

## **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

### **Witness Statement of**

FDM

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is FDM and my date of birth is 1966. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### **Background**

2. I am a married woman with two children. I have been married to my husband for 31 years. I am currently employed as a community nursing assistant.
3. I was born in Springburn to my parents and . Along with my parents, my older brother , younger sister and I initially stayed at Springburn, Glasgow. We thereafter moved to Fort William and stayed at in Coull.

### **Life before being put into care**

4. As time went on there were difficulties with my parent's marriage. You don't fully understand at the time, you just remember bits and pieces. My father was a chronic alcoholic, he left home and went to stay with his parents in Glasgow. We stayed with our mother. I think she struggled to keep the house and kids going. We didn't have a terrible life but there was quite a bit of dysfunction about it, it wasn't the best life.
5. This led to the family being evicted from our home in Fort William and my mother took the three of us to Nairn, where we stayed for a short period of time in a caravan.

██████████ and I attended school there for a bit. We weren't the best attenders. Living in the caravan was an unacceptable situation, it was damp and wet.

6. Arrangements were made for ██████████, ██████████ and I to go back to Fort William to stay with my mother's brother, our uncle ██████████ and his wife. Whether they knew we were coming or not, we arrived on their doorstep with some belongings and a family allowance book. We stayed for a period of time but ██████████ then went to stay with another relative in Fort William, one of my mother's sisters, our aunt ██████████ in Treeslig. I was ten years old and ██████████ was about five or six and we both attended Coull Primary School. I'm not sure how long this period was.
7. There were no social services in place at this point, I don't know how we came under the radar at that time. However after a while ██████████ and I were placed in a foster home in Inverlochy, the same area, by the social work. The couple's name was Mr and Mrs ██████████ We stayed there for about a year to a year and a half and attended Inverlochy Primary School. There were no issues with this placement.
8. At some point there was a request from my father who was still staying with his mum and dad, my Gran and Grandpa, for ██████████ and I to stay with them, so we left foster care and went to stay with them in Glasgow. We stayed there for about a year but my dad was staying there too and he still had a drink problem so it was difficult for our grandparents to deal with this and look after ██████████ and me.
9. During this time we had limited contact with our brother ██████████. He was still in Fort William and he joined the navy. We didn't visit so keeping in touch was very limited. We always knew he was there.
10. From there we were moved to another aunt and her husband in Bearsden, Glasgow. This was my father's sister and her husband. We stayed there long enough to be registered in the school, Colquhoun Park School. I think the social work were involved, but not to the extent that we were aware of, I think they were there in the background

**Mugdock Children's Home, Milngavie**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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15. We left the children's home because it had to be closed down. I don't know why, whether it was unmanageable through costs and things, I don't really know. We were disappointed because we were well looked after at the home and I got on well with the house parents. We weren't troublesome children, we done what we were told. There were decisions made about where all the children would be placed. It was put to [REDACTED] and I whether we'd want to apply to be placed in foster care or go to another children's home.

16. At that time, being a bit older, I made the decisions for [REDACTED] and I. I was like a mother figure to her more than anything. We both decided we'd prefer to go to a foster placement and the application was put in place prior to the home closing.
17. The search was put out for a suitable family for us. They asked what type of family we would like and took that into consideration and looked for certain things in people. We were glad we were given the choice rather than be upset and go into another children's home because moving about just became too much, although that wasn't the end of it.

### **Moving to foster care**

18. David Burke overseen the foster placement and a family took an interest. I don't remember going to meet them prior to going there, I just remember being shown a photograph of the family. It was of a mother, father, three sons and a daughter. These were the [REDACTED] who stayed at Hardgate, Clydebank. I'm not sure how long the period was before leaving the home and being put in the foster placement, to me it seemed quite a quick process. I would have been fourteen and [REDACTED] was ten.
19. By this time our family had handed full parental control and care over to the social work department. Over all this time we had no contact at all with our mother, we didn't know where she was after we left the caravan. We also had little contact with our dad due to his erratic behaviour.

### **The foster care**

20. We were placed within the family home in [REDACTED] 1981. Initially, [REDACTED] and I fitted in well with the family, we attended social gatherings with them. The three boys were older than us but we saw them as brothers, we got on well. It was a basic council house, it wasn't anything big and fancy. The three brothers, who were [REDACTED] FLV, in his mid-twenties, [REDACTED] who wasn't much younger and [REDACTED], who was about eighteen or nineteen, all shared a room. [REDACTED] and I shared a room with the

██████ daughter ██████ who was about twelve years old. ██████ and ██████ shared bunks and I had a single bed.

