

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

QDK
[REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My name is QDK [REDACTED] When I was in care my name was QDK [REDACTED] QDK [REDACTED] My surname changed, although not officially, to QDK [REDACTED] after my mother remarried. This was when I was about twelve and had returned to my mother's care. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1963. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. My mum's maiden name was [REDACTED]. Her surname was [REDACTED] when she was married to my dad and changed to [REDACTED] when she remarried. My dad's name was [REDACTED]. I think my mum married my step-dad [REDACTED] [REDACTED] when I was about ten.
3. I have two brothers and four sisters. There is a nine-year age gap between the oldest and the youngest. [REDACTED] is the eldest. She is fifty-seven. I am the second eldest. My brother [REDACTED] is fifty-four. My sister QOH [REDACTED] is fifty-two, [REDACTED] is fifty-one and [REDACTED] is forty-nine. My brother [REDACTED] was adopted. He is now fifty.
4. My mum and dad met in the Royal Air Force. My mum was from Musselburgh and my dad was from Liverpool. I was born in Liverpool and spent my early years there.
5. My childhood was chaotic. My dad was schizophrenic and was classed as a risk to children. He attempted to suffocate one of my siblings and punched my brother

██████ in the face, putting all his teeth through his lips. My mum told me that he sexually abused my sister but not me. He also used to beat up my mum really badly.

6. I remember all the beatings. We were lifted from our beds by the police in the middle of the night at times. When ██████ was only about six weeks old, my dad beat my mum that badly that she jumped out of the window naked to get away from him. The police came and battered my dad in the kitchen before they took him away. We were all traumatised having seen my dad beating my mum, and then we were kept in the sitting room while the police dished out their own justice. We could hear all the scuffle and thuds.
7. There was social work involvement in our family from an early age. I remember we had a lot of dealings with a social worker in Liverpool called Mr Smith.
8. My mum would be taken into hospital sometimes after being beaten by my dad and we would be taken into care. They'd take my dad into hospital sometimes as well and let him out again after a few weeks. My mum had a nervous breakdown at one point because of all the beatings. We were in and out of care from a very young age, sometimes for a couple of days and other times for a few weeks or months. I think the longest period was about a year.
9. Despite everything that went on in our house, my mum always kept us clean. The house was always clean and tidy and we were well-dressed kids, even though our clothes were all second-hand. When my dad wasn't going through one of his bad spells, he was a stickler for manners. We were probably really well brought up.
10. I had some good and bad experiences in care before I came to Scotland. I was in Nazareth House in Liverpool for about a week, which wasn't very enjoyable, and was in various foster care homes. ██████ and I were with a woman we called "Mrs Feed-you-up". She used to feed us all the time which made me vomit, and she wouldn't give us anything to drink after a certain time of day because we wet the bed. We ran away from there twice and then they separated ██████ and me. We were never anywhere together as a full sibling group in Liverpool. We never got to see each other when we were apart.

11. The last place I was in before we moved up to Edinburgh was with a foster carer called Mrs [REDACTED]. She was really nice. [REDACTED] QOH [REDACTED] and I were there, and I think [REDACTED] might also have been with us. We stayed there for about a year. The social workers turned up one day in a minivan. They had [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] with them. They told us that we were going home and they drove us all the way to Edinburgh. They took us to my mum's new house in Broomhouse, Edinburgh. She was there waiting for us. I was about six. For the first time all seven of us were together again with our mum.
12. My mum was Catholic and she was quite involved in the church. We went to St Joseph's Primary School in Edinburgh. They helped us a lot. I remember they actually took us shopping with my mum and bought us all clothes and we could go to school and have our dinner during the summer holidays.
13. It was just us and our mum in Edinburgh, and then my dad turned up at some point. He lived with us for a while and started beating my mum up again. My last memory of my dad is when I was about seven. He beat up my mum and she managed to get out of the house and took a couple of the little ones with her. She went upstairs to the neighbours. My dad sent [REDACTED] up to tell her that he was going to start killing us if she didn't come down. The next thing I recall is the police being in the house, and I was asking them to check under the beds and in the cupboards to make sure my dad was gone. I don't remember my dad leaving. I have never seen him since, and I don't know if he is still alive.
14. We always had social work involvement when we moved to Edinburgh. The two social workers we had a lot of dealings with were Miss Brown and Mrs Paisley. Miss Brown was quite young. They were based at Springwell House in Gorgie. I remember we used to go to the offices a lot.
15. I remember the social workers turned up at our house one night and took my brother [REDACTED]. My granny was with them. Her name was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] after she remarried. I haven't figured out what my granny's role was in this. We were all in bed, and [REDACTED] was in his cot. He was about two. They just lifted him and took him. I

don't remember how my mother reacted. I can't even recall her being there. [REDACTED] went to foster carers who eventually adopted him. My mother signed the adoption papers while she was in the Andrew Duncan Clinic in Edinburgh. This was a completely illegal adoption because she was mentally unwell at the time.

16. My understanding is that we were made wards of court. I have seen this in paperwork. I know my mum was admitted to the Andrew Duncan Clinic, but I'm not sure when this happened. Apparently, she had taken [REDACTED] and left us all with our dad. I think this might be the reason [REDACTED] QOH [REDACTED] and I went into foster care with a woman called Mrs LXO [REDACTED] was in Thorntoun School in Kilmarnock and [REDACTED] got taken somewhere else. I am not sure of the timeline as to when everything happened. I feel that my life is like trying to put jigsaw pieces together and there are lots of missing pieces.
17. We were with Mrs LXO [REDACTED] for about six months and then went back home again for a very short period of time. QOH [REDACTED] and I were then taken to Quarriers. The paperwork I have says that we were admitted to Quarriers by my mum.

Mrs LXO [REDACTED] foster carer, Bonnyrigg, Edinburgh

18. I think I was about six and a half when I went to live at Mrs LXO [REDACTED]'s. The house was lovely. I don't remember the address. Mrs LXO [REDACTED] had a husband and a daughter called [REDACTED] I think she had another daughter called [REDACTED]. I'm sure her daughters were in their late teens. They certainly seemed a lot older than us. I think Mrs LXO [REDACTED] was in her forties. She was thin with dark, short hair.
19. I can recall living at Mrs LXO [REDACTED]'s, but I think I only recall the bad things. Mrs LXO [REDACTED] was horrible. She was fine with [REDACTED] She got looked after and fed.
20. We had to sleep in the same beds as Mrs LXO [REDACTED]'s daughters at first. You would get a slap or a kick from them if you moved. We used to have to take turns to sleep in the baby's cot as well, even though I was six. QOH [REDACTED] and I were then moved downstairs to a bedroom.

