

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

MTB

Support person present: No

1. My name is MTB My date of birth is 1948. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Background

2. I have no formal academic qualifications but I was employed for nearly forty years for I worked my way up in the company after I did my apprenticeship elsewhere as a panel beater.

Becoming a Foster Carer

3. I can't remember the exact time when I became a foster carer. My memory isn't great. My wife was the one who would have known all of this. The only way I can think of it is my son was born in 1984 and FIM came to us a few years before so it must have been approximately 1981. The Foster Carer payment ends at eighteen but FIM stayed with us longer so it didn't really end. She wasn't abandoned or kicked out at eighteen because she was part of the family and she was my daughter.
4. We never really planned on becoming foster parents. We hadn't even thought about it before FIM My wife worked in a children's home as a domestic and she would always talk about all the kids when she got home, just like people normally speak about their work. One day though, she came home and she was talking about this girl she felt sorry for. This girl was getting into bother in the home, but didn't

know her full background. [REDACTED] asked me if we could help her out and take her out for the day one Saturday. I was always happy to do anything [REDACTED] wanted so we got the right permission from the home and took her to down to the coast. This happened for a couple of months, so she would spend the day with us on a Saturday and then go back to the home at night.

5. When she was with us she was no problem at all. Supposedly, once she went back to the children's home she was chaos so she got transferred to Dr Guthrie's in Edinburgh which is a List D school. When she was in Edinburgh we'd drive through from Dumbarton for the day to see her. I can't really remember how long this went on for.
6. Sometimes she would even come and stay for the weekend. We got [REDACTED] her own room and everything. Then, one day out of the blue, I got a phone call from Dr Guthrie's School and he was asking what our intentions were with [REDACTED] and if we had ever considered fostering. In truth, we were probably too young as we were only in our early 30s but we decided to do it. From there, we were assessed by the social work department by an informal home visit and [REDACTED] was placed with us.
7. The assessment process was very informal. I don't even think you can call it much of an assessment. There were never any background checks and we never had any qualifications or anything. All they did was come to our house for a chat. The social workers were Catriona Neil and Kate Cook. I can't remember any references being taken either. From what I remember, I don't think it was a very long process between Dr Guthrie's School phoning us and [REDACTED] coming to live with us. I suppose because we'd known her for a while from our weekend visits we might have skipped some steps but it was still all very informal.
8. Once [REDACTED] came to us, there were no more checks or assessments. We had monthly meetings with a support group where we would discuss different topics about fostering. It was always conversation based and it was more like 'if x happened, what would you do?' It was really for support and advice with other foster parents. This only started after we had [REDACTED] and it was run by a social worker called

Mike King. This is where we were told we could get an increased payment for having FIM because of her complex background. This was less of an assessment or check and more in the realms of support.

9. When we took on [REDACTED] it was quite different. Again, we were asked to take him on but we didn't know him at all before he was given to us. He came from the List D school in Cardross where he went every day when he stayed with us. Because of this, he was constantly surrounded by social workers in that environment. We were never assessed when taking on [REDACTED] either as they assumed we were up to the job from having FIM
10. The end of the foster placement wasn't great with [REDACTED]. It had become too much so we had to have a 'case conference meeting' where it was decided he would be going to live with his uncle instead. In total, I think he was only with us for a few months, and definitely less than a year.
11. I think before someone is given a teenage foster placement, they should be given training. You should be told the pitfalls and problems that can occur.

Training

12. I was never given any formal training on being a foster parent. I was never told anything about how to handle a child with different experiences. I can't even remember if we were told the full extent of FIM problems, never mind how to handle them. I was never told anything about child protection, discipline or foster arrangements.
13. The only 'training' I received was during these monthly meetings in Wellington Street with the other foster parents. Even then, these meetings were more about support. Sometimes Mike King would bring up a specific topic at the meetings and give us pointers on how to handle a situation, but really it was more of a chat night. I remember the structure of the meetings was taken from some American scheme so half of it wasn't relevant. I don't remember being given any written guidance or instructions at all.

14. I can't speak about fostering young children, but for fostering difficult teenage children there should definitely be some sort of structured training, like working through a booklet or something.