### *Visits*

21. We visited our grandparents, our dad's parents now and again, but with my dad being there it was quite difficult, it was kind of limited. But the ██████ knew there was family there and we'd like to keep in touch with them as much as possible.

### *Schooling*

22. I began attending Clydebank High School and ██████ was going to Goldenhill Primary. I don't recall it being a really difficult time, we were in that settling in period, so we weren't sure what to expect but it didn't seem a bad thing. When I'd went to Milngavie Primary I had made a few friends that I tried to keep in touch with when I was in Clydebank. I think that caused problems in the foster placement because I tended to do as much as I could to maintain these friendships. It was important to me. I would meet them in Glasgow.

### **Abuse**

23. We were in the foster placement for a short period of time because there was some abuse directed towards me. I can go into the details now. I've given a statement to the police and ██████ is aware of it. I have always found it difficult to explain this or to tell anybody what happened to me. I knew that ██████ was aware there was something but she didn't know the details. I didn't want her to come here and hear things for the first time, so I had to write a letter. I told ██████ I couldn't tell her face to face.
24. The three boys in the house were like our brothers. As a family unit you expect to become part of that family with the people who foster you, so you take on that role as siblings to a point. I saw them as brothers. I wouldn't say I favoured one over the other two. However things kind of changed.



25. I believe that the family had cousins, who stayed with their gran because their mother had died. They stayed with her in a flat. The cousins and the brothers seemed to be quite close, that's how I got to know them, because they'd be in and out our house. Their names were Glen and Alistair.
26. My first recollection was that I remember being in a flat that wasn't the [REDACTED] house. I don't know how I got there, or why I was there but I found myself in a flat with the oldest brother <sup>FLV</sup> [REDACTED] and his cousin Alistair. There was alcohol involved, I don't remember being forced to take it, I just remember I was drinking it. It was vodka and orange. It was my first experience of alcohol and I wasn't aware of the effects it would have on you and how quickly that can happen and I became intoxicated. I was lying on the floor feeling sick.
27. I remember <sup>FLV</sup> [REDACTED] trying to kiss me while I was on the floor. I was pushing him away saying 'No, no'. That was all that was attempted at that point. I don't know anything else about that time. I don't know if I passed out because I don't remember getting home. Even the days after it I don't recall the circumstances. I don't know why, I can't remember going home or why I was there. I remember him leaning over and trying to kiss me and me pushing him away. That's all I remember.
28. It was never discussed again. We didn't speak about it. I didn't tell anyone. I didn't speak to <sup>FLV</sup> [REDACTED] about it and he didn't speak to me. It was just left. I think I was frightened that I'd get into trouble for drinking, that was my worry. At fourteen you shouldn't be drinking and that would look bad on me. As such, it wasn't discussed.
29. I don't know how soon it was after that episode that things got worse. The next situation must have been late at night because I believe everybody was in bed in the foster home. I was in bed, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in their bunks.
30. At some point during the night I heard a noise, I wasn't sure what it was but it made me think someone was in my room. Very soon after there was the presence of a male in the room, who sexually abused me while I was in bed. I was frightened, I

panicked, I knew what was happening but I couldn't do anything, I froze. I don't know if I thought that if I didn't do anything the person would go away. During that abuse I was expected to participate in sexual activity.

31. I don't know how long it went on, the room was dark. I was lying on my stomach and my face may have been facing the wall. I was too frightened to turn around. I didn't know who it was and I can't recall how long it went on for. Someone was removing my underwear, basically putting their hand under the covers and as that was happening I couldn't move, I was paralysed. I was more at the bottom of the bed.
32. The male proceeded to put his fingers inside my vagina. I couldn't move, I didn't know what to do. Nothing was said, all I could hear was my own heart. He reached into the covers, took my hand and placed his penis in my hand and I had to simulate some kind of masturbation. I couldn't see anybody, I couldn't turn around. My body then said you need to react to this, this is wrong. I started going berserk, shouting, screaming and swearing to whoever was in my room at the time.
33. I've named the person to the police, I think it was the same person, although I couldn't see anyone. I felt it was <sup>FLV</sup> I can't be positive of that but my first instinct was that it was him because of the previous incident. The room was still dark and I wanted him to get out of my room and I was screaming to the point that the foster parents came in and put on the big light. I was shouting <sup>FLV</sup> 's been in my room'. I didn't give any details then, I was just shouting 'He's been in my room, get him out'. I can't really remember their reaction but I think it was anger that I'd made this accusation. They said it couldn't have been <sup>FLV</sup> as he was just in from work.
34. I remember the parents being quite angry. It was during the night and there wasn't a lot getting said or done. They just wanted everything calmed down and it would get dealt with. I can't remember how the rest of the night went.
35. What stuck in my mind was, to me it's a very significant part, that when the big light was put on I saw that the light bulb had been removed from my bedside lamp. I remember seeing the light bulb sitting where it shouldn't have been. It had to have