21. We went to school while we were there. The only thing I remember about the school is that there was a Catholic end and a Protestant end. Quite often the two sides would form big lines and run at each other as if we were going to attack each other. We'd all get halfway and then just run away.
22. I don't know if my mother visited us at Mrs LXO's, but we used to go and visit her at home in Broomhouse. We must have been taken there by the social workers.

Abuse at Mrs LXO's

23. A lot of the abuse was emotional, but there was also physical abuse and neglect. Mrs LXO didn't feed us properly. We used to steal rhubarb to eat from gardens. A lady used to give us a poke of sugar. That lady is now my sister QOH's mother-in-law. She must have been one of Mrs LXO's neighbours back then.
 24. At teatime, Mrs LXO would make us wait outside until everybody else had been fed. We could watch TV, but we weren't allowed to sit on the furniture. We had to sit on the floor. We'd be told to get off the couch if we sat on it. I don't recall any of the family speaking much to us. We were treated like dogs.
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25. We weren't allowed to get out of bed until about lunchtime at weekends. They would all sleep in at the weekend, and we wouldn't get any breakfast. I remember we got up one morning because we were starving. When you're traumatised and you're told not to do something, you don't do it, so we usually stayed in our room. But this one day we were really starving, and we got up and I made toast and burnt it. We were that hungry we ate it.
 26. Mrs LXO used to make us take out for a walk in her pram. She would throw us out during the day and tell us not to come back until later. I remember going with and QOH to the park in the winter and it was so cold, we were literally frozen. We didn't have gloves on and the three of us sat in the park crying. It was snowing, but we knew we weren't allowed to go back to the house.

27. Mrs LXO [REDACTED] was another one who wouldn't give us drinks after a certain time because we wet the bed.
28. My brother [REDACTED] got scabies, and she used to put him in the cot and tie his hands to the sides so he wouldn't scratch himself.
29. Sometimes you would just be sitting there and Mr LXN [REDACTED] would walk past you and kick you for no reason. Mrs LXO [REDACTED] used to slap us as well.
30. I spent my day in a state of high anxiety, never knowing what was coming or whether I was doing the right or wrong thing.

Reporting of abuse at Mrs LXO [REDACTED]'s

31. We told our mum how horrible it was at Mrs LXO [REDACTED]'s. I remember her arguing with the social worker, telling her that they had better get her kids out of there. She wanted us back home, but I'm not sure her mental health was that good then.
32. We were removed from Mrs LXO [REDACTED] because of the way she treated us. We must have been at home for a visit with our mum and she bone-combed our hair and we were crawling with head lice. She gathered up all the lice and went to the social work office and threw them at the social worker.
33. I found out a few years ago that Mrs LXO [REDACTED] won some kind of award as a foster carer, 'Foster Carer of the Year' or something like that.

Leaving Mrs LXO [REDACTED]'s

34. The social workers didn't tell Mrs LXO [REDACTED] that they were removing us. They told us we were going to be leaving, but told us not to say anything to her. I remember crying because I had to go back to Mrs LXO [REDACTED]'s after a visit home, and Miss

Brown told me not to worry because I wasn't going to be there for much longer. This is the only time I remember anybody actually discussing with me any plans about where I would live. When the time came for us to leave Mrs L^{XO} s, the social workers told her that we were just going to stay at our mum's for the weekend.

35. After we left Mrs L^{XO} s, they discovered that s had developed alopecia and we were all suffering from malnutrition because she hadn't fed us. I had burns all over me from the sun. To be fair, they didn't think about sun creams in those days, but I had massive blisters and burns and she didn't do anything about them.
36. We went back home for about a few weeks before they took us to Quarriers.

Quarriers, Bridge of Weir

37. Nobody had a discussion with me about placing me in Quarriers. I was about seven at the time. Q^{OH} s and I went there first. I think s came a while after and then s came maybe about six months after s
38. My first impression of the place was that it was huge. I had never seen anything like it. I didn't really know what it was at first. I thought it was just like the previous foster homes I'd been in. It took me a while to get my head round the fact that the whole place was for children.
39. It was actually a little village. It had its own church, school, hospital, shop and hall. The hall was called the Somerville and the hospital was the Elise. It also had a huge park and even had what they called the baby homes, which were two separate places for kids under five. There was also a home in the grounds for adults who suffered from epilepsy. We used to see them walking around wearing helmets for protection in case they fell over.
40. There was also a big office where they had a collage of photographs of all the kids on the wall. They used to produce brochures of the village. Q^{OH} s and I featured in a brochure picture showing kids at play.

41. I think the person who was in overall charge when I first went to Quarriers was Dr Davidson. I could be wrong but that name sticks in my head. Dr Minto was definitely the person in charge by the time I left. I don't know if they had any role in relation to the children. I'm not really sure what their job was. All I know is that they lived in a beautiful, big house, which was kind of separate from the rest of the cottages.
42. We were told that there were over five hundred kids in Quarriers. I think there were around forty-three cottages. There were between twelve and fourteen children in each one.
43. All of my siblings and I went into cottage 17. If you were standing at the front door looking out, the church was on the left and the school was straight ahead, hidden behind another couple of cottages. I think the cottage had a name, but I don't remember it.
44. QNZ [REDACTED] was the house mother. She was single. We had to call her Auntie QNZ [REDACTED]. She was a nurse. I think she had worked in the hospital in Quarriers before she became a house parent. Even if she hadn't been trained as a foster carer, she should have had some human compassion as a nurse, but she had none. I think she was in her late thirties or early forties. She always looked old. She was tall and skinny with really short, curly, greyish hair. She always had a comb in the back of her head and she had really long fingernails.
45. We also had what were called 'aunties'. They were just staff that came in and worked through the day. They didn't sleep in the house at night. There were a few aunties, but they don't figure too big in my imagination. There was an Auntie Carol, and there was another one who had an epileptic fit and died in her sleep. I think her name was [REDACTED]. We also had a cook/cleaner. I think her name was Mrs Glassford. She was lovely.
46. There were three big bedrooms upstairs for the kids. QNZ [REDACTED] had her own room and there were two bathrooms upstairs. We were allowed to use one and the other one was QNZ [REDACTED]'s bathroom.