Foster Care Arrangements

15. I didn't think of myself as being employed as a foster carer. I didn't feel like I worked for someone. Yes, we got paid from the social work department, at that point for the Strathclyde region, but this was secondary. We didn't really think about the payment as a motivator. It was just out of our love and affection for FIM
16. I don't know what type of foster care arrangement it was, we just fostered FIM and that was it. We weren't looking to foster, it just happened through our relationship with FIM. We never had any paperwork or anything that I remember. Even when we had later on, I don't remember anything formal. We were just asked to take him on.
17. We didn't have our own social worker. Kate Cook was FIM social worker and had some man whose name I can't remember. If things got bad we could contact her.
18. In terms of support, we sometimes had to contact the social work to say we couldn't cope with FIM because of her behaviour. To give us a break, she would be sent to go stay at the List D School Assessment Centre place in Cardross. Even when she was there, she'd sometimes show up at the door at eleven at night having escaped.
19. However, in terms of ongoing support, there was only really our monthly meeting group. There was one occasion where a meeting with a child psychologist was made for . This was so she could speak to him about FIM behavioural problems that were getting out of hand. After explained, at length, the problems we were experiencing, he said these difficulties were too deep for us to resolve and to 'run a

hundred miles in the opposite direction'. With the benefit of hindsight, there really should have been more support.

20. We were just looking after someone. It was never a profession or occupation. I think there should be more of a chance to get some qualifications when fostering. However, there is a danger of professionalising something that should be emotional. The way we became foster parents was fairly unique so considering it as a work arrangement wasn't right.

Financial Support

21. We were given a monthly payment to foster. I can't remember how much but it was around £100 or £200 a month. This was the highest payment you could get as we'd taken on a List D school child. I think this came from the social work department and it was either paid into my bank account or by cheque. I used it for things like clothes, food and experiences like going away for the weekend. You're never going to be rich being a foster carer. We never got anything beyond money, no clothes or toys.
22. Overall, I think the financial support was definitely sufficient

Foster Home Household

23. I fostered with my wife [REDACTED]. When we fostered FIM [REDACTED] it was just me and [REDACTED]. When [REDACTED] came along FIM [REDACTED] was also there. He was only there for a few months. [REDACTED] was gone before my son [REDACTED] was born, but FIM [REDACTED] was still living with us then. She was beyond the age of eighteen and was no longer being fostered by us. When we were asked to take on [REDACTED], we spoke to FIM [REDACTED] about this first.
24. FIM [REDACTED] initially lived with us at [REDACTED] in Dumbarton. She was there with us for about two or three years. We then moved to [REDACTED] in the West End. In both of the houses, FIM [REDACTED] had her own bedroom. [REDACTED] also had this own room. We already had enough bedrooms so we didn't need to make any changes to the

home. [REDACTED] always kept the whole place spotless, the two sitting rooms, three bedrooms and bathroom. Even the gardens were kept tidy.

Children Fostered

25. We fostered two different children. We took on our foster daughter [REDACTED] FIM when she was about fifteen and [REDACTED] was a few years later when he was about fourteen or fifteen. I think this must have been within a four or five year period as she had a couple of years on her own before we took on [REDACTED] for those few months.
26. Neither of them were related to us and we were asked by the local social work department to take them on. This would have been Strathclyde Social Work at that point.
27. [REDACTED] FIM never officially changed her name but when she was living with us she went by [REDACTED] FIM instead of her real name [REDACTED] FIM. [REDACTED] always kept his own name.

Placement Preparation

28. In terms of notice, we chose to take on [REDACTED] FIM because of our relationship with her. It wasn't really a matter of notice. For [REDACTED], we couldn't really say no. We got a call and he was with us not long after. I don't think we were well matched with the foster children at all. From what I remember, we weren't told much about either of their backgrounds. Maybe they did but I never got any records or care plans.
29. For moving them in, all the social work did was a visit to our home. I suppose we'd had our weekends with [REDACTED] FIM before so it was different. This must have been at least a dozen or more times. We hadn't met [REDACTED] before he came. We were just asked to take him on by the List D School and then he was with us.
30. I think the foster children settled in fine. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] FIM got on well enough once [REDACTED] came to stay too.