been removed as I would have had my lamp on before going to sleep. It's always stuck in my mind and made me think it was premeditated.

### **Reporting of abuse**

36. I imagine the family would have contacted the social worker David Burke. The only conversation I remember having was with him in the foster home. As far as I remember it was only the two of us there. I remember I gave him the details. It was decided that we had to be removed from the family. The foster family didn't want us there. It was suggested that I go but [REDACTED] stayed, so it seemed to me that I was the problem. I was adamant that [REDACTED] would not be staying in any place where I had just been abused.
37. There was no investigation at the time, there was nothing. There may have been talks with the social work and foster parents but nothing that I was part of. I had no contact with the police after the incident. I had no interviews with anyone else, or counselling or anything. My recollection is that I gave my account to David Burke and that was the end of it. There was no children's hearing before or after I spoke with him. After I left the [REDACTED] I had no further contact with the family.

### **Leaving foster care**

38. There was a period of time when we were going to get placed somewhere but stayed in the foster home while this was organised. It might have been a few days, I don't think it was as long as a week.. I didn't feel any fear that it would happen again, because I knew it wouldn't. My life changed from that moment onwards, in that I would never allow any sort of abuse, i.e. sexual, physical or verbal to happen to me ever again.
39. During this time none of the family spoke to me except <sup>FLV</sup> [REDACTED] who I had accused. It was difficult conversations, but he was the only one. He bought me magazines too. The rest of the family isolated [REDACTED] and I during this time.



40. Prior to the incident I had found Mr [REDACTED] easier to speak to than Mrs [REDACTED] I didn't speak to her a great deal. It wasn't a bad relationship, but I don't think I responded to her as much as the rest of the family. I'm not aware of the [REDACTED] having a key worker, I just know that any involvement with us was with David Burke.
41. We were in foster placement from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] 1981 so that incident happened between that period of time. We were then moved to Glenavon Children's home in Strathaven, and that starts another journey.

### **Glenavon Children's Home, Strathaven**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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### Leaving Glenavon Children's Home

56. At the age of nineteen I became pregnant. That changed things as to where I could stay. I was still under the care of the social work department. At this time my social worker changed from David Burke to Hilary Finnegan. He felt there wasn't very much he could do for me in regards to care so it was decided I would no longer be under the care side of things.
57. With being pregnant, [REDACTED] and I decided to get married, which we did in [REDACTED] 1986. I was welcomed into [REDACTED]'s family. They were supportive and strong people in my life. My mother-in-law and father-in-law took [REDACTED] in when she left care. She ultimately stayed with them for eighteen years. They were the most supportive family we'd ever had. They are no longer with us anymore but being in a loving, supportive family has made us the people that we are today.
58. After telling the social worker David Burke, the next time I mentioned what had happened to me was to my husband before I got married. I mentioned it to [REDACTED]'s mum as well and always said I was going to do something about it, I would deal with it. People who I'd worked with in the past knew I had been in a children's home and asked how that was and I did mention it to two of them, not detailed but that it happened.
59. I have two children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] I have always put them first. My only focus and my only thought was that at some point I might have to stand up in court and I didn't



want my children to go through it. They were young and didn't know anything about it. I thought that might be too much. Then my father-in-law became ill, so we took over and cared for him a bit along with [REDACTED], before he died. Then [REDACTED]'s mother became ill and over the last ten years we cared for her.

60. I think with the Inquiry coming along and the children being older and knowing about it as well as [REDACTED] I felt it was my time. It wasn't something I broadcast widely. The emphasis is on it now. People need to come forward and report these cases of abuse.

