spoke to us about how things were going and I would say we had a couple of really nice link workers but they changed quite a bit. Our link worker would speak to the foster kids and that was done in private so we wouldn't know what they said. I will take a guess and say that they spoke to the kids in case they wanted to speak about something they didn't want us to hear.
115. There was no one other than social workers who would come and speak to the kids.
116. I know there is a lot of criticism about social work but I would also say that there were some really great social workers. They weren't all bad.
117. I would say there was no link between our link worker and the child's social worker. They are from two different sections. The link worker is from an office on the Southside whereas the kid's social workers were from all over. They weren't even in the same building as each other. I did feel there was a bit of a disconnect and even when we went for meetings my link worker for most of the time kept quiet. I always felt there was a lack of communication in the social work and that coupled with different social workers having different views on how things should be done left things unclear. As an example one of our boys got his pocket money split up so if he had a good night

he would get ten pence and if he went to school the same. We were trying to work with him to reward good behaviour. It was that kind of thing but it was great to see him go to a van and spend his money. The following week if he was say thirty pence down you could see him thinking that if he actually behaves he gets more money. We had some social workers saying that was a great idea but the senior link worker who we later reported for a different things told us we were not allowed to take a wean's pocket money off him. We just have to accept what they said even if other social workers agreed with it. She was a woman who had never had a kid and was high up telling people like us who had lots of experience looking after foster kids how to do things. I am not saying I am an expert but I feel we had valid opinions to help look after the children.

118. The problem with the social work department is that if somethings gets said then you are guilty until you prove yourself innocent. I think that has to change. Being automatically guilty no matter what it is or no matter how outrageous it is needs to change. It never happened to us but I know a couple of carers that it did. Even now I still talk to a lot of carers and it has never changed.
119. No offence but everything this girl who has made allegations about me says about us is absolutely crap and the more people who pay attention to that it is just going to get worse and worse.
120. I think they could have the social work visits more often even if it is only five minutes. If they pop in when passing and have a cup of tea. They don't need to make all the visits official, make it look like they have just dropped by. That could make things more relaxed for the kids

#### *Review of Care/placement*

121. We had a foster carers review every year. If anything had been said about us they would bring it back up even if it had been proved it was a lot of rubbish.



122. Reviews for kids all depended on the situation for each kid. If it was an emergency I would say the reviews were more often, short term would be further apart and if it was long term then they could maybe be once a year.
123. We did have an input into the kid's care plans but I would say that social work never listened. I don't think we ever saw any copies of care plans.
124. We would go to children's hearings at the panel at Bell Street, Glasgow. The foster child would be there. Each kid went to a panel once a year and we went with them. My biggest thing with social workers is when they were in a meeting they didn't really speak to people at a level they could be comfortable with and understand. I think some of the kids and their families needed to hear it in a more basic level. I have an HNC and other qualifications and some of the things they would say in meetings would leave me not knowing what they were saying. A lot of the arguments with the kids' parents was because they were confused. When they actually put it into simpler terms it didn't cause the same problems. I would be sitting at meetings thinking that if they worded things differently they could have avoided near ruckuses. I would say that there was a whole lot of lack of or poor communication.
125. Once children left our care we were never updated by social work about how they were doing. Most of the time it would be the kids who would seek us out. The lassie who went up for adoption still classes us as aunt and uncle.
126. If I think if foster kids were listened to by social work it is a difficult one, it is yes and no. I have seen occasions when the kids want to go back home and you know that is not going to be good. I have one incident in my mind when we knew as soon as this boy went back to his parents it wouldn't be a good move and now he is on drugs. We knew that was going to happen but they listened to him. On the other hand we had a wee baby and the mother was trying her best. She would come to our house to pick up the wean but social work strung it on too long. I thought they were not looking and listening at what was going on. Sometimes they listen to the kids but they shouldn't have because you could predict things were going to happen then other times you see



where parents are busting a gut and social work take their time. There is not set answer really.

127. I would say that nearly every kid wanted to be at home and that was for social work to try and speak to them about that and explain why they couldn't be there. We would have to deal with the aftermath of when social work had spoken to them and the confusion they felt. We never asked any questions. We were always told that we had to wait for the kid to come and speak to us first. I actually remember to this day one kid speaking out and I nearly crashed the car. It was me and my wife in the car and this wee girl spoke of remembering seeing her dad raping her mum and then hitting her with a hammer. To this day I still feel tears at the thought of this. That was something social work knew and didn't let us know anything about it. For us it was a massive shocker to get hit with a kid saying something like that. Funnily enough this was the same kid who social work wanted us to accommodate her father visiting her at our house.