47. There was a big sitting room downstairs and a big kitchen which had a pantry off it. QNZ's living room was just by the stairs and the children's playroom was next to it. Down a few steps to the left of the playroom was the children's bathroom. It had two baths, a load of sinks and a couple of toilets. To the right of that was a big shed with a concrete floor. That's where all the shoes and coats were kept. Outside the shed, we had a paved area with a fence and there was grass on the other side. We used to sit there and eat our tea in the summer.
48. It tended to be sibling groups in the cottages. The family groups in our cottage remained pretty consistent while I was there. I remember several of them. and QDO were older boys. I'm sure was mixed race. was another older one. I think she and were about fifteen. I thought QDO was about fifteen or sixteen. He was one of QNZ's favourites. She also liked QDM and her siblings QAK QDN and . She didn't like me or any of my siblings. She told us that.
49. QKT and her brother QDL were also in our cottage. They were later joined by their little brother . We were then joined by another family, , and . Another boy called came at some point, but I can't remember his last name. Apparently cottage 17 was one of the smallest, which is why we didn't have as many kids.

Routine at Quarriers

Mornings and bedtime

50. There was a boys' room and a girls' room. The boys had a red room and the girls had a yellow one. Red and yellow were the colours of the curtains and bedspreads in the rooms. There was also a green and orange room, which was for boys and girls.
51. QNZ would sometimes make different people sleep in her room. There was no reason for it. Every now and then she would say to you that you were to sleep in

her room. She had two single beds in her room. I think she did it to throw you off, just another one of her mind games. This happened throughout my time in the cottage. I used to be filled with dread when it was my turn. She gave me the creeps. ^{QOH} had to sleep in her room too. ^{QDM} slept in her room a lot of the time.

52. I think one of the older children used to wake us up in the mornings. We would get up, make our bed (which had to be done properly), and then make sure the room was tidy before we went down for breakfast. The aunties were there to assist. They helped get the little ones ready for school and made sure they had everything they needed.

Mealtimes

53. There was a big, long table in the kitchen. At night time, we had to prepare the breakfast for the next day. We would set the table, put the porridge into a massive pan, fill it with water and put the lid on it. We would also pour the cereal into the bowls and put the side plates over them.
54. In the morning, one of us had to get up first and go down and make all the toast for everybody, including ^{QNZ} and the auntie that was coming in. You'd make mounds and mounds of toast and butter it all. We didn't get a cooked breakfast during the week. We'd maybe get a sausage on a roll on a Saturday.

55. Mrs Glassford would help the aunties to cook the dinner. We had a set weekly menu. I remember we would get fish every Thursday.

Washing

56. The little ones were bathed, but I was just told when to go and get a bath. It wasn't the same as Nazareth House in Liverpool where we all lined up. I think we had a bath every night. You sometimes shared water, particularly if one of your siblings had been in before you. You would just get in after them. There was no privacy in the bathroom. There was a lock on the door but the baths were in cubicles and you

could climb up and look over. Also, sometimes some of the older kids would come in and supervise you having a bath. This happened up until I was around ten.

Clothing

57. They had what they called the 'Drapers' above the shop. It was like a huge storeroom where they kept shoes, coats and clothes. You would go in there and get whatever you were given. You never got to choose anything yourself.

School

58. The school was for Quarriers children only. It was traditional schooling. We all sat at old-fashioned desks. You were in classes according to your age.
59. The uniform was a grey jumper, grey skirt, blue shirt and a blue, black and white tie. We had assemblies in the morning and we all sat on the floor. The headmaster's name is Mr McGuiness. I remember I had a really nice teacher, whose name was Mrs Lamb or Lambert. She was lovely. I seem to remember she had daughters called [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
60. I remember we all got the belt one day for chasing sheep. The sheep had broken free and we were only trying to help round them up. I don't know if it was recorded anywhere when the belt was used. Usually it would be the class teacher that gave you the belt, but you had to go to the headmaster if you were really bad. Some of the teachers used to say that he soaked his belt in vinegar. It was the old-fashioned kind of belt, and you had to stand with your hands out in front of you, one on top of the other. I remember going home from school once with bruising and swelling on my wrists where the belt had caught me.
61. Some kids got the belt way more than others. You always knew the ones who were going to get it. I saw bruising and swelling on other kids' wrists when they got the belt. The teachers used to slap you round the back of the head as well.

62. I left Quarriers before I went to secondary school. I'm sure they had secondary schooling in Quarriers, but some children went out to school in Linwood.

Chores

63. I'm not really sure what the aunties did as most of the cleaning in the cottage was done by us and Mrs Glassford. We all had daily cleaning jobs to do to, which included having to clear the table and wash and dry all the dishes before we went back to school after our dinner.
64. We also had to clean ^{QNZ} [REDACTED]'s bedroom. She insisted that everywhere else in the cottage was kept so clean and tidy, yet her bedroom was disgusting. She would leave dirty knickers and tights on the floor and we had to pick them up, and there were always dirty ashtrays and cigarettes all over the place. It could take hours to clean her room.

Religious instruction

65. There was a huge Church of Scotland church in the village. The minister was Mr Fraser. My mum said she didn't want us to go to the church because we were Catholics, but they took us there twice on a Sunday and we also went to Sunday school. It wasn't like any church we had ever been to, so we didn't have a clue what to do. Nowadays every attempt is made for a child to follow their own religion but it wasn't like that then.

Birthdays and Christmas

66. ^{QNZ} [REDACTED] did acknowledge people's birthdays but even these were turned into unpleasant occasions. The little boy [REDACTED] couldn't say the letter C properly. Quite often ^{QNZ} [REDACTED] would say to [REDACTED] that it was somebody's birthday and ask him what we were going to have. He would say "tate". And she would say, "No, [REDACTED] What are we going to have? Until you say it properly, you're not getting any". He couldn't say it, so she wouldn't give him any cake. He was three years of age.

67. We used to get a lot of stuff from our mum for our birthday and that seemed to really anger QNZ. I really don't know why.
68. Quarriers would provide us with toys at Christmas, but we just wanted to open the presents our mum had sent us. QNZ wouldn't let us open them until later on in the day. They would be sitting there and she wouldn't let us touch them. She was really cruel.

Pocket money

69. I think we got about ten pence pocket money. My mum used to send us postal orders. There was a shop and post office in the village. We would go to the post office to cash the postal orders. QNZ wouldn't let us spend the money on sweeties, but there was nothing else to spend it on.

