

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

FED  
[REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is FED [REDACTED]. My date of birth is the [REDACTED] 1994, I am 24 years of age.. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. I was six months old when I first went into care and because of my age I have no memories for most of that time. I was in fourteen different care placements all under the control of the Social Services. There are only three placements that I have memory of. (1) Harley Place Children's Home, Salcoats on two occasions between 1999 and 2000. (2) JBY/JBZ [REDACTED] family foster care between 1999 and 2000 for a nine month period.(3) GEF-SPO [REDACTED] family foster care between 2000 and 2015 where I remained until I was 21 years old.
3. I was obviously very young when all this was happening and do not have a recollection of how and when some things happened. I have had access to my Social Work notes and this has helped me to piece together my experiences of care and what was happening with my home life.

**Life before going into care**

4. My mother had health problems and was diagnosed with having a mental age of a twelve year old. I never knew my father. I have a brother who is about three years older but I have little contact with him. I only got to know my brother when I was about fifteen but we had a fall out and no longer talk to each other. It was to do with him having a son removed from his care. My brother was badly let down by the social services throughout his entire life. He was not prepared for fatherhood.

5. My mother had problems with addiction to prescription drugs and from the day I was born my family were being monitored by Social Services. Although I spent a lot of time in care I was also occasionally returned to my mother where I stayed for short periods of time.
6. When I was about five years old my mother signed over her parental rights as she was not capable of looking after me. At this time I think that my mother overdosed on her prescription drugs. She also had a lot of different boyfriends who lived with her.
7. From records of my time in care that I have now recovered I discovered that I was also abused by my mother's boyfriend. The sexual abuse happened when I was returned to my mother's care. The notes state that my mother was counselled about her boyfriend and advised to end her relationship with him. I think the disclosure came as a result of me telling my aunt. I don't think I was immediately removed from my mother's care. The social work were informed and it took them a period of time to react to the disclosure.
8. The social services placed me in Harley Place Children's Home while they worked out what to do with me. I was there on the first occasion for about nine months and about six months on the second occasion. These were emergency placements.

**Memories of care as a four or five year old at Harley Place Children's Home, Salcoats, on two occasions between 1999 – 2000.**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

9.

10. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

**Foster care with JBY/JBZ family in Irvine 1999 - 2000**

16. After the emergency placement at Harley Place I was put into foster care with the JBY/JBZ family. I was either four or five years old. As far as I knew my mother had gone down south and I had little or no contact with her.
17. JBY was the father's name and I can't remember the name of the mother. The only reason that I know his name is that it appeared in the records that I requested to see. They resided in the same cobbled street in Irvine where the was based. I cannot remember the address. I know that I continued to attend as I grew up and I always hated going back because of the memories of JBY/JBZ
18. JBY/JBZ had two other foster children in their care. They were both girls and were already there when I arrived. I don't remember their names. Apart from the abuse I was to suffer at the hands of JBY/JBZ I can't recall much about my time there. I think that when the period of care started off it was not too bad.
19. It was a house like a bungalow but it had an upstairs and a down stairs. It was quite old fashioned with a chimney. There was a big garden with rabbit hutches. The garden was surrounded by a brick wall. I slept in a bedroom with the two girls. I was sleeping on a mattress on the floor. I think that there can only have been two bedrooms and I remember that the toilet was next door to our bedroom.
20. I attended the School in Salcoats and I think that I was taken there by the local council. I think that the name of the lady that took me was called Kathleen. She was an older lady employed by the local Council.
21. I think that the food was okay. I remember when I left JBY/JBZ foster care placement I had fewer clothes than I had when I went in. A social worker commented in my records that JBY/JBZ received allowances for clothing but this was never passed on to me.

*Visits*

22. I do remember that my mother visited on one occasion and brought me a present of a key ring with a whale on it. It was one of the few things from my mother. The other two girls in the foster home stole it from me and I remember being very distraught. The foster parents didn't seem to bother. I managed to find the key ring myself but it was again taken off me and I never saw it again.

23. I think that I did get visits from the Social Services although I don't remember them. I do recall that on one occasion I did report abuse to the social worker when she came to visit and I think that is why I was taken out of foster care at the JBY/JBZ

**Abuse in foster care at the JBY/JBZ**

24. Whilst I was in care at JBY/JBZ I was subjected to physical, psychological and emotional abuse. I was never the subject of sexual abuse. Most of the abuse came from Mr JBY

25. I remember being handcuffed to a rabbit hutch in the back garden. Mr JBY was a security guard at and he had a set of handcuffs. Mr JBY did this on more than one occasion and used to leave me handcuffed to the rabbit hutch in all weathers. I think he punished me because I was too active running and playing in the house. I was like any other child of that age.

