

## Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EXB [REDACTED]

Support person present: No

1. My birth name, and my name as a child in care, is EXB [REDACTED] My name as an adopted child was EXB [REDACTED] My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1974. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

### Life before going into care


2. I was born in Edinburgh. I lived with my mum and dad and my twin brother who was called [REDACTED] When [REDACTED] was adopted then his name was changed to [REDACTED]. I had two older, half-brothers called [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is two years older than [REDACTED] and I and [REDACTED] is five or six years older than us. My mum was called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and my dad was called [REDACTED]
3. My mum and dad were heroin addicts. My impression is that my mum didn't get a lot of support. My brothers and I were all taken into care at the same time but [REDACTED] went back to mum and dad later. I first went into care when I was eight months old. My brothers and I all got split up when [REDACTED] and I were five years old and got adopted. I don't know about [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has his records and they didn't say very nice things about my mum.
4. What I know about the chronology of the places I was in before I was five years old, is from the records [REDACTED] has in a book. We both got a book when we got adopted. With

me being in all the different children's homes and moving to lots of places, I didn't keep my book very safe. I don't have the book now.

**Clerwood Children's Home, Edinburgh – first stay**

5.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the page content for item 5.

**Lord and Lady Polwarth Children's Home, Edinburgh - first stay**

6.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the page content for item 6.

7.

8.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

9.

10.

11.

12.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

13.

**Returning to mum and dad – [REDACTED], Livingston**

14. I must have gone back to my mum and dad because I remember starting school in [REDACTED], Livingston. That was sometime between when we were aged three to five years old, for a few months. I don't remember anything else about that time.

**Lord and Lady Polwarth Children's Home – second stay**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

15.

16.

**Foster Care – [REDACTED] Dalkeith, Midlothian**

17. I was five or six years old when [REDACTED] and I were fostered in Dalkeith. We were not there for very long, not even a year, before we were adopted. I don't remember the name of the foster parents, only the street.
18. The foster parents were nice, family people. They had a daughter who was older than [REDACTED] and I. I think she was the only other child in the house. Their daughter was unwell with bad eczema and had to go to hospital a lot.

*General Routine*

19. At mealtimes, I would choke and spit my food out. I'd go to school with my breakfast in my pocket and ditch it on the way. I had swimming lessons at school.
20. I had an operation to correct a squint in my eye. When I had my operation, my eye was all red and I met my prospective adoptive parents.
21. I saw my social workers maybe once a month. In the children's homes, I had less visits from my social workers than when I was in foster care. The visits weren't frequent.

**Leaving Foster Care – [REDACTED] Dalkeith, Midlothian**

22. We met our prospective adoptive parents in Dalkeith. My adoptive parents were called [REDACTED]. We were introduced by my social workers, Ian Tripney and George. Ian Tripney was West Lothian based. George was Aberdeen and Elgin. The social workers spoke to [REDACTED] and I beforehand to explain what was happening. Then the adoptive parents took us to Elgin and we stayed with them for a couple of nights.
23. After we met the adoptive parents, we were asked if we wanted to go and stay with them. [REDACTED] wasn't keen. I said, "Let's do it, they've got a dog and they live near a beach." I was the boss so [REDACTED] agreed to it and we went to Elgin. Social work said [REDACTED] would be our new mum and dad. They painted a pretty picture of adoption. I get sucked in and see an opportunity in everything. I said it'd be great.

**Adoption – [REDACTED] Elgin, Moray**

24. [REDACTED] and I were about six or seven years old when we moved in with the [REDACTED]. The adoption order was granted by Elgin Sheriff Court on [REDACTED] 1982, when I was eight years old. I was with the [REDACTED] for no more than two years. They changed my

name to <sup>EXB</sup> [REDACTED] and my brother's name to [REDACTED]. My adoptive parents were only 26 years old when they adopted us. They thought they couldn't have children but when they adopted us, [REDACTED] fell pregnant.