Leisure time/trips

70. We used to sit in the big sitting room and watch TV. We also had a playroom with toys and everybody had their own locker in there. You could put personal stuff like toys in the locker, but nothing was ever really yours because if other kids wanted something, they would just take it. The lockers were never locked. And QNZ was never very good at telling kids to hand things back. In fact, she seemed to get great pleasure out of seeing kids destroying something which belonged to someone else, particularly if one of the QAK/QDM/QDN was doing it.
71. During the school summer holidays, they used to have what they called the 'group'. Loads of adults would come and all summer long they would do a kind of programme with us. We would do this together as a cottage or they would split us into age groups. They did different sports with us and took us out on day trips. They did all kinds of activities with us.
72. We used to go fairs and to the circus. I also remember going to watch the Wombles, which was my first ever concert. Cliff Richard came and did a concert too. I think I was about eleven then. They also did something like Songs of Praise. TV crews

came and there was a singer called Moira. I was in the school choir, so I remember sitting at the side singing. Apparently, my face was one of the first shown when it came on TV. I also had music lessons and we had a piano in the cottage. From the outside, it sounds idyllic and to be fair we were provided with a lot. I suppose if we'd had any other house parent, we might have had a great time.

73. QNZ [REDACTED] didn't really encourage us to go out and about and visit other cottages. I don't recall forming any real relationships with anybody. I didn't really have friends. I very much stuck with my own family.

Holidays

74. Every cottage went on holiday. We used to go to Turnberry or Girvan. There was a man called Mr Hodge, who was a millionaire, and he apparently owned these holiday homes in Turnberry. I think there were four or five houses, and we would go and stay there for a couple of weeks every summer. I remember Rod Stewart landing once by helicopter.

Healthcare

75. I don't remember getting any sort of special medical care or health checks. I remember having to stay in the Elise Hospital once, but I don't know why. [REDACTED] and I stayed in the hospital.
76. I think I was anaemic as a child, and I also suffered terribly with sore throats. I ended up having to get my tonsils out when I was nine or ten. That wasn't done in the Elise. I don't know where I went, but I was in the hospital for two weeks because I wasn't well when I went in, and they had to wait until I was better before they did the operation.
77. They also had a dentist in the village. I remember going there to get some teeth out.

Visits / Inspections

78. We didn't go home during the first few years. Our mum used to write to us but didn't visit much because she had moved back to England. She did come up to visit whenever she could. She was allowed to take us out when she came. She sometimes took us to Bridge of Weir.
79. I remember my sister [REDACTED] visiting us. She came in a big minibus with all the other kids from Thorntoun School. I think they had just been passing and she asked if she could come in and see us.
80. QNZ [REDACTED] had her own visitors to the house. She had family who would come and stay. Her sisters came and brought their own kids. That was really hard because QNZ [REDACTED] treated them really nicely because they were her nieces and nephews. We were told to play with them and we were seriously warned beforehand to be on our best behaviour and not to say anything.
81. It was the same when our social worker used to visit. I'm sure Mrs Paisley came sometimes. I don't recall seeing her a lot. I remember this one occasion when she came to visit. QNZ [REDACTED] put out a plate of biscuits and she warned us not to eat the chocolate ones, as these were for Mrs Paisley. We were allowed to eat the rich tea and digestives. Mrs Paisley made us take a chocolate biscuit and then she asked QNZ [REDACTED] when she walked into the room if it was alright to have done so. QNZ [REDACTED] said yes of course. We were all terrified. Trying to swallow a biscuit that you knew was going to get you into trouble wasn't easy. We were punished for it afterwards.
82. Even if QNZ [REDACTED] wasn't in the room during visits, you were terrified. She used to say to us that she would deal with us after the visitors left if we hadn't done as we were told. You couldn't even enjoy the visit. You spent the time worrying about what was going to happen to you afterwards.
83. I don't recall any official inspections of the cottage taking place, and I don't remember seeing any social workers who were employed by Quarriers. As far as I

know, everybody had their own social workers from different local authorities. I think Dr Minto might have come round to be introduced when he took over from Dr Davidson, but I don't remember any of them visiting the cottage at any other time.

84. Quarriers had an open day for their centenary. It was like you were on show. People came round to look at the houses and the children.
85. There were a lot of orphans in Quarriers and potential adoptive parents used to come to see the orphan children.

Abuse at Quarriers

86. QNZ [REDACTED] was horrible about my mum. She didn't like her, and she knew when she spoke about her it would make me angry and upset. She would get our letters from our mum and read them out to us, sometimes when other kids were there. She did this even though she knew we could read. She'd say, "Oh look, the [REDACTED] have got another letter from their mum". And she would ridicule what my mum had written. She would say things like, "Your mum says she loves you, yet she's left you here. And, look at this, she's saying that you've not to worry because you'll be home soon. That will never happen. I will make sure of that". She used to say to us that she had the power to keep us there and we would be there until we were sixteen. I was terrified it was true.
87. She addressed me as "QDK [REDACTED]", "[REDACTED]", "You", just whatever came to mind. She preferred to use your last name if you were one of the kids she didn't like. She would pick you out and try to humiliate you in front of the other kids. She would say, "Look at QDK [REDACTED], she's got a face on her" and "You, [REDACTED] you never smile". It was the same sort of thing she used to do to little [REDACTED] when he couldn't say the word "cake". QNZ [REDACTED] loved nothing more than to humiliate and belittle kids. Some of this might not seem significant, but it was relentless.
88. The punishments were relentless as well. You knew there was going to be something every day. One of her favourite punishments was to make you walk

around the playroom with your hands in the air, and if you dropped your arms she would hit you. She would actually get you out of bed to do that. She used to have days off and quite often when she came back, she would find something that hadn't been done properly, like the playroom hadn't been tidied properly or the bathroom had been missed. She would get everybody out of bed to question us on who had done what. She would then have you walking around the playroom with your hands in the air until she decided you'd had enough.

89. On one occasion she came back from a day off and there was no toilet roll in the bathroom upstairs. The little ones were in bed. She got them up and brought everyone else upstairs. She lined us up, questioned all of us and then slapped everyone with a belt across our bottoms and legs.
90. There were a few times when she got us up out of bed and made us go into the shed and scrub the floor with the toothbrushes. We'd be up doing this in the middle of the night or the early hours of the morning.
91. Another time she made me and [redacted] do press-ups when she had visitors. [redacted] and I must have been talking in bed, and she made us come downstairs and do press-ups behind her couch in her living room. I couldn't do a press-up to save my life, and she went mad at us because we couldn't do them and we were laughing.
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- She grabbed us by the hair, slapped us and made us go back up to bed.
92. She would make you sit under the table in the kitchen as a punishment. Quite often she punished you in a family group because she was quite twisted that way. You could have [redacted] under the table at one end and [redacted] at the other, me in the pantry and [redacted] over at the other end of the kitchen, and we wouldn't know what we were being punished for.
93. There was one occasion where she stuck my head in the bin. I think that was because I hadn't emptied the bins in the playroom. She tipped a bucket full of potatoes over [redacted]'s head as a punishment. I can't remember what that was for.