128. I think there needs to be an awful lot more communication between social work and foster carers. From my understanding I don't think things have changed that much from the time we fostered. Back then social work would come and talk to us and then talk to the kids privately. Even if there wasn't anything negative said they wouldn't tell you. I understand if a kid put in a complaint about a carer then that is fair doos. I have never had a bad complaint about us.

#### *Records*

129. We were not given any written or verbal guidance or instruction about keeping written records. We were never asked to keep any. Basically any updates we were told to give verbally to our link worker. We were not told to keep a diary or anything.

130. In this day and age everything is done on computers so they could actually do something where they get a laptop with a programme where everyone adds things into a central database. It could hold records and things like that. When you are at your yearly fostering review you could be asked about something that happened nine

months before which you might have forgotten about. If there was something there then the carer could sit on the laptop and be able to refer to things that had happened months ago. The foster carer's link worker and the kid's social worker should have access to this. This would maybe help the communication between all the different people involved in the care of a child. It would help them work a lot closer.

### *Moving Placement*

131. I think we only had one kid who left us to go to another carer and that was just basically because we had no help with him at all from social work. I think he went away for a weekend access to the new carer to see how they got on. We met the new carer as we dropped him off. I think he went there but I don't think it lasted any more than a few months. This was a wee boy who was only about six or something and he got put into a children's home. If they didn't crucify us for something that was nothing to do with us we might have had him to this day. This was the wee boy who was with his sister who was adopted with the older brother. We had offered to keep the three of them and he found it hard when his sister left. He couldn't understand why his sister had left when he had already had the rest of his family ripped from him. He wasn't consulted about the move because of his age. We would have got support if they had established if he had ADHD because he might have been prescribed medication or whatever else he needed. After he left we basically retired from fostering.
132. I think most of the kids we had went back to their parents when they left us. I don't think any left us because they were leaving care other than my daughter I adopted and the other daughter we are legal guardians for.
133. We did have one girl who went back to live with her sister when she was still under the social work. She had a lot of communication with her sister and she filled her head with a lot of stuff. She has actually come back to us and said it was the worst decision she ever made.

134. I think when children are going from one foster carer to another they could probably plan it a bit better. I think there are times when social work don't have a choice but to do things quite quickly.

#### *Leaving the Care System*

135. I don't really know a lot about children leaving care but I think when they do leave care they need a huge amount of support. There is a big difference between having all the support in a carer's house to having very little. That's about all I can comment on when children leave care.

#### *Complaints*

136. I don't know if there was a procedure to complain about social work or any aspect of a child's care. You work for them so if you put a complaint in what happens? They force you out the door because they don't like you questioning them.
137. We made a verbal complaint to our link worker's senior following an incident where one of our kids was assaulted by a teacher at nursery. Nothing was done and that is part of the reason we decided to retire from fostering.
138. I think you should be able to make a complaint without any kickbacks from social work. I don't know how you would do it. Whoever the complaint was about would find out even if it was an independent body. For example if I went to an independent body to report the senior I complained about for failing to investigate an assault on one of our children they would have to speak to her and she would know where it came from. An independent body might make sure the original point of the complaint was investigated. They would have to do their investigation quickly without the social work knowing.



139. The wee boy we thought had ADHD, his mother had said she had wanted a football team so you can imagine how many kids there were. We had him and his wee sister and we actually said to social work that they could give us his older brother as well and we would keep them long term. We had the room for it and we really wanted to work on these kids as we thought maybe having his brother there might have helped them. We had had both of them for a couple of years and taken the girl to all the pre-adoption meetings social work arranged. The older brother was living with another carer. We got knocked back and this is another sore point with social work. They used her to get the older brother adopted so basically what they done was separate the two that were in our house and put the wee girl and her older brother up for adoption. She was a cute wee thing and an absolute angel. The older brother had a lot of behavioural problems and I think this was to get him out of the care system. We knew that social work were telling a lot of lies to the adoptive parents about the wee boy's behavioural problems because we knew his foster parents as they had a caravan at the same place as us. I could see his behaviours in the complex.
140. We were trying to teach this same boy that he should be close to the people looking after him to help with his attachment disorders. To let you understand he would climb on the knee of a stranger. We had a lot of concerns about the nursery he went to and this one teacher frustrated us. As soon as he went in he would sit up on her knee and put his head in between her chest. He would sit there most of the day. We reported it to social work but nothing was done. We felt that that this teacher was teaching him to go to anybody and not working on his attachment issues. This was a different teacher to the one who was alleged to have assaulted him. I feel the link worker's senior wasn't supporting us and we found it very difficult to work with her.
141. I actually have two daughters who are not children we had. Other than our adopted daughter we are parents to another girl we fostered. Social work were basically evil gits to her when we were retiring from fostering. They put her through torture and she went and got her own lawyer and fought them so she could stay with us. I think she came to us when she was about twelve and this happened when she was about 14-