25. I was choking on my food all the time when I was at the [REDACTED]. It happened every meal time. I don't know if I was eating too fast or if it was anxiety. One time I had to be turned upside down by [REDACTED].

### **Leaving adoptive parents**

26. My adoptive dad was really nice. I thought my adoptive mum was a bit of a psycho. We didn't get on. I don't blame my adoptive dad. I blame my adoptive mum. The adoption broke down when I was about seven years old and I was taken away. That was not long after [REDACTED] had the baby.
27. [REDACTED] stayed with the [REDACTED]. I saw [REDACTED] twice after I left the adoptive home and was in foster care in Keith. [REDACTED] was still in Elgin and a social worker from Moray social work, Anne Brown, took me to see him. Then it was eighteen years until I saw him again.
28. Six months after I left, [REDACTED] moved to Hong Kong. I thought [REDACTED] was in Hong Kong too but he was in a boarding school in England, in a glorified children's home.

### **Foster Care – [REDACTED] Keith, Moray**

29. I was about nine years old when I went into foster care in Keith. I don't think I was there for long, not even a year. My foster parents were called [REDACTED]. They had two sons, [REDACTED] was the oldest. He was about sixteen or seventeen years old. The youngest was called [REDACTED]. He was about fourteen or fifteen years old.

30. When I was adopted, I didn't gel with my adoptive mum. When I was fostered, I was overly close to my foster mum but wasn't close to my foster dad. It was weird. I wasn't scared of [REDACTED] and I had no reason to be but he was quite a stern man. [REDACTED] was really nice. [REDACTED] was in hospital for ages because she slipped a disc in her back. I was looked after by [REDACTED] then. I think the sons helped as well.
31. I moved school to Keith Primary School. I don't know how I was getting on.
32. I don't remember visits from the social workers to the house in Keith or going to the social worker's office.

**Abuse in Foster Care - [REDACTED] Keith, Moray**

33. This happened at the time [REDACTED] was in hospital. I don't where [REDACTED] or the youngest son were. I was in the living-room. [REDACTED] the son was trying to do things to me. I can't remember exactly what he was doing but he was sexually touching me. I don't know if it was his hand or anything else. [REDACTED] was behind me. It was uncomfortable. I was thinking, hurry up and go away. I remember distinctly that I was watching the news, while he was trying to do things to me. I was thinking the people on the news were going to be disgusted in what he was doing. I knew what he was doing to me was wrong.
34. [REDACTED] the younger son came into my room one night and tried to get into my bed. He was trying to undo my pyjamas. [REDACTED] caught him, gave him a row and got him out of the bedroom. [REDACTED] shouted that we were only playing doctors and nurses or schools. I was thinking, oh my God, they are both doing it and they probably don't know that each other's doing it, what am I going to do? [REDACTED] shouted at me and [REDACTED] It wasn't long after that, that I left Keith.
35. I didn't talk to [REDACTED] about what had happened. I didn't tell anybody in the children's home I went to. It just came out when I was an adult.

**Leaving Foster Care – [REDACTED] Keith, Moray**

36. I think the time that [REDACTED] caught [REDACTED] in my bed had something to do with my leaving foster care in Keith. [REDACTED] was breaking her heart and crying loads when I had to leave. Social work might have said I was leaving because [REDACTED] was ill but she was out of hospital.
37. I was under the impression that the foster parents just couldn't handle me again and I was the problem. I was adopted, then it was me who was sent away and my brother stayed. I was fostered, then it was me sent away again. I was really upset. I remember crying a lot. I went to a children's home in Rhynie.

**Nicoll Lodge, Rhynie, Aberdeenshire**

38. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- 39.
- 40.



Secondary Institutions - to be published later

41.

42.

43.

44.

45.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

46.