94. She would often slap you or grab you by the ponytail. She would also hit you with hairbrushes and a belt. And she was never done gripping you and digging her nails into you, or poking you with her long fingernails. We always had bruises and scratches.
95. She would batter you senseless if you ever mentioned in front of anyone that she smoked. You knew that whenever the person left, you would get such a beating. She seemed to have this front that she presented to people, that she was this good, Christian, non-smoking woman who was devoting her life to poor little orphans. When in actual fact, she was a psychopath who smoked like a chimney.
96. I hated fish because there were bones in it and I was terrified of choking. We got fish every Thursday. QNZ [REDACTED] knew I wouldn't eat it, so she would resort to force-feeding. She would stand behind me, grip my forehead, and then she would get hold of my chin and literally ram the fork in. She didn't care if she cut my lips or mouth. She would then try to hold my face so that I would swallow it. When that didn't work, because it rarely worked, I would be made to sit there until lunch finished and then she'd give it to me again for my tea. This never let up. I knew Thursday was coming every week and I knew the same thing would happen again. I lived in dread, and mixed in amongst that was a feeling of total helplessness, because I knew there was nothing I could do about it. Sometimes Mrs Glassford would put the fish in the bin when QNZ [REDACTED] went out the room, and she'd tell me to take a mouthful to make it look like I was finishing it when she came back in.
97. I think it was [REDACTED] that was hurting me one time, and for the first time ever, I just lost my temper and really went for him. I think this must have been coming up towards the end of my time in Quarriers, because I had become a little bit more verbal then. I had previously been very quiet, but I think I got to the point where I'd had enough. QNZ [REDACTED] got hold of me and slapped me hard. She was absolutely furious because she had guests. She was more concerned that I was embarrassing her in front of her guests than about me getting a beating.
98. I remember just standing there and I don't know what made me do it, but I literally just screamed and screamed at her. She grabbed hold of me from behind and put

one hand over my nose and mouth and then put her other arm round my waist and was squeezing me to the point where I almost passed out. I couldn't breathe. She dropped me onto the floor when I went limp, gave me a kick and told me to get to bed.

99. My sister [REDACTED] used to wet the bed. I think she came to Quarriers when she was about three. [REDACTED] used to make her stand on a chair in the shed at a big stone sink and wash her sheets in cold water, not all the time but now and again. She was only three and four when this happened.
100. The aunties wouldn't hesitate to slap you round the head as well. You just accepted that that was going to happen.
101. [REDACTED] one of the older boys in the cottage, sexually abused me, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] knew about it, yet she adored him. She knew because she walked in one day when he had been chasing the three of us around the shed with his penis out. We were screaming and [REDACTED]'s sitting room sort of backed onto the shed. [REDACTED] had locked the shed door and [REDACTED] was banging on the door. He sorted himself before opening the door. We told her why we had been screaming, but she just gave us a slap for screaming and told us to shut up.
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102. There was a big cupboard, similar to a meter cupboard, under the window in the playroom. I think we had shoes in it. You could fit in it if you bent down. [REDACTED] would sometimes get me in there and try to kiss me. He would put his hands down my knickers and try to make me touch his penis. He did the same to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. He would sometimes get the three of us together and try to make us touch his penis or put it in our mouths. I was about seven or eight when all of this was happening.
103. I felt threatened living with [REDACTED]. He was big and looked like a grown man, although I was told in later years that he was only twelve at the time. He was another reason why I lived my life in a state of fear and anxiety.

104. QOH and I were also sexually abused by QDM. I don't know what age she was. She looked like a grown woman. She was fully developed. She used to go into the shed, strip herself naked and lie on what we used to call the shoe hamper. It was a massive wicker thing. She would spread herself out and make us examine her, which involved touching her vagina and breasts. She used to give us polo mints for doing it. On reflection, I think QNZ was a lesbian and I think there was something going on between her and QDM. She slept in QNZ's room a lot. Although, QDM was a vulnerable young person too, so she was probably abused herself.
105. There was a PE teacher at school who was always "touchy-feely". I can't remember his name. He seemed really old. We had to wear PE knickers for gym and he was always patting the girls' bottoms.
106. The physical and even the sexual abuse you could just about deal with, but all the emotional stuff, the constant belittling, humiliation and calling you names was really hard to deal with. I suppose to anybody hearing about it they might not think it's that bad but when that is happening on a daily basis for that many years, it really grinds you down. You live your life in a complete state of anxiety and fear and then you get to the point where you're watching somebody else getting the same treatment and all you can think about is that you're just glad it's not you. I suppose I lost a little bit of compassion for my fellow man, except when it was one of my siblings.

Reporting of abuse at Quarriers

107. We used to go to Dr Minto's house. QOH and I were quite friendly with Dr Minto's daughter. I think we told her some of the stuff that QNZ was doing, so they used to have us round to their house quite a bit to get us away from her. Considering he was the Director of the place, I think there would have been better ways of dealing with it.
108. Initially we told the social workers, Mrs Paisley and Miss Brown, that QNZ was really horrible and that she would shout at us and smack us. I'm not entirely

sure what their reaction was. I think we were told not to worry and they would speak to Quarriers. As time went on, we didn't say anything. QNZ used to warn us not to say anything and she would tell that she'd be listening even if we were in another room.

109. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] asked to speak to all of us girls one by one in the playroom about QDO [REDACTED]. When I went in, they asked me if QDO [REDACTED] had ever done anything to me. They assured me that I wouldn't get into trouble if I said anything. I told them what QDO [REDACTED] had done and I know that QOH [REDACTED] and QKT [REDACTED] did the same. I probably wouldn't have said anything to anybody if they hadn't come and asked me. They must have reported it to someone else, as QDO [REDACTED] was taken away a few months after that. We were told that he had gone to an approved school. I remember him coming back for a visit and he was smoking a cigar. QNZ [REDACTED] was delighted to see him, and she made us all sit and listen while he played the piano. There was a guy with him. I think he was probably an escort from the approved school. I can't believe they actually brought him back to the cottage after what he'd done to us.
110. I didn't say anything to anybody about what QDM [REDACTED] was doing to us. I think my attitude back then was that I was just happy to be getting polo mints. Also, I had been sexually abused in other homes in England, and I think I just kind of accepted it as part of what happened when you were in care.