31. For the preparation for placing or moving a child, I think the best way to do it is by meeting a child you get on with and fostering them. When [REDACTED] was rushed into our home, it made the process more difficult because there was suddenly this stranger in the house.

Daily Routine and Sleeping Arrangements

32. Our daily routine was fairly normal. We got up in the morning, had breakfast together, got ready for school, did the school run, and we always had dinner together. In the house, we tended to share out the chores. The foster children didn't have to do anything major. They would tidy their rooms and tidy throughout the house but [REDACTED] was so methodical that the place was never untidy. Myself and [REDACTED] did all the washing and ironing.
33. Myself and [REDACTED] shared a room and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] FIM had their own rooms. They never wet the bed.

Washing and Bathing

34. There was only one bathroom in the house with a bath and shower and all that. The foster children had full access to it and soap was always provided. There were locks on the doors too.
35. [REDACTED] had some hygiene issues. He would do anything but wash his hands and face. Sometimes he'd even go and wet the soap but not use it to make it seem like he had. This caused some issues.

Clothes and Shoes

36. The allowance we got from the social work department was used for clothes and things for the foster children. [REDACTED] would go shopping with [REDACTED] FIM and she got whatever she wanted. Myself and my wife washed and pressed the clothes. The foster children never shared clothes.

Mealtimes

37. We always had breakfast and dinner together every day. [REDACTED] always liked to cook relatively plain things like stews, vegetables, sometimes even a Chinese curry. It was just normal family food. We often had pudding too. We probably split the cooking between myself and [REDACTED] equally.
38. There were never really any problems about the foster children eating their dinners. If they weren't hungry they didn't have to eat but no one ever went without. No one was forced to sit and eat something they didn't want to.

Leisure Time

39. Whatever the kids wanted, they would get. This was especially true for FIM [REDACTED] because of how long she was with us. She loved going to the swimming baths and would always ask for me to go with her. I can't really swim but I'd go anyway. When FIM [REDACTED] decided she wanted to play football I got her into a team. I even organised a mini bus from the local school and got it all fixed up for the girls' team to have. We lived by the school and we would often go into the school playground and play a game called 'wally' where we'd hit a ball off the gable end of the building. The kids loved it.
40. The foster children had access to anything they wanted. If they asked for a book, or a magazine, they'd get it. Even for things like making calls to friends, they had full access to the telephone. We also had a front and back garden.
41. I can't really remember if [REDACTED] was part of any clubs but like FIM [REDACTED] he got anything he wanted. They both got pocket money too, so if they wanted to buy themselves something they could.

Trips and Holidays

42. As a family, we often went on daytrips. We were always going and doing something like going down to the coast or up to my family home. That was more with FIM because of how long she stayed with us but we did take [REDACTED] on a family trip to Scarborough.
43. With FIM we also went down to the Lake District. Myself and [REDACTED] have never been abroad so we never took the foster children on foreign holidays.

Schooling

44. FIM went to the local school. This was the local Catholic school in Dumbarton that I can't remember the name of. Before this, she was in a Catholic school in the city, I think it was Notre Dame, then she was sent to the List D School. Once she was with us, she just went back to normal school. Because of all that happened to her before we met her, her education suffered a lot. She had a serious lack of education and suffered academically because of it.
45. [REDACTED] attended the school in the assessment centre in Cardross. He travelled there on the train every day from Glasgow. He was at that school before we had him, during, and I assume he still went once he left us.
46. I don't remember there being anything like parent's evenings or concerts or anything like that but if there was I would have been there. I don't really remember them doing homework much either.
47. On our part, we tried our best to teach FIM self-respect and self-worth since she had such a low opinion of herself. We never formally taught them how to cope with adult life but we always got them involved in chores, garden work and their hobbies so they would be well developed.

Healthcare

48. If the foster children had any problems, it would probably be the GP that dealt with them. I remember one time FIM got terrible sunburn and I had to run to the pharmacy to get sun cream and all that. I remember putting the cream on for her.
49. I don't remember any routine health checks but they were registered with the same GP and dentist as myself and We never kept any records of their medical issues.