### **Aberdeen Psychiatric Hospital for Children, Aberdeen**

47. When I was ten or eleven years old, I was taken to Aberdeen Psychiatric Hospital for Children. I stayed in Ward 7 for about a year and a half, until I was about twelve years old. I don't remember going to the hospital and I don't know if it was a planned or emergency admission. None of the children were younger than seven or ten years old. A few children came and went but most were staying at the hospital long-term.
48. There was a corridor out to the front of the hospital which was always locked. The play area was at the back and there was a gate at the bottom of the play area. There was a sleeping area. At the bottom of the corridor there was a big TV room and a dining-room. The pink room was down there too. You were put in the pink room to calm down. The glass in the pink room was made of plastic. The room was used a lot for kids. I don't know who made the decision to put you in there.
49. There were a couple of auxiliary nurses. I didn't like them. The auxiliary nurses were old school and really harsh but they didn't do anything bad. There was a nurse called Sandra who had red hair and brown eyes. She was really nice.

## **Routine at Aberdeen Psychiatric Hospital for Children**

### *General Routine*

50. I stayed on a ward with other kids. The girls were at one end and the boys were at the other end. The children got on with each other and just got on with things. There were four beds in our ward. I had a friend and her name was [REDACTED] She was older than me and had a side room to herself. [REDACTED] had anorexia and nearly died. The staff tried to make her eat. I was shocked and got a fright when [REDACTED] was forced to eat and came back with a tube up her nose. I thought this was not a nice thing to happen to somebody.
51. The only possession I had was a big rabbit and I slept on it, on my pillow. I've still got the rabbit in the loft. I had it from when I was a baby. I was told by someone it was bigger than me.
52. The staff gave you veal and things like that. It was posh food. You didn't have to help clear up.
53. We were told to have a shower by ourselves. The showers were partitioned by glass tiles and someone would be in the shower next to you.
54. There was a TV room. There was a massive jungle gym and swings in the playground outside. I had Ghostbusters books. I liked Sylvester Stallone and his character, Rocky. I had his books as well. It was weird because I later found out that my twin brother had exactly the same books and we were apart.
55. We went on trips. One time we went to Aberdeen and I had an ice-cream. We walked back to hospital.
56. There was a little school with two classrooms. There was a room for the younger children and a room for the older ones. The school day was about three hours. It wasn't very long. One teacher came in and did everything. We did basic things like English

and maths. I wasn't in primary six or seven at mainstream school because I was at the hospital.

57. No-one explained why I was at the hospital. I saw a lot of psychiatrists and they asked me questions. There was a two-way mirror. I knew there were people behind the mirror and I wouldn't say anything. The mirror put me off and I was not very co-operative with the psychiatrists. I sat there and looked out of the window. They were trying to find out why I had that breakdown **Secondary In** and figure out what was wrong. I saw a particular psychiatrist every week. That was in a different part of the hospital.
58. Once, I had to have a sedative to calm me down. I was in bed and something triggered me. It was maybe about my brother or maybe somebody ripped one of my posters. I was upset and angry. The staff put you in the pink room to chill out and calm down whenever you kicked off. Kicking off was getting angry or disrupting the class in the classroom. The pink room wasn't a padded room and it wasn't abusive. It was just how the staff calmed the kids down. They didn't put you in the pink room when you got upset.
59. I started my periods in hospital. I was only about ten or eleven years old. The nurse called Sandra helped me. She encouraged me and said everything was okay and it was normal. I was thinking, 'Oh my God' and Sandra was really nice.
60. I ran away a couple of times with a girl who lived at the hospital. I don't know how we managed to run away, with it being locked. We ran away to Aberdeen city centre. The police found us in Union Street and took us back. I don't remember if we got into trouble when we got back.

### **Weekend Respite Care at Children's Home, Skene, Aberdeenshire**

61. **Secondary Institutions - to be published later**

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

62.

63.

64.

**Children's Home, Culbin Road, Forres, Moray**

65.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

66. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

67.

68.

69.

70.

71.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

72.

73.

74.

75.

76.

77. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

78.

79.

80.

81.

82.



Secondary Institutions - to be published later

83.

84.

85.

86.

87.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

88.

89.