Leaving Quarriers the first time

111. I left Quarriers and went home to my mum when I was eleven. Home by this point was down in Birkenhead. My mum had remarried. We had met our step-dad once. My mum had brought him to meet us at Quarriers and told us she would like us to call him dad.
112. I presume social workers made the decision for us to go back home. I know they had met my step-dad. The decision was probably based on the fact my mum had remarried and had some support. My step-dad had a job and my mum was working

too, so they probably thought it was fine for us all to go home based on what they had seen.

113. Nothing was done to prepare us for going home. We were just told that we were going. I was delighted. Our stuff was packed for us without us knowing. I think we went in a minibus all the way to Birkenhead, accompanied by Mrs Paisley.

Living at home in Birkenhead

114. My step-dad had his own issues. He was an alcoholic. He never hit my mum, but he did hit us and was quite cruel verbally. He terrorised my brother [REDACTED]. I don't recall a social worker coming to visit us at home. In those days, England wouldn't have taken responsibility for us as children coming out of care in Scotland. Nowadays, you would alert a local authority if a 'looked after child' or somebody on a child protection plan was moving into their area, but I don't think that happened in those days.
115. I was home for about four or five months, definitely less than six months, and then was sent back to Quarriers.
116. I have no idea who decided that we should go back to Quarriers. All five of us went back. My mum took us all to Edinburgh one day and we met the social workers in St Andrew's Bus Station. I had a horrible feeling that we were going back to Quarriers. My mum never said a word about it. We were sitting there chatting and then my mum said that she had to go to the toilet. She wouldn't let me go to the toilet with her, and I remember telling her that she'd better not leave us. I just knew that she was going to leave, and she did leave. That's the way they planned it. The social workers then drove all of us back to Quarriers.

Second period in Quarriers

117. We all went back to the same cottage in Quarriers and QNZ [REDACTED] was still there. Things were pretty much still the same. I think there might have been a new young person there called [REDACTED]
118. I was so angry at being back. I had kind of tried to be as invisible as I could, to pretend that I didn't exist, during my first time there, but I wasn't like that the second time around. I challenged everybody and I would hit anybody who hit my siblings. I just remember being horrible. QNZ [REDACTED] could not get her head round it. She thought I was being difficult because I had been back home. But that wasn't it. It was the fact that I had been returned to her.

Leaving Quarriers the second time

119. I was back in Quarriers for about six months the second time. I think they decided to do a staggered return home for all of us. My mum had probably felt it was too much to have us all back at once. I was told that I was going home and I think I went back on my own for a couple of months. [REDACTED] then came home and QOH [REDACTED] came after him. [REDACTED] was also back living with my mother by then.

Life after being in care

120. My life at home until I left at seventeen was chaotic. My step-dad was drinking and he used to batter us. You never knew whether you were coming or going. One day I'd be in Birkenhead and the next I'd be on a train to Edinburgh. We were always leaving my step-dad.
121. The police were called out to our house a lot. My step-dad assaulted [REDACTED]. I think he fractured her skull and yet nothing was ever done about it. I don't actually know how we were allowed to remain with him and my mum, unless my mum did a whole lot of covering up.

122. My mum left my step-dad once again when I was fifteen. We went back to Edinburgh and slept on an auntie's floor for a good few weeks and then went to a homeless unit in Leith. This was before [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] came back home. [REDACTED] stayed in Birkenhead with her boyfriend and his family. The homeless unit was down on the waterfront and was still being used by sailors. All the prostitutes used to come in the evening. They were really nice. Somebody locked all the doors in the unit and set it on fire one night when we were in it.
123. We got a house in Edinburgh and things settled down. It was nice, calm and quiet. I was at St Augustine's school. I had to do extra classes because I had missed such a lot from moving around and having to follow a different curriculum when I moved between England and Scotland. I was well supported by the school. My mum then told us that my step-dad was coming back. I was so angry. She said he was a changed man, but he came back and was just the same.
124. As far as I know there was still social work involvement with our family because [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were still in care. They sometimes came home for the weekend. I imagine social work would have been keeping track on our family, but I don't recall seeing any social workers. I actually don't know how my sisters were allowed to come home at all given how bad things were at home. I actually asked to go back into care at one point. That's how bad it was.
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125. My mum made me go into a fruit and veg shop to apply for a job when we were out shopping one day. She said I had to take the job because she needed the money due to my step-dad spending it all on drink. I hadn't even sat my O-levels. The school begged my mum to let me stay and in the end the compromise was that I could go back and sit my exams. I passed English, history and English literature. I failed maths and arithmetic.
126. I started working in the shop full-time. I think I was there about three months before I decided I was better off dead and I tried to kill myself. I was sixteen and I'd just had enough. It wasn't just my step-dad I'd had enough of, there were still a lot of issues

from Quarriers and I was also worrying about [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], both of whom were still in Quarriers.

127. I was taken to the Western General Hospital and they washed my stomach out. They transferred me to the Royal Infirmary, where I was locked in a ward full of old women with some serious mental health issues. A psychiatrist came to see me the next day. He was trying to ask me questions, but I got the feeling he thought I was a stupid, little girl who was attention-seeking. I said to him how unhappy I was and he told me off. He said that I had a huge chip on my shoulder about men. He then spoke to my mum and told her the same thing. He said to her that I wasn't very trusting, and the sooner I got rid of the big chip on my shoulder, the better off I'd be. That's pretty much what the consensus was. I left hospital and there was no follow-up whatsoever. No further assessments were done by anybody, and if the social workers were informed about what I'd done, I don't know about it.
128. I decided I had to leave home because I was getting to the point where I was kind of losing the fear of my step-dad and what I wanted to do was kill him instead. I think my fear had been overtaken by rage. I felt rage at my mum as well. I felt she was keeping us in that situation and she should have protected us a bit more. I don't blame her for Quarriers or all the other care homes, but I very much feel that she was complicit in what happened to us in her care with our step-dad, as she knew what was happening and did nothing.
129. I joined the air force four weeks after my seventeenth birthday. My mum had to sign for me so that I could join. I served nearly three years and left to get married. My husband [REDACTED] was in the air force as well. He had a pretty similar background to me, except he hadn't been in care. We got married in 1982, split up in 1986 and divorced in 1988. I had two sons, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], with him. I also have a daughter called [REDACTED]
130. I didn't love [REDACTED] when I married him. I know that now. My mum and step-dad kept saying to me that I didn't have to marry him, but I knew that anyway. I think I was just cutting off my nose to spite my face. We had only been married three months and I went back to the RAF recruiting office and asked if I could come back. My

relationship with [REDACTED] was so destructive, and there was no way I was staying with a man just for the sake of the kids.