Christmas and Birthdays

50. My family's Christmas dos are mad. We always had a huge Christmas tree, all the presents and that. Birthdays were the same. We would get them a big cake and all that. They were always spoiled rotten with gifts: I remember FIM once being upset and kicking off because we got her a snooker table rather than a motor scooter.
51. I don't really remember having a birthday when he was with us.

Discipline

52. It wasn't always bad with FIM Sometimes it was a bit of a battle to get her in line but I always made allowances for the foster children because of what they've been through. When FIM first moved in, she vandalised our neighbour's properties so I sent her out with cleaning fluids and a pail of water and told her to apologise and clean it up. It was always a case of fixing the wrong rather than punishment.
53. We really erred on the side of smothering them with love and giving them as much as possible. We knew we weren't dealing with normal children so allowances and understandings had to be made. Sometimes giving sanctions and whatnot would just add to the problem of FIM behaviour. It was like adding coals to a fire.

54. We were never actually given any guidance on disciplining the foster children. But whenever we did, myself and [REDACTED] would do it together. We'd talk about it and decide what to do.
55. We never physically punished the foster children. [REDACTED] would have what we called her 'full moon' thing where she would lose it. She once held a knife to my wife's throat. At times she was restrained because of her extreme violence. After this, we locked up all the knives in the house apart from the usual cutlery. That was just the way life was like with [REDACTED]
56. We didn't keep a record of any punishments or sanctions. We wouldn't do that for our own children so we didn't do it for the foster children.

Relationship with Foster Children

57. I think I got on pretty well with the foster children in my care. I treated them like I treated my own biological children. [REDACTED] was always smothered with love. Myself and my wife are very 'huggy' people so we would often hug the foster children if they wanted it.
58. [REDACTED] was well past eighteen by the time [REDACTED] was born but they lived together for a short while. It was just a normal family dynamic. I think the foster children might have even been more indulged or spoiled than our own children. [REDACTED] was just treated as one of the family.
59. [REDACTED] situation was slightly different but it was always a healthy relationship until we couldn't cope anymore. Even then, it didn't end with any animosity.

Contact with Family (other than siblings)

60. [REDACTED] never had any contact with her parents or other family. I never spoke to or met [REDACTED] parents. I had no information to give [REDACTED] about her parents as I didn't know

anything. We never blocked any contact but there just wasn't any. I think it was maybe prohibited but I don't know for certain.

61. I can't really comment on if arrangement for contact with family other than siblings should be changed because I never experienced it.

Siblings

62. I'm not sure if any of [FIM] siblings were placed in care at the same time as her. However, we never fostered them. [FIM] had a younger sister, an older sister and a brother. I think she would sometimes phone her brother but her older sister wanted nothing to do with her.
63. However, she would see her younger sister. In fact, we encouraged it. Her sister loved coming down to the house for her dinner and they phoned sometimes. It was never a formal arrangement but we never put any restrictions on them seeing each other.
64. I never had any issues regarding sibling contact. I think it should always been encouraged.

Visitors

65. [FIM] social worker didn't visit all that often. Kate Cook would come down to the house from time to time, maybe for dinner with the family, but [FIM] always had full access to the phone to call her if she had any issues. If [FIM] ever wanted any time with Kate Cook alone then that was fine. There was nothing routine about the visits.
66. Mike King was the only person you could describe as 'my' social worker and I only saw him at the monthly meetings. At the meetings, Mike would introduce the topics of the meeting and we would all discuss them. These were always general topics about foster care problems, behaviour and all that. There was also the opportunity of one on one with him if we wanted.

67. Sometimes, if we were struggling, we would call Kate Cook or Mike King to let them know. However, the social workers were never there to inspect us or monitor us.
68. I can't remember who [REDACTED] social worker was but because he was at the List D school, he was surrounded by social workers every day. Again, any issues with him and we could phone Mike King.

Review of Care/placement

69. There were never any child care review meetings. For [REDACTED] when the placement was coming to its end because of his behaviour, we had a 'case conference' where we discussed [REDACTED] and how it wasn't working. This was where it was decided that [REDACTED] would go to live with family instead.
70. We never had a care plan for either of them. I don't think we went to any children's hearings either. I used to sit on the board so I might be confused.
71. Essentially, we were left to get on with it. We didn't really talk about the fact of them being 'in care' a lot. If they wanted to speak about it all, they could. These conversations would probably be had with [REDACTED] rather than me. I don't think they had an independent advocate either.