### **Moving on from Children's Home, Forres**

90. I got a place on a Youth Training Scheme (YTS) at the stables when I was fifteen years old. I mucked out the stables, fed and groomed the horses and cleaned the tack. The home kept my room for me. It was good. I was away all week and home at the weekends. I stayed in a caravan which came with the job and made my own meals during the week. I don't know how I managed it on £29.50 a week.
91. I was a typical teenager and made excuses why I couldn't go back to the home at the weekends. I'd say I had to feed the horses or there was a show on but I was staying out, partying with friends. I went out Thursday to Sunday. Eventually, when I was sixteen, I was allowed to go out and stay at the home only when I wanted to.
92. The only time I did go back and stay was for a few weeks when I got kicked by a horse. My pelvis was smashed and my coccyx bone snapped off. I stayed in Raigmore

Hospital in Inverness. I stayed at the home reluctantly and I was looked after. One night I stayed out all night. The staff said if I could stay out all night then I should be going back to the caravan. That was okay and I went back.

### **Leaving Children's Home, Forres**

93. I left the home for good when I was about seventeen years old. I met my daughter's father at the stables. He stayed in one of the caravans. I moved in with him and that was it. There must have been a formal leaving thing at the home but I don't remember that.
94. I got extra money on top of my YTS through the social work. The cheques were sent to [REDACTED] the woman that owned the horses. I found out later that she was cashing some of the cheques. That was a carry-on and I didn't do anything about it. I tried to resolve it by asking her why they'd gone missing.
95. I had to meet the social workers every so often and check in with them. My social worker was Sandra Cameron at Forres. She was a community social worker. I stayed in touch with the home after I left.

### **Life after being in care**

96. I was discharged from the care system when I was eighteen years old. I was meant to be in the social work system until I was 21 years old and Sandra was my social worker until then. Social work involvement ended when I was 22 years old. I left the stables where I'd worked on the YTS to work in a different stables, again with live-in accommodation. I didn't stay there long because it was ten miles outside Forres in the country and I wanted to be in town with my friends and my boyfriend.
97. I moved in with the father of my daughter. He and I moved around a bit and then got a house in Forres. I got a job at an old folk's home. We split up for a short time and I

got my own place, which was a bedsit. I worked at the shortbread factory. Then I got pregnant with my daughter when I was eighteen years old. I got a one bedroom flat and help from social work with furniture. My daughter and I lived there for a year and then got a bigger one bedroom flat. I slept in the living-room. I moved to a private rented house because I wanted to have a bedroom and a garden for my daughter.

98. By the time I was 21 years old my mum was in my life. I wrote letters and had phone calls with her. Then she booked me a flight to see her in England. My mum had remarried. I broke up with my daughter's dad. I got a new boyfriend and we broke up. Then the private rent was being put up for sale and the council refused to rehouse me because I had given up the one bedroom flat. My mum asked me to move to England and I did.
99. I lasted three months in England. I was getting on well. I worked in a care home and they were going to put me through practitioner training. I had met a good few friends. Mum was looking after my daughter. My daughter's dad came down to see her and all of sudden my mum said she wasn't looking after my daughter any more. I wasn't letting someone I didn't trust or know look after my daughter, so that was difficult. Friends would phone the house and mum wouldn't let me speak to them.
100. When mum was out, I phoned friends asking them to come and get me. I told them it was awful. I was in touch with my dad because mum had given me his number. I phoned my dad and he gave me £500 to get back to Forres. I came back to Forres when I was 24 years old and my daughter's dad let me stay with him. Eventually I got a council house. My daughter's dad died in 2013. We weren't together then but we were good friends.
101. I went to study nursing and got a computer for writing the essays. I hadn't done much computing at school and now I discovered this wonderful machine. I thought it was fabulous. I got into Information Technology from there. I did two Higher National Certificates and the A+ and N+. The A+ is an overall general knowledge computer course. The N+ is an in-depth course about networking.

102. I won two awards through Learn Direct, which is a Scottish learning association who help fund courses. My awards were Champion Learner of the Year [REDACTED] and Personal Achiever of the Year [REDACTED] I have worked in Information Technology since then as a trainer and as a project manager. I am currently working in cyber security and ethical hacking.