15 years old. They actually phoned her up at school one day and said that they were picking her up from school and taking her somewhere else to stay. We didn't even know that plan. She phoned my wife crying but she had phoned her lawyer and he sorted it out in half an hour. Whatever he did he got an agreement for her to come home to us. I would say some of the things social work did to her were really nasty and it was cloak and dagger stuff. I actually think it was aimed at us rather than her although we hadn't done anything wrong but we were in the process of quitting.

142. Before she was sixteen she wanted us to adopt her but she knew her mum and she knew there was no chance she would agree. She wanted to wait until she was sixteen but there is a rule that once you reach that age you are not allowed to be adopted. It is a real sticking point I have with the government. What she did was make us her legal guardians and we removed her out of the care system then. This was all done through the children's panel and she had a lawyer representing her at that. We no longer received any finance or anything for her then.
143. The oldest lassie who fought the social work was at a panel to find out if you could stay with us and the three members of the panel ripped the social workers to shreds with the lies they were telling. There were three different social workers all contradicting each other. The Chair actually commented on this.

### **Convictions**

144. I have no previous convictions.

### **Allegations of Abuse**

#### *Awareness of Abuse*

145. My wife had taken or was collecting one of our foster kids to the nursery. This was the wee boy who had the attachment disorders and he went to a nursery that called

themselves a nurturing nursery. A parent of another kid there had told her they had seen a teacher assault him.

146. My wife reported this to our link worker and the senior came out. I don't know what she said but she told us to ignore it as the teacher is a professional. We couldn't believe we were told to ignore an assault on a kid. That's as far as it went and is part of the reason we decided to quit. We couldn't work with this lady anymore. We asked for a different senior but they wouldn't change her.
147. We went to a panel for retiring from foster care and our senior's boss was on it with another carer and someone else. We brought up our complaint and her boss asked us how we knew that they hadn't investigated it. I told her that I still speak to the lady who had witnessed the assault and if they had done an investigation I would have expected them to have spoken to her and I knew they hadn't. That is why I know the abuse wasn't investigated.
148. Although we reported the assault on the child at nursery to our link worker I do not believe a report was made to the police. As I mentioned we made a complaint against the senior but that didn't go anywhere either.
149. If I witnessed any abuse by anybody, no matter who it was, I would have reported it.

*Allegations of abuse for which there has been no criminal conviction*

150. I have never been the subject of any complaint of abuse.
151. I don't even know if the time the wee girl spoke to us in the car about her dad raping her mum and hitting her with a hammer was ever reported. I reported it to the social work but whether they have done anything after it I don't know.
152. All we were told to do if we had any concerns about abuse of the children we cared for was to report everything to our link worker.



153. With the benefit of hindsight I do not believe there was anything that was abusive and should have been reported when we were fostering. I believe if I saw something abusive I would have reported it.

*Reporting to police/criminal proceedings*

154. There was no kid in my care ever abused so no reports were ever needed to be made to the police.

*Prior Statements*

155. I have never given a statement to anyone about my time as a foster carer. I can't actually remember if the social work asked for a statement about the thing to do with my dad but I don't think they did. I definitely never gave a statement to the police.

*Allegations of Abuse Against my Father and Sister*

156. All this was meant to have happened twelve years ago and all of a sudden it is coming out. Why was it not mentioned twelve years ago? The lassie who made the allegations about my father was never in my house other than for two days and she would actually walk past my house and ignore me.
157. At the time I wasn't aware what the accusations were against my father, I just knew it was allegations. I never questioned what they were because I thought if I had the right to know they would tell us. They would have probably told us it was none of our business. It was just put to us that could she come to us until they done their investigation into the allegations from my sister's house. I don't know the outcome of that investigation but I would guess he was cleared because he was still fostering after it. He was never charged.
158. I really don't know if other people in the family knew about the allegations but I would take a guess if it happened in my sister's house she would know about it. As it was

against my dad my mum would know about it. I don't know if my brother knows about it.