Records

72. We never had any records or kept any records for either of the foster children.
73. I can't comment on any changes about record keeping.

Moving Placement

74. FIM [REDACTED] stayed with us as part of the family after she was eighteen so she never had to move placement. She was treated as part of the family for years. I drove her to her

wedding. My daughter was even a flower girl at her wedding. It was only when she tried to sue our son, [REDACTED] that we cut ties.

75. [REDACTED] had to move on. We had a 'case conference' with [REDACTED] social worker, the List D school manager and some others who I can't remember. We didn't meet who he was going to but I know it was a family member. We did all of this without [REDACTED] knowing: after the meeting we came home and told him he was moving on. He saw it as a positive thing as he said he was glad to be going back to his family. I can't really remember if he was sad because of it. We weren't giving him up. Ultimately, we didn't want him anymore because we couldn't cope, but fundamentally it was better for us that he went. We stayed in contact after as he once visited with his girlfriend and baby.

Leaving the Care System

76. When [REDACTED] FIM left the care system at eighteen, she stayed on with us. The foster payments stopped when she turned eighteen but the social work got us some advice and told us to get her to apply for government assistance. That was really the only transitional advice we were given.
77. When [REDACTED] FIM moved out of the family home, we helped her get a nice flat in the West End and got it all furnished. We even paid for her bills. We were involved in her wedding too and always gave her financial and emotional support. We did try to help her with employment but she couldn't really cope with the job we found.
78. I think much more should be done to help foster parents for when their foster children leave the system. More support and information needs to be given.

Complaints

79. To my knowledge, there was no specific procedure for foster parents or foster children in making any complaints. Of course we could have phoned but there was no process I knew of.

80. I think there should have been a formal procedure.

Convictions

81. I have no convictions relating to the abuse of children. I had no convictions before becoming a foster carer. I can't remember if I was asked about convictions.

82. We stopped being foster carers when [FIM] was well past eighteen and married in her own home. We also had children of our own by then.

Allegations of Abuse

Awareness of Abuse

83. I had no awareness of any abusive behaviour happening to [FIM] or [REDACTED]. The children never needed any medical attention because they had been abused. With hindsight, I do not think any discipline, punishment or other practice was abusive. I have been asked to clarify the last sentence. The wording of the sentence and manner in which it was framed was in direct response to the question in the original document: *Vis the benefit of hindsight, do you consider any discipline, punishment, or other practice to have been abuse?* By using the phrase 'with hindsight' I was answering the question only. It was not my intention to leave any implication of any practice which might be construed as abusive in my perception. I do not accept any inappropriate behaviour at all including any discipline, punishment or other practice.

Reporting of Abuse

84. The foster children could speak to their social worker, myself or my wife about any concerns or worries. They were given full and free access to the telephone and they

knew they could phone anyone. They also knew they could talk to us about anything just because of our family dynamic.

85. I could speak within my monthly meeting about any concerns or worries I had. I also knew I could phone the social work too.
86. I wasn't aware of any specific reporting mechanisms in place. No guidance, written or verbal, were given to me on the reporting of abuse. The topic of sexual abuse was never a topic of conversation.
87. I never knew of anything in my household that I feel now that I should have reported.

Allegations of Abuse for which there has been no Criminal Conviction

88. I have not been the subject of any other complaint in relation to alleged abuse of foster children.

Reporting to Police/Criminal Proceedings

89. There was no abuse of foster children in my care reported to the police.
90. The supposed abuse of a foster child in my care for first reported to the police in 2012 or 2013. The police visited my house twice and on the second occasion they advised me to get a lawyer. I attended a police station interview where I gave no comment and was not charged. Nothing further came from this allegation. The police behaved in a moderate and reasonable manner.

