

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

EFG

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is EFG My date of birth is 1948. My contact details are known to the inquiry.

Life before care

2. I was born in Edinburgh. My parents' names were and My dad worked in the at Craigmillar. I'm not aware of my mum working when I was little. She had a job later on, after my father died. She worked in at a hostel, which was a kind of doss house where people could go to get a cup of tea. I'm the youngest of my father's six children. I have a big sister, who is still alive. My older brothers and are now dead. I have an older brother, who lives in Chesterfield. The closest sibling in age to me is who is two years older than me and lives in Edinburgh. After I was put into care, my mother had another child, Sadly, I've probably only seen him about three times in my life.
3. When I was two, I was put into the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital because I contracted polio. I don't remember anything about my time there. I was there until I was four years old. As far as I know, my brothers and my sister stayed at home while I was in the hospital.
4. My big sister sometimes talks to me about life at home, but she doesn't go into the nitty gritty. She just says that it was rough and that my father wasn't a very nice person. My big brother, left to join the Army when he was eighteen. My sister also left

early and I think she went to stay with one of our aunties. She was engaged and married by the time she was 23. I never got to sit down with anybody and go over the family history, but I've picked up some things. I think some of my brothers may even have gone to live with my sister.

5. I really can't remember much about family life at all. We lived at [REDACTED] in Edinburgh. The sad thing is, I couldn't even tell you what my father looked like. If I shut my eyes and tried to picture him, I wouldn't even know. I think he died when I was six or seven years old. After I left the Princess Margaret Rose Hospital, I was at home for about three years. I attended Peffermill Primary School. I remember bits and pieces from that time. I did get called names because of my polio, but it didn't stick in my mind or scar me. I had to wear a calliper on my arm, which had a breast plate. I would deliberately get into fights with kids and let them try and punch me in the chest. I wore the calliper until I was about six years old.
6. Some things stay with me, but I can't remember the everyday, mundane things. I have vague memories of the house. It just looked like a dark, dinghy, gloomy house. You went in the front door, there was a hallway and you went into the living room. That's all I can remember about the house. I can remember going to school and sitting on a grass verge. There was an old, half-eaten roll, lying at the side of the road. I remember bending over to pick it up because I was so hungry and I needed something to eat. I remember not wanting to go to school and being dragged to school. I remember getting caught by the truant officer when I was playing at Craigmillar Quarry. We were taken down to go in front of the headmaster. I don't remember being taken to a Panel or anything like that, but I think that sort of thing added up and resulted in us getting taken into care. Apart from that, I don't remember much else about my life at home.