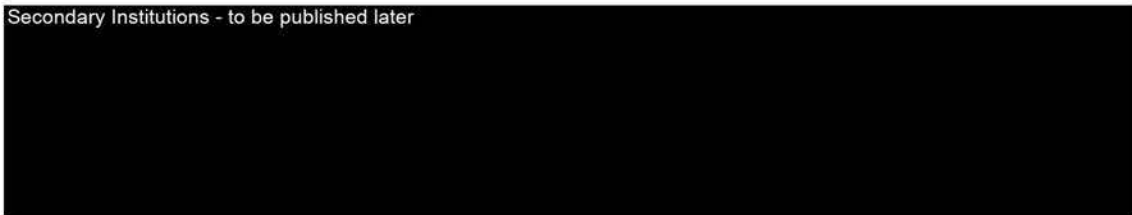
### **Impact**

103. My time in care has had a massive impact on my life. I get paranoid and think people are always out to get me. Someone can say something wrong and not mean too, and I jump way quicker than I should. That happens especially with my partners. When I was younger, I thought it was me being stressed. In work I am fine and a completely different person.

104. When I was with my daughter's father our relationship could get volatile. When we split up, I stayed single for years other than casual relationships. I can get volatile and argue. I know it's me and not just my partner. When I get scared then I get angry. Anger is one of the first emotions I have and I can't control that anger. That's definitely an impact from my time in care.

105. Recently I've made a couple of 999 calls because I've wanted to commit suicide. I've phoned 999 to stop it. I would benefit from counselling because I've never addressed anything that happened to me. I've brushed it off.

106. Secondary Institutions - to be published later



107. I'd like to know why I was put into Aberdeen Children's Psychiatric Hospital. I'd like to know if there was anything wrong that the authorities didn't tell me about. I have the impression the authorities put me in there because they couldn't figure out what was

wrong with me. I don't think that's the truth and they are all professionals so they will know.

108. I had no contact with my birth parents from seeing them at the Children's Home at Polwarth until I was 21 years old. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Secondary Institutions - to be published later

109. I thought my parents were dead until my mum contacted Sandra when I was 21 years old. She wanted to see me. I was confused. When I met my mum it was good. There was a lot of anger in me. She tried to help me with my daughter and I told her not to tell me what to do with my daughter. I thought I'd won the lottery by meeting her. She had sorted herself out. However she was a weird woman and not maternal.
110. I got back in touch with my brother [REDACTED] when I was about 22 years old. I had always given him my new address when I moved. At first I was scared of [REDACTED] I felt bad because it was me who wanted to go ahead with the adoption and it didn't work out. [REDACTED] didn't want to get adopted. I asked him once if he remembered the run up to the adoption and he said he didn't. I've never gone into that with [REDACTED]
111. [REDACTED] wasn't keen to meet our mum but I convinced him to do it. We all went abroad together and that was good. [REDACTED] came up to Forres a few times. Then our mum kept us apart and tried to get inbetween us. [REDACTED] and I are close now.
112. I met [REDACTED]'s adoptive dad the other week for the first time in years. [REDACTED] was really nice. [REDACTED] said I was full of trauma. He said I was the one struggling the most but I stood strong and protected [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] said he and [REDACTED] were too young. They had no training and felt let down by social work.
113. [REDACTED] said the adoption was really rushed and social work were pushing him and [REDACTED] to adopt us. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] asked if they could foster us but social work said adoption only. I think five or even six years old is too late to adopt a child who has been

traumatised, unless the adoptive parents are trained in therapy and in how to manage children, and have a lot of support. It's a big task.