Prior Statements

91. I have never given any other statements about my time as a foster carer.

Specific Allegations that have been made to the Inquiry

92. FIM ██████████ known as FIM ██████████ has given a statement to the Inquiry. Within that statement she says "MTB ██████████ used to ask me to come and sit on his lap. I was fourteen and you just don't do that. Things like that made me shy away from MTB ██████████. I told ██████████ and she said it was just because he hadn't had a child, and wanted to be a daddy to me." I deny that such an event happened.
93. She says that "MTB ██████████ would also want to go into the bathroom and wash my hair when I was having a bath.....Then he started touching me in places he shouldn't have been touching me. I kept telling him to stop and that it wasn't right, but he kept doing it. He then started to kiss me. It was a proper, grown man, slobbery kiss, all over me. It wasn't nice at all. Then he started putting my hand down his trousers to play with his thing." And that "This would happen when ██████████ was at work. She was still working at ██████████." I deny that such an event happened.
94. FIM ██████████ alleges that, "When ██████████ would go to the bingo, I would be in bed because I has school the next morning. MTB ██████████ would come into the bed beside me and start cuddling into me. He would start kissing me and kissing my body. He would put his fingers inside me." I deny that such an event happened. I was never in FIM ██████████ bed on any occasion.
95. She also says within her statement "It just kept going on so I started to reject MTB ██████████ and started being destructive. They still wouldn't put me in care. I kept telling MTB ██████████ to stop touching me and I didn't want to touch him. He would say that he was going to tell my real dad, and the people who sexually abused me, where I lived. I think that's why he got away with doing it to me. He wouldn't stop abusing me so I kept running away." I deny any abuse that is alleged. I didn't know anything about FIM ██████████ real Dad or any of the people who sexually abused her. I had no details or any knowledge of who these people were. FIM ██████████ never ran away or attempted to run away. FIM ██████████ never asked to go back into care.
96. Later in her statement FIM ██████████ says "I went to Glasgow University and studied law. I got my own flat in Broomhill. I still couldn't get away from MTB ██████████ I had given ██████████ a set of keys to my flat at Broom hill, but MTB ██████████ would use them and come

in after his night shift at work. He would let himself in and get into bed beside me. I was eighteen years old and still couldn't get away from him." I deny that such an event happened. I never went into [FIM] flat in Broomhill. Neither myself nor [FIM] had keys to enter.

97. The person making the allegations was my foster daughter who continued to be treated as my daughter after the placement ended. I thought we had successfully turned around [FIM] life. [FIM] was a complex young woman who had more good points than bad. She was never sanctioned or punished.
98. In my view, as foster carers we ought to have been given training and rigorous insight into the foster child and the process.
99. The allegations against me are untrue. I do not believe the passage of time has affected my recollection of what is alleged.
100. Despite many difficulties, myself and my wife helped [FIM] into adulthood. [FIM] had a history of being spiteful and vindictive. I would be in a position to give more detail about the type of things she did. I believe it was a spitefulness about our breaking of contact that motivated these allegations.
101. The final straw for breaking our ties with her was when she tried to sue my young teenage son when he was only doing a kindness to her by giving her one of his old phones. She even got a lawyer involved. We said it was too much and cut her off. I know she didn't take this lightly as myself and my wife were always her rock, always touched base with her and bailed her out.
102. Years after being told she couldn't contact us anymore, she got back in contact and tried to make amends and re-establish her relationship with my family. We missed our grandson, [FIM] son [FIM] very much. [FIM] also told us she had been confined to a wheelchair which caused us significant angst. My wife [FIM] decided enough was enough and couldn't take the drama anymore. This was multiple calls a day with new drama each time. She felt we were too old for it and would rather things just

stayed the way they had been. We needed some peace. Prior to the allegations, FIM made threats via a lawyer's letter which we responded to via a lawyer's letter. This stipulated there was to be no further contact. Some two or three years later, I heard about the allegations.

- 103. If someone did what she alleges happened, I would of course accept that is abuse. However, she was never abused in my home.

- 104. This whole ordeal has had a damaging and lasting impact on me. Every single day I am reduced to tears at the thought of a girl who I once considered my daughter to have accused me of these terrible things that I did not do. My mental health is ruined and I am plagued with suicidal thoughts. I am not sure if I will ever fully recover from the emotional toll this has had on me.

Helping the Inquiry

- 105. Since it has been almost four decades since I last fostered, I don't know what the modern system is like so I cannot comment on lessons to be learned.

Other information

- 106. 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.. MTB

Dated..... 14/6/22