26. Mr JBY wore steel toe capped boots and on occasion he deliberately stood on my toe and broke all the nail. It was very painful. Because I complained he then handcuffed me to the rabbit hutch for a couple of hours.

27. When my mother would visit she would often bring a toy for me. For some reason JBY/JBZ did not like this and used to take the toy from me. I remember on one occasion they took a "Buzz Lightyear" which my mother had given to me. They then put this toy on display on the headboard of their bed and dared me to try and get it back. I knew if I did this I would be skelped.

28. It was always JBY that would punish me by hitting. He would hit me with a belt. I usually got belted for allegedly being bad. I think that it happened on a number of occasions.
29. There was an incident at Primary School. One of the teachers was giving a history lesson about schooling methods in the past. He had a school belt with him and he picked up the belt and demonstrated how it was used by hitting the desk. I immediately hid under the table. The teacher was obviously bothered by this and reported it to my carers. They in turn asked me about this and I told them it was because Mr JBY hit me with the belt.
30. JBY/JBZ had a large open plan kitchen and there was one occasion when they forced me to eat a meal. I was sick and they made me eat the vomit.
31. There were two occasion which involved JBY/JBZ. They made me put on ear muffs to stop the swelling on my face and then they sat on either side of the room and punched me. They did it on at least two occasions. That was the only time that Mrs JBZ was involved.
32. The last day I spent in the care of JBY/JBZ was another occasion when they assaulted me. Just before I was collected by the Social Work JBY/JBZ made me sit on the stairs and bang my head of the wall. If I stopped doing this they would come and shout at me. When the social worker collected me she took me to the Accident and Emergency Department at Crosshouse Hospital in Kilmarnock. I was treated for mild concussion. JBY/JBZ told the social worker that I had fallen outside while playing. I told my social worker what had actually happened. This incident was not reported to the police.
33. When I managed to recover my records from my time in care I noted that there was a comment from another social worker concerned about the lack of action taken by my social worker who dealt with my visit to the hospital after the assault by the JBY/JBZ. This comment criticised the time it took my social worker to have me removed from the foster placement with the JBY/JBZ.

34. Because of my circumstances I was made to feel that I wasn't an easy child to deal with. I had been in fourteen different placements. I had a lot going on in my life and I was only five years old. I don't think I can excuse what all the people responsible for my care did to me but I don't think I deserved it.

**Reporting abuse at JBY/JBZ foster care placement.**

35. I made several complaints to my social worker and told her what was happening. I can't remember her name. Her name is in my notes. I was able to make these complaints out with the knowledge of JBY/JBZ I could read this in my social work notes when I finally got to see them in later life.
36. Because of the complaints that I had made to the social worker she finally decided to take action and arranged for me to be removed from the foster care placement with JBY/JBZ. I know from reading the notes that this should have been done earlier.

**Leaving foster care at JBY/JBZ**

37. I was removed from the care of JBY/JBZ by the local social worker. I was then taken to Harley Place Children's Home where I was to remain for the next six months until such time as another foster placement could be arranged.
38. My overall memories of Harley Place were good and I had the support of Brian who was my care worker. I was there for two spells. One spell was for about nine months prior to foster care at JBY/JBZ and the other was for six months prior to foster care at GEF-SPO. I find it hard to remember too much as I was only four or five years old. I know that I did go to GEF-SPO foster care from Harley Place.

**Foster care with GEF-SPO family 2000 to 2008.**

39. GEF-SPO lived in Irvine. I was placed with them under a foster care arrangement. For the first eight years I stayed with GEF-SPO. I was told that my placement was supposed to be a short term arrangement. I could never become

fully integrated as I felt that I was not there on a permanent basis. I think that [REDACTED] and GEF [REDACTED] tried to get a full term arrangement but the social services knocked them back. These were not things I knew at the time but are things I have learnt from piecing my life together through my records.