159. It wasn't discussed as a family unit. It is not that I don't love my family but it is a weird one. I clash heads with them. I have my own way of doing things. My background is I had a boy who is not my wife's but she brought him up. My family didn't always agree with my wife but she is my wife so tough shit. I had a close relationship with my family growing up but not when I got married.

160. I was sent a statement of FDL [REDACTED] by the Inquiry but I haven't read it all, my wife has. Some of it is too difficult to read. The things my dad was meant to have done just made me feel sick. I just couldn't read it. I am aware there are allegations made about my sister and if I had witnessed any of these I would have reported her to social work. I wasn't aware of my sister doing the things said in the statement. I wasn't that often in her house. We had our caravan for four years and I think my mother and sister must have been in it a couple of times. They had a caravan at the same park. There were actually quite a few foster carers had caravans down there. We actually got our caravan because we knew a carer who had a caravan down there and we thought our weans play with her weans so it would be nice to take the kids there. This is where it really annoys me because everyone thinks I must have known something was going on but I wasn't in their houses very often. Usually if I was in my mum and dad's house they needed something fixed in their house and I could do joinery.

161. FDL [REDACTED] has said "*I had already wore a bikini and been in the hot tub and FLM [REDACTED] had made an inappropriate comment to me.....*". The year before those allegations my wife and I had taken all our kids to a cabin in Argyle Forest for Christmas day. It was fantastic. In the morning Santa Claus came to the door and gave all the kids a present. We had the hot tub on the balcony and we had an absolute ball with the kids. The following year we decided to have it just after Christmas [REDACTED] in between Christmas and New Year. We went to Argyle Forest twice. We had actually booked the second trip and half way through the year my sister and mum booked it. It might seem like we booked the same holiday at the same time but we didn't. After our first trip we discussed with our kids and agreed to go again over New Year. It wasn't



until the March or April that they all heard we had booked it and they decided to book it too. We were all in separate cabins so we had three of them. My cabin had a hot tub, I think my sister's did but I don't know about my mums.

162. I don't know anything about an inappropriate comment. What had happened was my sister wanted to have a new year's party so for the bells we were there for about half an hour before we went back to our own cabin. We wanted to have a wee hot tub party so me, my wife and the kids went back to our cabin. We had wee champagne glasses with juice and the kids were kidding on they were drinking. It was fun and we sat up for about two hours having a wee party on our own. I don't know anything about what happened in my sister's or mum's cabins because we were only there for half an hour and nothing was said when I was there. I have never witnessed any inappropriate comment from anyone in my family. When we booked this holiday we booked it because we wanted to spend time with the kids. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] My foster kids had been making me dinner and everything. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I barely knew the wee girl who has made these allegations. I had her in my house for two days and other than that she was never in my house and she was never in my log cabin.

163. I feel that we were victimised by social work in linking us to my dad and tarring us with the same brush. We abided by absolutely everything that the social work had put down to us. Social work asked us if we believed the allegations and I said that I didn't know as I never saw it. Anything that has been said about my dad I can't comment on but no offence the amount of lies she has made about me I am more inclined to stick by my dad now. I am not saying this as if he is guilty but I never saw anything. I told social work that if I had witnessed anything I would have dealt with it and handed him into the police. I told social work if I had seen anything whether it was my dad, mum, sister and even my own kid hurting a child I would have reported it. I wouldn't care who it was I would tell social work. Kids come first.

164. One of my daughters told social work she was lucky if she saw my dad 3-4 times. That's it, we had our own life. We were always very active with the kids so every



weekend we had something planned and all during the week we would be out at parks and all that. Don't get me wrong with the physical stuff that was wrong with my dad the stuff that she is saying is physically impossible in my eyes but I wasn't there and I never saw anything so I don't know. In my heart I am hoping that it never happened but in another sense I hope someone wouldn't make it up. You do get girls that do that as well. It is not that this broke up my family but it did take its toll. As soon as I met my wife and had my family I concentrated on them. What was in my house was my main priority. My sister and mum did their own wee things and went away on holidays together. I wasn't interested as I wanted it just me, my wife and the weans.