*Contact with family*

61. Whilst at Glenavon we tried to contact our mum. Prior to leaving, David Burke had tried to find our mum through social services and the department of health and work and pensions, but to no avail. That request was through [REDACTED] and I. In between that time unfortunately my father had passed away at 48 years old through alcoholism. My gran and grandpa were still alive at that time. David Burke had left and we were passed over to Hilary Finnegan. He took over the process of finding our mum. That took a bit of time. She was eventually tracked down, living in Coventry. Because we initiated it there was some feelings there that we would like to get in touch again. So there was some communication, just letters now and again.
62. Through the course of this we arranged to go down to Coventry and visit our mum and the social work paid for that. She had since had another child called [REDACTED] with a man who I remember through the early part of the marriage break up in Nairn. He was called [REDACTED] too. [REDACTED] and I went down for the weekend. We didn't particularly enjoy it. It was a difficult time because we hadn't seen her for a good few years. It was just to make that contact. But we stayed the weekend and promised we'd be in touch again.
63. From the notes I'd managed to obtain regarding communication during that period of time between my mother and the social work department, it appeared she had no idea that we were in care and still thought we were with her brother. However she

didn't want her family to know where she was and where she was staying as it would obviously cause problems. But I'm assuming there was no contact and she thought that's where we were. So there was always something in me that I had difficulty accepting. To me, she gave us away. She didn't come and look for us and she'd had another family. I didn't think it was right. I'd had my own child by then. I just felt this relationship wasn't going to go anywhere.

64. When I was eighteen and still in the unit my mum came and stayed for a short period with her son [REDACTED]. During that stay, on my eighteenth birthday, I received a birthday card signed, 'From your sister [REDACTED]'. I had no idea who my sister [REDACTED] was. I approached my mum with it because she was there and I asked her who this was. It came to light that we had another sister who was older than me but younger than [REDACTED]. She had been adopted at birth. It was difficult for my mum to admit this. I was annoyed and shocked by this, I didn't know how I was feeling. Why was this person coming into my life?
65. We began writing to each other, she said she was glad to make contact, how much it meant for her to know she had brothers and sisters. Her adoption had been planned before she was born. Because of my mother's circumstances at the time, she couldn't have this child. My mum's sister stayed in Malaig and there was a neighbouring couple there who were childless, so they took [REDACTED].
66. Nobody had ever spoken about her, even my dad's family, my gran and grandpa had never mentioned it, so it was a complete surprise. My brother seemingly did know, a long time before we did. We still communicate from time to time but it's not a strong relationship. My relationship with my brother [REDACTED] isn't too strong either. He's doing his own thing, he joined the navy, then joined the prison service.
67. I remembered that there had been talk from my father's family that there was another child, who had died when very young. On a family trip to Fort William, Glen Nevis for a week, I told my husband that I'm sure my gran said there was another baby and this is where she was buried. We walked around the cemetery there and found the grave of my sister, who died at ten weeks old. Her name was [REDACTED]. That never,

ever came from my parents. I was quite saddened by that. She was born in between [REDACTED] and I.

68. I made enquiries as to what happened and I went to the District Council in Fort William and got the death certificate. She died of malnutrition, dehydration and hypothermia. It brought me back to the home environment. It hadn't been great.
69. So instead of three siblings, there were five of us, but we are worlds apart, except [REDACTED] and I. I'm now estranged to my mother, I don't have contact with her. I don't blame her for what happened to me but I'm thankful to the care system, they've helped along the way. However we are where we are today without any help from our parents. I don't know if my mum's aware of the abuse. I never discussed the abuse with her or my grandparents and my dad.
70. I believe my mother doesn't keep good health now. For the last 25 years she hasn't been part of my life. I don't have a lot of contact with [REDACTED], maybe the odd, 'Happy New Year sis'. It's just the circumstances, we were all apart, everybody had separate lives, we didn't have that bond. He was very seldom in touch while we were in care. Maybe when he was on leave he would come and visit, but it was very limited. He still sees [REDACTED] and I as his true sisters. I know he's there.