40. GEF-SPO [REDACTED] would call at Harley Place Children's Home and basically choose the child they wanted to provide foster care for. It was like selecting a puppy dog from a kennels. I always tried to impress them and try to influence them to pick me. I started going out on day trips with them and then overnight stays at their house. I thrived on their attention and I started going for whole weekends.
41. I assumed that because Mrs [REDACTED] did not work this was like a paid job for her and she would earn money. GEF-SPO [REDACTED] did not have children of their own although I learned that there were two other girls who were also foster children and had been there before me. I never met these girls. I later learned that [REDACTED] had lost a daughter in infancy.
42. GEF-SPO [REDACTED] only had two bedrooms and so they were unable to accommodate any other foster children. I do remember that there house was up for sale as they looked for a bigger one but it didn't sell.
43. I was very well looked after by GEF-SPO [REDACTED]. None of us could understand why the foster arrangement wasn't changed for GEF-SPO [REDACTED] to become my full time careers. Over the years GEF-SPO [REDACTED] tried to change this on a number of occasions without success. It wasn't until I was thirteen and had been with GEF-SPO [REDACTED] for eight years that they were finally granted full time care status for me.
44. My mother had passed away when I was ten and I didn't find this easy. I was really angry. It was GEF-SPO [REDACTED] that had to tell me [REDACTED] days before Christmas and [REDACTED] days before my mother's birthday.



**Foster care with GEF-SPO family 2008 – 2016**

45. When I was about fifteen or sixteen I tried to get back in touch with my brother [REDACTED]. He turned up to visit me at school one day when he was very drunk. After that happened the social work became involved and they tried to make scheduled appointments to meet. That was to continue until I was eighteen and could make my own decisions. I could not have a brotherly relationship with [REDACTED] as we were different people.
46. GEF-SPO [REDACTED] told me in a nice way that although I had been with them for nearly seventeen years they were not prepared to adopt me. I was desperate for this to happen and was very disappointed that they were not prepared to do it.
47. GEF-SPO [REDACTED] had a number of issues with me that they had to deal with. I was the product of an unstable childhood.. I had no problems with the care they provided for me. I was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

*Visits and social work involvement*

48. When I went to GEF-SPO [REDACTED] I think that I was dealing with a social worker called Charlene McGowan. She was very good and was a regular visitor to me. I remember her giving me presents. Charlene left to have a baby and when I was in primary seven at school. John Ferguson succeeded her as ,my social worker.

*Schools and further education*

49. When I moved in with GEF-SPO [REDACTED] I changed my school in primary year four from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] Primary School in Irvine. From day one at the school I was a problem pupil and caused a lot of problems for the teaching staff. I would pick fights with the other pupils. I do remember the head teacher called Miss McKenzie who did try to understand me and help through the school. She also build a good relationship with my foster parents.

50. When I graduated to secondary school I went to Greenwood Academy in nearby Dreghorn. I didn't enjoy school although I was good at art. The [REDACTED] there Mr [REDACTED] embraced and challenged the care system that I had been a part of, he was very supportive. Mr [REDACTED] introduced behavioural timetables which helped me remain in main stream schooling. No one understood the care system and there were some children at the school whose parents had told them to keep away from me because I was in care.
- 
51. I stayed on in school till the end of sixth year. I had attained my gold Duke of Edinburgh Award and I had a real interest in outdoor pursuits. I was accepted to attend a college course to become an outdoor instructor. Three weeks before I was due to start the funding for this course at James Watt College was cut and they could only offer me a sport fitness course. I completed this course and attained a national certificate.
- 
52. Because of my interests in outdoor activities and my success with the Duke of Edinburgh awards I was offered an apprenticeship in youth work.. From there I went to university. My foster parents were delighted as I was the first person in their family to go to university. The local social workers were also delighted that I was going to university as I was only the third person who had come through the care system in the area and had gone on to university. There was a fair amount of pressure on me to succeed.
- 
53. I was now about twenty or twenty one and I was feeling the pressure from everyone to work and study. The law at that time stated that if I was in full time education the social work department would recognise the foster care arrangement until I became twenty one or completed my full time education.
- 
54. I started to resent my course and was not able to study which resulted in me dropping out of the course. I had also just obtained my records and was having great difficulty coping with what I was learning. There was just too much going on.
-