165. The biggest thing in my head is the lassie who made the allegations against my father and now about me was in my mother and father's house when all of this happened so why would she fight to stay in the family. She fought to move to my sisters so she would still have contact with somebody who had done all that to her. That I don't understand. No offence but if all of that had happened to you would you not want away from it?
166. All I can say to the Inquiry is any allegations against my father, if I had witnessed it, I would have leathered him. I would have ended up doing time but I would have reported him to the social work as well. Anything like that, I don't agree with child abuse so I don't care I would report it no matter who it was. Even if I hadn't witnessed it but heard about it I would have phoned social work as I would have wanted it investigated.
167. I would also add that one of the girls she talks about still talks to us. I think she was interviewed when the allegations were made about my dad. She was with us long term which was 8-10 years. They actually quizzed her about my father and she actually told them it was a load of crap. I think she made that statement to the social work and police and she said he never behaved like that or made any comments against her. She had met him over the eight years quite a few times. Obviously we never used babysitting or anything so the kids were always with us.

*Specific Allegations Against me that have been made to the Inquiry*

168. I didn't know the girl who has made the allegations that well. Other than the two days she spent in my house everything in that statement about me is a lot of rubbish.
169. We never had any conversations with my mum or sister about the girl who has made the allegations when she was living with them. It was just that I never saw them that often and if I did it was maybe for half an hour or something.
170. The girl who has made the allegations has made out like she was in our house a lot and she wasn't. She made an accusation against my dad although another girl who was fostered by my sister had made accusations against him. It could have been because of the other girl's allegations that social work removed her from my parent's house. I am just not really sure. Social work wanted somewhere for her and the other girl to go for a couple of days until they did an investigation. That was it. We looked after them and then they went back. I could be wrong but I think the girl who made the statement the Inquiry sent me went back to my mum and dad. I didn't think she went to my sisters until quite a bit after then. I can't remember if they were two sisters or if it was the one who made the allegation and another older girl.
171. She was never given any sanction or punishment when she stayed at our house. I never abused her. I have never laid a finger on any kid.
172. FDL has said in her statement *"Nothing happened in those few days we were at FLPs, but we used to visit him at times and he could be really brutal with his discipline. If you did one tiny thing wrong he could make a big thing of it"*. Nonsense, absolute nonsense. She never visited our house.
173. It is not possible that the passage of time has affected my recollection. I don't know why she is saying this. I can only say she is telling lies. If what she said had happened I do accept that this would be abuse.
174. She has also said *"He used to make sit on the stairs for hours at a time as a punishment"*. That never happened. That girl was a good wean who we fostered.



175. It is not possible that the passage of time has affected my recollection. I don't know why this girl is saying this. She is making it up. If a child was treated in that way I do accept that this would be abuse.
176. She has also alleged "Another girl, [REDACTED] who was fostered by FLP [REDACTED] and FPF [REDACTED] was really scared of the shower. I saw FLP [REDACTED] and FPF [REDACTED] drag her upstairs and force her into the shower. She was screaming". One thing, she wasn't scared of the shower this was a wee girl who was scared of the toilet pan not the shower. She went and showered with absolutely no problem at all. That never happened. Another fact which was noted by social work is that I never dealt with that child because of her age. She was not scared of the shower and she would take a shower as many times as she wanted. I am going to take a guess that this girl who says this is meant to have witnessed this but she was never in my house when that child was there. I don't think that child was there at that time. At the very top of her statement at this part she said "*nothing happened during those few days.....*" so she has already stated that in those few days she was in my house nothing happened so it couldn't have been at the time she was at my house so she has contradicted herself. It is just gutting that someone would make this up.
177. I don't know why she is saying this. I can only say she is telling lies. I don't know if it is because she can't get back at my dad so she is just trying to start on other people in the family. I don't know why she would make this up. If a child was treated in that way I do accept that this would be abuse.
178. She also said "FLP [REDACTED] and FPF [REDACTED] adopted a girl called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] told them that one of the wee boys they fostered, [REDACTED] hit her on the face with car keys, and FLP [REDACTED] slapped [REDACTED] hard for that. [REDACTED] was really young. I didn't see this but, [REDACTED] told me about it". I wasn't even in the house, I was out working. Another foster child was in the house when that happened so that did not happen like that. What happened was that [REDACTED] did hit my kid but it wasn't a car key and what I was told is she had a wee tiny dent with a toaty bleed from it. That was it. My kid told everyone that it was [REDACTED] but no-one witnessed it. It could have been an accident so you can't do anything about that. That was reported to social work as well and they were in the house all the



time visiting. No offence but if I have slapped a wean it is going to be noticeable. It wasn't until I got home from work that I found out about this and [REDACTED] was in his bed by then.

179. I can only think she is saying these things to try and get at the family because she canny get my dad. If a child was treated in that way I do accept that this would be abuse.