114. There was no attempt to maintain a relationship between [REDACTED] and me. He had to run downstairs to get my letters before [REDACTED] found them. [REDACTED] kept us apart and we wrote to each other in secret. When I was first taken away from the adoptive home, I got to see [REDACTED] twice at most.
115. I tried to reconnect with [REDACTED] to tell him our mum had died in 2020. The police went to his door to tell him. [REDACTED] remembers way more than [REDACTED] and I. His way of dealing with it is to shut us out. I speak to [REDACTED] and his children on the phone. He's still a heroin addict. My mum got him into heroin when he was eleven years old. Social work put a picture of [REDACTED] in the newspapers saying, "[REDACTED] needs a home." It was absolutely disgusting. There was no attempt by social work to maintain a relationship between [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I.
116. I wasn't taken away from my parents because I was naughty. I was taken away from my parents because they were drug addicts. However the teachers at Forres Academy weren't thinking, why was I in care and why had I been in care all this time? The teachers had a small-minded attitude towards children in care and treated me as if I was a bad child. I was expelled from high school but I was smart. Well, everyone says I'm smart but I don't see it. I found a way to catch up. I got the hang of things quickly. If I had a better memory then I'd be super smart. My memory is so bad.
117. I only think about my time in care when other people talk about their lives. I've shut it away and it's all compartmented. I started losing my memory when my daughter got ill when she was twelve years old. I think it's psychological due to the stress and worry and my memory hasn't recovered. If any abuse happened to me before foster care then I don't remember it. That's a good thing.
118. As I got older, I thought if there was a God then none of these things would have happened to us. I have very mixed feelings about religion. On the other hand, what

has happened to me has made me an amazing mother, a very driven person workwise and a very strong person. I'm quite glad of all those traits.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

119.

### **Other action taken**

#### *Revisits*

120. My daughter and I went to Edinburgh and decided to go to Livingston where I lived with my mum. I freaked out and had to leave. [REDACTED] came up in 2018 and we went to our old adoption house and I freaked out then. I looked in the dining room and had some flashback images. My freak outs are internal and I want to just leave. The flashbacks have only happened at those times.

#### *Compensation*

121. My mum said I needed to get compensation. I said to her that if it wasn't for her then the abuse wouldn't have happened to me and why would I need compensation for something she caused? My mum never brought it up again. What use is compensation? It's not going to change anything.



### **Treatment / Support**

122. I've never had counselling but I think I need that. I have a lot of physical problems. I have alopecia, arthritis, sleep apnoea, heart arrhythmia and chronic fatigue syndrome. I have Meniere's Disease and I am deaf in one ear. The doctors are looking into whether I have fibromyalgia. It's fine. I just roll with it.

### **Records**

123. I got some medical records and some social work records from Moray and Grampian in 2020. I haven't read them all. I thought it would be good to read them but I read some and freaked out. My daughter said just to leave them. One person wrote that I was a very disturbed child. Someone wrote that I had put weight on and was looking like a young woman. I thought that was weird. I'd like to get my earlier records.
124. The records were emailed to me. A lot of the records are written in pen. They have been scanned and are difficult to read. Records should be in a readable format when they are sent out.
125. I'm in the middle of getting my records from Lord and Lady Polwarth Children's Home and from Moray Council, through Crossreach. I want a clear picture of what happened after burying things away and forgetting things.

### **Lessons to be Learned**

126. [REDACTED] and I shouldn't have been adopted at the age we were. You can't adopt kids who are four or five years old who have been through a lot of trauma, especially when the adoptive parents are young. That's when it started to go wrong. We shouldn't have been split up.

- 127. Social work shouldn't have kept us in the children's home for so long and we shouldn't have been in and out of care. They should have adopted us at a younger age when we would have been easier to deal with. I found out that my mum's mum told the children's home not to let [REDACTED] and I get back with our mum. Social work should have taken that on board. If kids are in care for too long it's hard to transition them to a family environment.
- 128. I was in a lot of places. That's due to a lack of training and a lack of knowing how that can impact people in adulthood. It's not good.
- 129. There should be better training and better understanding of kids who've been through a lot of trauma and who have behavioural issues.

**Other information**

- 130. Things turned out good in the end. I went to Forres Children's Home and that was the best home I had ever been to.
- 131. 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..........

Dated..... 10 September 2021 .....