### Leaving foster care with GEF-SPO

55. I had now met my fiancé and was engaged to be married. Everything came to a head at the engagement party. [REDACTED] arrived with their friend [REDACTED] GEF [REDACTED] had refused to attend. They both had all had a good drink before coming. I had been very friendly with [REDACTED]'s son [REDACTED]. When we were seven years old I had persuaded [REDACTED] to run away with me when we had got ourselves covered in mud and were in for a row. Although we returned very quickly [REDACTED] never forgot and would cast it up to me.
56. At the engagement party [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] embarrassed me in front of my future in-laws by talking about the running away and dropping out of university. [REDACTED] also tried to pay for my meal which I didn't want and it led to another argument. That was the last time I was to see [REDACTED].
57. My relationship with GEF [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had completely broken down and I was no longer in touch with them. If mail arrived for me they would leave it in the recycling bin for me to collect.
58. I was now nearly 22 and my relationship with GEF-SPO [REDACTED] had broken down mainly because I had dropped out of university. I had nowhere to stay. I turned to North Ayrshire Council who passed me on to their "Throughcare" team. They assisted people who had been through the care system. They were not really able to help as I was now a month out with the age criteria for support. I had just turned from 21 to 22.
59. "Throughcare" however managed to find a house for me in Kilwinning. This was a particular rough area and after discussion with my fiancé we decided against moving there. The "Throughcare" worker seemed outraged with me for not accepting the house and we broke off communication on poor terms.

**Life after being in care**

60. I moved into my fiancé's mothers house where I stayed for two years. There was not much room and it was not a good situation. After all the years of people making decisions for me I chose to buy a house in Ardrossan. I was having to work all the hours I could to pay for this. It meant that my fiancé and I were making huge sacrifices to survive. I was very naïve about running a household and so I had to learn domestic skills as I went along.

61. I got a job as a security guard at a university where I am still working. I did try to work as a child carer but I found the experience too hard as I associated my own period of care with what was happening to them. I hope that I will be able to complete the course I started at university.

**Impact**

62. My brother wanted to have a loving relationship with me as we were blood relatives. He started to get into trouble and ended up in prison. I didn't want to have that relationship with him as he had only entered my life for a few years. He was not the sort of influence I needed. My fiancé had a career in the police and she couldn't be seen associating with criminals. I find it hard how to find a way to break off contact with [REDACTED]

63. I am constantly trying to understand how I see the world as I do. I am angry and jealous. I don't feel that I can settle anywhere and I don't feel happy. I have researched "attachment disorder" on the computer and feel that I may be suffering from attachment issues..

64. I have received treatment for ADHD and have been prescribed medication by doctors to help with this. I did try counselling but did not find it beneficial or helpful. I have been referred to a psychiatrist as a result of a referral from my doctor. I am also receiving support from Future Pathways.

65. I think that coming out of the care system was harder than going into it. I think that there is an expectation that I will have built a resilience and developed skills to be an adult . I feel pressure to perform the role of an adult. I feel that there has been a lack of support from my carers to enable me to make this transition.
66. My self-belief and self-motivation has improved since I have been getting support but at one time it was very low. I know for a fact that if I was the natural son of the **GEF-SPO** I would not have had to leave the family home when I was twenty one and would have received the support needed to get me through my university course.
67. I don't yet know where I fit in in the world as all the decisions I have had to make have been forced upon me and I have had little choice.

### **Reporting of Abuse**

68. I did not report the abuse when I was in foster care at **JBV/JBZ** until later life. I have made two separate reports. The first was made jointly to the Social Work Department and the Police at Salcoats about two years ago. The Social Work made enquiries and found no substance. I hadn't heard from the police and so I contacted them. The Police told me that they had completed their enquiries but had found no evidence.
69. I was unhappy with the Police response and so about seven months I again reported the abuse to the Police at Salcoats. I have not heard back from them and I assume they are still investigating.

**Records**

70. I had a very hard time trying to recover my records from the Family Placement Team of North Ayrshire Council. I was told that I had to go into the office to discuss my records. They told me that there were a lot of files and asked which ones I wanted. I told them I needed to see them all as it was all about my life and I needed to learn what had happened to me. I couldn't remember everything and wanted to fill in the gaps. It was not made easy but I managed to get my own copy.

**Other information.**

71. I have since learned from my records that there was an email exchange between two social workers with regard to my mother's failure to keep a visitation appointment. The email says that my mother [REDACTED] failed to attend the meeting today. It finishes with a "hip hip hooray and three cheers for [REDACTED]". I felt that it was very degrading for my mother and that it was mocking her.

72. When I was eighteen and staying at GEF-SPO [REDACTED] I received a letter from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board with a cheque for two thousand pounds. I was told by the social worker that a claim had been made on my behalf by them for an assault on me by my mother and this was the amount that had been agreed. I had absolutely no previous knowledge of the application or the abuse.

73. 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.

FED  


Signed.....

Dated *16/05/2018*.....