131. I moved in with my sister [REDACTED] in Birkenhead for a while when [REDACTED] and I split up, and then I got a house of my own and pretty much stayed there. [REDACTED]'s father walked away the minute I told him I was pregnant, so I brought up all three children on my own.
132. I went to college and then university, and I qualified as a social worker in 2002. Since then I have worked in child protection.

Impact

133. I started to suffer terribly with anxiety and stress in my twenties. I saw a couple of psychiatrists. I was on my own with my children and I used to constantly worry about keeping them safe and making sure nothing happened to them. I was so over the top with it all.
134. I also cleaned excessively. I was terrible for cleaning and trying to prepare myself in my head for every scenario that could possibly happen. I think I drove myself mad. I couldn't go for a night out. I had to prepare myself for every eventuality I had to clean my house from top to bottom, make sure there was food in the house, and make sure the kids had clean clothes. I had to do everything I could think of so that if anything happened to me, my kids could survive.
135. I remember seeing a psychiatrist and saying to him that I couldn't stop thinking about my children dying. I told him that I didn't want to hurt my children and would be devastated if anything happened to them, but I just kept thinking about their death and planning funerals for them. He said to me it was kind of like a healthy way of offloading myself of responsibility. I told him all about my experiences in care and he said what I was going through was directly attributable to my time in care.

136. He said he wasn't surprised that I felt the way I did because of all the things that had happened to me in care, and because I had had so much responsibility from a young age. I used to have to look after the younger ones all the time in care and when I was at home. I have always been a carer of some sort. He said that I was actually quite a strong person because I was still going.
137. I felt so suicidal at times. I would literally spend weeks and weeks thinking about killing myself. The only thing that stopped me was my children because I couldn't bear the thought of them going into care and the same things happening to them.
138. I often went to the hospital thinking I was dying when I was having panic attacks. I didn't know they were panic attacks at the time.
139. It all came to a head in 2000 or 2001. I had not long started university. My children were older and I was becoming more manic about trying to keep them safe. I had [REDACTED] by that point. She was nine coming up for ten. I had three different jobs and living inside my own head at the time was torture. On the outside, I probably appeared perfectly calm and rational but on the inside I was constantly making plans about how I could keep my kids safe and make sure that they never experienced the things I had experienced.
140. I went and spoke to my GP and told her I was so exhausted and that my head just never stopped. I said to her I would rather lock my kids in the cellar and not let them out so that nothing could happen to them. She said she thought I needed help. I was put on medication for anxiety around 2001.
141. I had a meltdown in 2004 and went off work sick in December 2004. My anxiety medication was then doubled. I was off work for six months and went back in 2005. QNZ [REDACTED]'s criminal trial was coming nearer and nearer, I think we had a date by then, and I just kept having flashbacks. Things that I thought I had dealt with were resurfacing and I was remembering new things. I literally could not function. Within a few weeks of being back at work, I just knew I couldn't work as a social worker so I resigned. I didn't go back to work until 2007.

142. I have never been able to get my medication dose reduced since it was doubled in 2004. The fact that I have to take medication to function really wrecks my head. I don't want to take it and it angers me that I need it.
143. I didn't find seeing psychiatrists helpful. I suffered from depression and was given a diagnosis of clinical depression, but I don't have a mental illness. You'd see a psychiatrist for an illness like schizophrenia or bi-polar, but anxiety and depression are different.
144. I've had counselling with a psychologist a few times, which did help. I think the last time was in the early 2000s. It was always time-limited, or I had to wait such a long time for it. I've kind of worked through my own issues. You have to or you just fall down. No matter what's happened over my life, I've always got back up. That's not to say that I haven't been crawling on the floor at times and I've wallowed for a good few days and felt so sorry for myself, but there's obviously something in me that makes me decide I'm not going to do that, and I get back up again.
145. I have been diagnosed with fibromyalgia, which is a condition that causes pain all over your body. It's bizarre because it doesn't seem to originate from anywhere. It can be extremely painful on a bad day. If you've never been to the gym in your life and all of a sudden you go and train with an Olympic athlete, the pain you'd feel the next day is what it's like. They reckon it's as a result of either a serious illness or severe trauma in childhood. Three of my sisters suffer from it too.
146. I've been single since 2002. I don't trust anybody. I never felt safe with anybody, and I certainly didn't want to leave my children with anybody. I'm also a control freak. That's another reason why I've cut myself off and don't have a relationship. I don't try to control everything, but I'd rather not deal with the stress if I'm not in control, so I just don't bother. I deny myself a lot of stuff because it's just too much hassle.
147. I was very strict with my children as well as being over-protective. When I think back now, I was way too strict. I wouldn't say my actions were disabling, because they are actually all very capable people, but my anxieties definitely projected onto them because they were the focus of my fear.

148. My kids have all suffered mental health problems. They have all gone through periods where they've had to see psychiatrists. My eldest son has terrible obsessive compulsive disorder. This is my fault. I haven't been diagnosed with that, but I was so manic I have definitely passed it on. I would wash skirting boards and doorframes every day and would take curtains down every week, wash them and put them back up. I couldn't go to the kitchen to make a cup of tea, but I ended up cleaning the cupboards. I used to have callouses on my hands because I cleaned that much. My middle son is pretty similar. He has lists for things and you have to fold things a certain way for him. Again, that's my influence.
149. I feel a lot of guilt about my children and how my experiences have affected them. That's something I really struggle with. In fact, that's the thing that impacts me most these days. They weren't even in care and never experienced any abuse, yet they've still been affected by it. I feel anger and guilt in pretty much equal measures. I don't feel angry at myself. I am angry at how awful it was and how it was allowed to continue being so awful for such a long time.

Reporting of Abuse

150. The police contacted me because my sisters had decided to report the abuse. I think [REDACTED] and QOH [REDACTED] had reported it. I said I was quite happy to give a statement. I reported QNZ [REDACTED], QDO [REDACTED] and QDM [REDACTED]. This was in the late nineties. The police were from Glasgow. They were really nice. I think they sent officers from the local force in Birkenhead to come and take a statement at first and then nothing happened.
151. About three or four years later it all came back up again and I think that's when I met the police from Glasgow and gave a statement again. The procurator fiscal (PF) then came down to Birkenhead to meet with me to go over my statement. It took ages for them to decide whether they were going to take it to court. I was told that they were not going to prosecute QDM [REDACTED] or QDO [REDACTED] but they would prosecute QNZ [REDACTED].