### **Impact**

71. My relationship with my husband is secure, strong and supportive. He is a loving husband. Sometimes I still get the physical feelings that I had that night, they still come back. Especially if the room is dark and my husband comes in and I just hear someone in the room. I waken and panic, get sweaty and have palpitations, but I can bring myself back to time and place and know I'm ok. I feel as if I have a guard up a lot. I'm very alert. I feel I'm not at peace with myself. Not real peace.
72. I believe I sometimes over think things with regards meeting new people and making relationships, I'm wary at first. Some people say I'm initially aggressive in my nature,

but I don't mean to be. I think it's me hiding other things. I don't think it's always been rejection through the care system, but it feels like it sometimes.

73. I do suffer from anxiety and have done for a long time. I don't know if it's related, I am an anxious person. I've been on various anti-depressants, anxiety medication, chopping and changing if I felt they weren't working. I'm on Escitalopram just now, 10mg a day. When I knew the Inquiry was coming up and I was taking part in it I went to see my GP. I tried to put things in place before it happened. She put me up an extra 5mg, which I seem to be doing ok with. That's the medication I've been on.
74. I haven't had great periods of depression, more anxiety. If I go to bed worrying about something, I lie there thinking about it. If I waken up with an anxious thought it stays with me all day. But I don't lose a lot of sleep. I have experienced that since the abuse. My GP referred me to a psychotherapist team. I've been to see them, but that was just an assessment. I will get my first session with them this month.

### **Records**

75. I have managed to get my social work records. The police have them. I got what they had from Glenavon Children's Home onwards. There was an application put forward for the foster placement because they couldn't find it within the council archives at that time, but they were going to send it to the foster placement department to see if there was anything there. However I received a letter to say that because of the data that was held within it, I couldn't obtain it. I don't know if it meant because there was a third party named in it. I know they can redact that.
76. I felt it was vital for me to see what was said and what was done, so I felt disheartened when I couldn't get it. For a period of time that's why I didn't pursue anything because I felt that I needed to get that evidence regarding the foster placement before I went to the police.
77. I applied for the social work records in 2008. I did get a lot of information, but all regarding Glenavon Children's home until I left care and got married basically.



78. My husband has always known about it and knew how I felt about it. He knew it was something that I was going to be dealing with. He works with Police Scotland and it must have filtered through that there was going to be a Public Inquiry into historic child abuse. He got me the email address and I applied to the Inquiry. I was delighted when I was told they would hear my evidence, because to me that was a big step. I'm aware that it's separate from prosecutions and any compensation.
79. Early on I thought I had an opportunity to go to the police and I was told that I could do this and it wouldn't jeopardise what I said to the Inquiry. The police have come out to me and taken my statement. They have spoken to [REDACTED] too. They have recently got back to me and I have been told that there is a possible witness who has been identified and it depends on whether they want to give evidence. The police have asked to see me again in the near future.
80. I applied for my records through the Freedom of Information Act. There's another group, passed on through my work, set up by the Scottish Government, INCAS, who I've been in touch with and had conversations with regarding my records because they feel there should be something there. However the police have been back in touch with me to say they have more records, more information. I don't know what they have, but there is something there. They applied to Dunbartonshire Council, so I don't know if that's information on the foster parents or if there's anything in it regarding my placement there.

### **Lessons to be learned**

81. I don't think any child wants to be in the situation we were in. Every child wants to stay with their mum and dad. We didn't have bad experiences in care, I felt we were well looked after. If it needs to be there, it needs to be there, provided it's well looked into and the focus is on the child and what they want. However I do feel that a lot of decisions are made behind closed doors and you don't have that involvement. When you're older you have more say but you should when you're younger too. I have copies of reviews now, but not then. I would quite often leave reviews tearful.

Decisions were being made. I thought I was being taken in to be part of these decisions but it was basically put to you, this is what we think is for you.

82. I was taken into reviews, but it was to tell me what they were planning. You'd be asked to leave the room but conversations would be continued and you were never part of that. When I did have problems I knew I could go to somebody, speak to my key worker about it.
83. I was never part of a review where my abuse was discussed and that angers me. I feel I was disbelieved. When it happened I told those responsible for my care, expecting things to be done but there was nothing more discussed with me. The only time was on the occasion I was alone with David Burke the day after the abuse.
84. With regards being in care, [REDACTED] and I didn't have the major problems that other children have had, we were guided quite well. We just went through it without major difficulties, but children need to be heard. At that time I felt it was all closed doors and you were spoken to when you needed to be spoken to.
85. 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

FDM [REDACTED]

Dated

5/6/17