180. She has also alleged "FLP [REDACTED] told me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to clean the bathroom around Christmas one time. I used bleach and didn't wear gloves and we got punished for that. FLP [REDACTED] and FPF [REDACTED] took the three of us to a Christmas fair in Glasgow, along with a boy called [REDACTED] who was a relative of FPF [REDACTED] but only [REDACTED] was allowed to go on any of the rides. We had to just stand and watch, while FLP [REDACTED] and FPF [REDACTED] made comments like "That's what you get for being bad". It was horrible. I was so upset the whole time. I think I was about eight". Under no circumstance was she ever in my house round about Christmas and under no circumstance did she ever clean my bathroom. As for my wife's relative being at a carnival at that time he was in a wheelchair with a leg break and he had a big metal thing around his leg for four years during that time. He was never at a Christmas fair because he wouldn't be allowed on any of the rides. What happened is he was hit by a car and he had this plaster cast with the metal thing for about a year and a half. It got taken off and he still couldn't do anything, he went to school and slipped on a stank and it broke again. He had to get another big plate and all that put on it. She is saying that I took [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and FDL [REDACTED] to a Christmas fair with my wife's relative and I have left my own son and daughter in the house? [REDACTED] was a kid we fostered and [REDACTED] and FDL [REDACTED] had come to our house for two days when social work asked us to take them but that was not at Christmas time. I don't think I have ever been to a Christmas fair. She never spent any time with us socially and my wife's relative was in a wheelchair from 2006-2009 then limited from 2009-2014 due to his injury. That will all be on record. What she alleges never ever happened. There is no way I was going to take three kids and leave my own two kids in the house if I was going to go to a Christmas fair. If I ever took any kids to a fair every one of them would be allowed on the rides because I wouldn't want to be on them as I am scared of heights.

181. I don't know why she is saying this but she is making everything up and this is why I am thinking other stuff is made up. I don't understand why she has made all this up and I am hurt that all of this has been said about us. It doesn't matter what it is I can't stand to read about things happening to kids. It just turns my stomach.
182. If a child was treated in that way I do accept that this would be abuse.
183. There are some answers I will never find out about why she has made these things up. Maybe she feels with my dad dying, if it did happen, she will never get her justice but if it didn't I just don't know.
184. I also think that it is interesting that everyone she says in her statement that were backing her up now don't want anything to do with her. That is what she says in the statement.

### **Helping the Inquiry**

185. The hardest part of fostering was not the kids but social work. There has to be better communication between all the social workers and also between social workers and foster carers. If kids come with certain illnesses they have to inform the foster carers. I also mean mental illnesses because these are important too.
186. The way I feel right at this moment is that there should be more done to protect foster carers from these allegations. There has to be a lot more protection. Don't get me wrong I do think changes can be made to protect kids.
187. Carers have to have it drummed into their heads that there has to be two of them around the kids at the same time, all the time.

188. I know it is difficult but there needs to be better matching for kids and foster carers. I know in certain circumstances it is hard for them to do it but they have to have some better system even for emergency placements.
189. There needs to be more training which would include childcare training such as SVQ level three or something like that but do that while they are foster carers.
190. I think when allegations have been made don't tar other people with the same brush even if they are related to them. My wife and I were crucified for something that had nothing to do with us or connected to our house.

#### **Other information**

191. I suffered for years after my father passed away and I was on medication for that as well. My contact with the Inquiry has brought it all back and I have not been sleeping as much since it all started. I just feel as if this Inquiry isn't taking mental health, which I know the Scottish Government pride themselves in, into consideration. I feel the Inquiry considers itself more important than my mental health. It was basically that this was voluntary but if you say no they will go to Lady Smith and she can make me do it. That's not voluntary then especially when I do have a lot of things that have been bought back up with that contact. I was starting to get over things and it is all coming back. Don't get me wrong if there is anything I can do that can stop abuse of children then one hundred percent I would want to help. The things to do with my father brought a lot of things back and affected my mental health. Even our kids know that something is going on. They don't know what but the impact on us means there is an impact on them. I struggle to understand why all of this wasn't said at the time and suddenly comes out now 6-7 years later. Even if she found it difficult at the time to talk about the stuff my dad was meant to have done to her why didn't she speak out about the stuff I was meant to have done? I don't understand why she would fight to live with my sister and maybe it is just me being a guy but I would have thought she would have wanted as far away from that family as possible.



192. 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.. <sup>FLP</sup>  .....

Dated.. *5/4/22* .....