152. The case eventually went to court in 2006, but they had been looking at dates from about 2003 and it just kept getting adjourned. QNZ was in her seventies by the time it came to court, and she was portrayed as this old, Christian lady, who was prominent in her local church and a pillar of society.
153. The trial was held in Greenock. QNZ looked exactly how I remembered her. She didn't look at all sorry. I felt like I was eight years old again when I saw her. I felt sick and had mixed feelings of anger and helplessness. I felt like I was on trial when I gave evidence in court. I was told that I was a liar, that I had made it all up, that we'd all colluded and it was all about trying to get money.
154. What kept me going was that I knew no matter how they tried to trip me up, I would keep telling them the same thing, as it was all true. My sisters gave evidence, as did QKT QDL and Nobody asked me if I would like to hear QNZ QNZ give evidence. I would have liked to. I don't even know if she did give evidence. And nobody from Quarriers ever made contact with any of us. There was no acknowledgement or apology from them for what we had experienced at the hands of their carers. It felt to me like they were supporting QNZ, just so they could protect the Quarriers name.
155. I think there were fifteen charges against her, including child assault and cruelty. She was found guilty of about seven or eight charges. Some of them were not proven, and I think they left a couple to lie on file. She got five years' probation.
156. QOH had also reported QDO to the police. They made some inquiries and came back and said that according to the documentation provided, he had only been about twelve at the time. I just couldn't believe he was that age. Even now, I'm still convinced he was about fifteen or sixteen. He was smoking a cigar when he came back to visit the cottage that time. I think it was the PF that decided not to proceed against him because of his age.

Other action

157. After the court case, we were encouraged by the PF to make a claim for criminal injuries compensation. I didn't want to do it because it felt like dirty money to me. I felt like a prostitute, like I was getting paid for it. I was just so delighted that we got a prosecution and QNZ [REDACTED] was convicted because it meant that finally somebody was listening, and, not only were they listening, they believed us. That meant everything to me.
158. QOH [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] got payments and they encouraged me to apply about a year later. I eventually did apply and I got compensation and gave it all away. Most of it went to my kids because they suffered as well.

Records

159. I haven't tried to access my records from Edinburgh or Liverpool social services. I have wanted to do so for a long time but just haven't got around to it.
160. I have the Quarriers records. They are so disappointing. I can't believe they cover four years of my life. There's nothing in them. You could read them and you wouldn't know who I was. I know foster carers have daily logs now but they had nothing like that then. I don't recall QNZ [REDACTED] filling out anything like that. It's a long time since I read them, but I don't think there's anything in them about me leaving and then returning again a few months later.

Lessons to be Learned

161. I think it would be good for somebody like me who has been in care and works as a social worker to give a talk to other social workers about the reality of life in care. I accept that my experience was years ago, but it doesn't matter whether it was then or now, how a child feels about going into care is still the same.

162. When I am dealing with a situation in my work where we have to place a child in care, my colleagues might be thinking about paperwork and that sort of thing, but I am off on a different tangent. I am thinking about it from the child's perspective, having been a child in care. I think about what a child might need, like making sure they've got their favourite things with them, and I do everything I can to try to reassure them. If they are going to a foster home, I try to find out as much as I can about the foster carers so that I can pass that information on to the child.
163. A lot of social workers don't stop to think about what it's like for a child to be left with a family they know absolutely nothing about. They don't know what it's like to be terrified when you wake up in the night in a strange house, or the fear a child has about wetting the bed or being forced to eat something they don't like. I ask a child what their favourite food is and make a point of telling the foster carers, in front of the child, which foods the child doesn't like. The child has then heard what you've said and is reassured. All of these things affected me, so I know it's important to consider these when placing a child in care. I wouldn't say that these are standard thoughts of a social worker.
164. Also, if a sibling group is going into care and they can't be placed together, they need to know when they'll see one another. They also need to know when they'll next see their mum. It is really important to explain this to them as soon as possible.
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165. Children need to be reassured that they are not just going to be dumped. Most children have mobile phones now, so I give my work mobile number to older children so that they can contact me themselves. It is important for children to know that they can contact their social worker when they need to. I also make a point of telling the foster carer, in the presence of the child, that if the child needs to talk to me and can't get me, they should contact the office and I'll ring the child back.
166. Children need to know that the social worker is there for them, not their parents or anybody else. I always say to a young person that my job is to help them. It's hard because a lot of children are very distrustful, as I was. Children need to be able to trust people to be able to disclose abuse and the right questions need to be asked. A child can't just strike up the conversation.

167. A lot of children are in care today and they don't know why. Some of them have a story in their heads that is so different from reality. Even if a child was taken into care really young, when they reach a certain age and want to know, somebody should sit them down and explain things to them. I don't think it should be a social worker that does this as some children, because they don't know who made decisions about them or understand what the decisions were based on, blame social workers for ripping their family apart. There should be a separate role that is responsible for sitting with children and going through the timeline with them and explaining why decisions were made.
168. It is also important to include a child in decisions that are going to be made about them and for them to have more of a say. This obviously needs to be age-appropriate. A lot of children will of course want something they can't have, but it should be explained to them the reasons why they can't have those things or why they can't return home.
169. Children get so offended if you don't know their name or date of birth. There are times as a social worker when you have to see children in an emergency situation and you know nothing about them and that can't be helped. But when social workers are given new cases, they should be given the time to read through the whole file so that they can get a full picture of the child and understand why they currently are where they are. Without a full picture, things can be missed. Also, I completely understand the relevance of paperwork, but it has to be made easier. My only experience of social workers in Scotland is from being a child in care, but I think a lot of the issues I've faced as a social worker in England apply to Scotland too.
170. One of the big issues faced by me and colleagues daily is a lack of resources and funding. There is a lack of properly qualified social workers, because it's become one of those professions that people talk about quietly because nobody wants to admit they're doing it. I want to be able to stand up and say that I am a social worker and I do a very good job. Another big issue is the constant changes of staff. A child has to tell their story over and over again and it gets wearing. It is also difficult for a child to build trust if their social worker is constantly changing.

171. A lot of foster carers do memory boxes for children as a matter of course these days. The children take these with them whenever they move on. I think this should be done for all children in care. Parts of my life are missing, and I don't know what I looked like at different stages in my life because no photographs were taken. Something like a memory box would have helped me to have a clearer picture of my life. My timeline would probably be crystal clear if I had been able to take things from one place to another.

Other information

172. I said that my time at Quarriers might have been better had we been in a different cottage with a different house parent. I say that because kids at school would talk about the things they had done in their cottage and it seemed so nice compared to what we were doing, or they would talk about being allowed to do things that we definitely weren't allowed to do. I remember children talking about a house parent called Mrs QAJ. The children used to call her Mummy QAJ. There was another set of house parents who sounded nice. They came from Chile but I can't remember their names.

173. 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.... QDK

Dated..... 11th June 2018