Canaan Lodge, Edinburgh

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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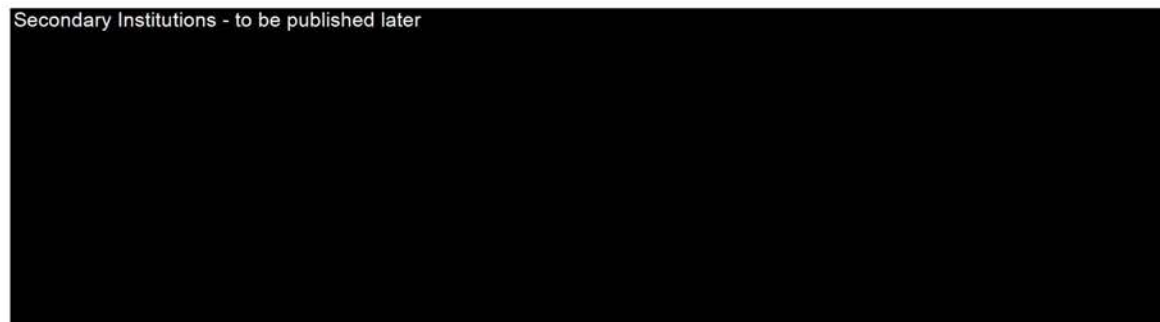
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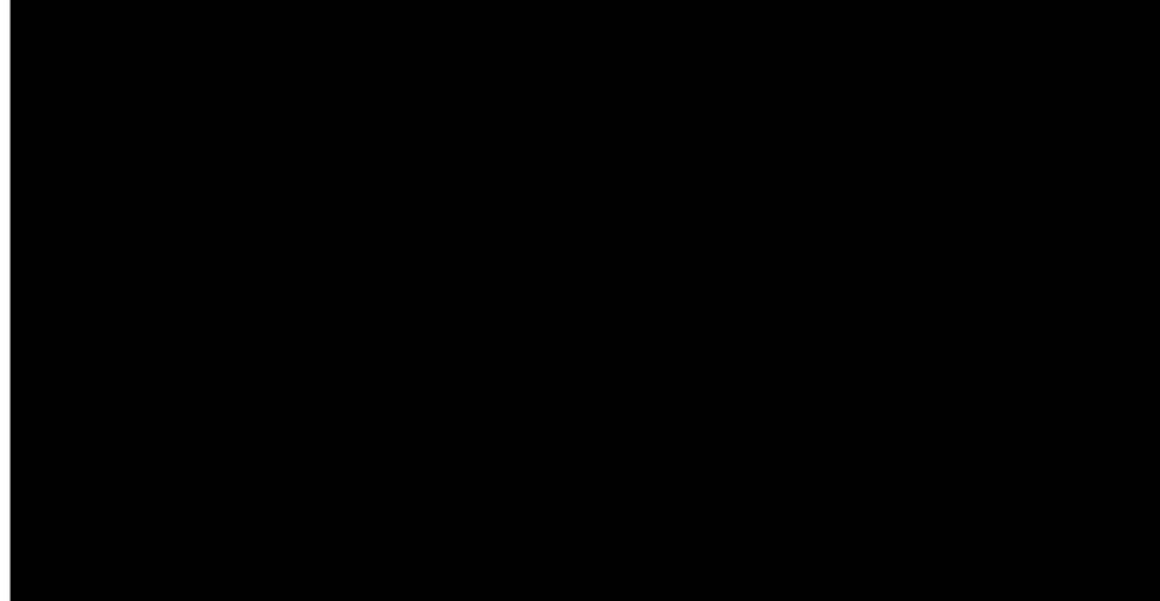
Redhall House Children's Home, Edinburgh

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Leaving Redhall

43. All we were told was that there was a family who didn't want younger kids. My brother and I were picked. It was a family in Blackburn, West Lothian. I don't know why a kid from Edinburgh was taken all the way out to Blackburn. We didn't think of that at the time. My mum didn't come and see us and tell us what was happening or anything like that. It was [REDACTED] of 1959. We just got picked up and driven through to West Lothian.

Foster care with Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] EHU-SPO, Blackburn, West Lothian

44. I was eleven years old when I went to stay with [REDACTED] EHU-SPO. I stayed there until I got married in 1974. The [REDACTED] EHU-SPO were in their late fifties, early sixties. Mrs [REDACTED] EHU was Dutch South African. The [REDACTED] EHU-SPO had a daughter, [REDACTED] and son, [REDACTED] who still lived with them. Their other sons, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had already left the family home. They also had two older foster children, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who were 20, 21 year old men. There were eight of us in the house when we first went there.
45. Mrs [REDACTED] EHU moved around Blackburn a lot in the course of my time with her. Initially, she lived in [REDACTED] which was post-war pre-fab. It was freezing in the winter time. I think Mrs [REDACTED] EHU had some sort of connection to the council because new houses were built and she got one. It was a five apartment house in [REDACTED]. We moved there when I was about fifteen and stayed there for a couple of years. She then moved from there to another new house in [REDACTED] in Blackburn. From there, she moved to again to another part of Blackburn. Laterally, she moved again to another part of Blackburn. They were all council houses. There were a lot of new houses being built in Blackburn for the Glasgow overspill.

Routine at the EHU-SPO

First Day

46. I always remember going in the back door of the house and seeing the kitchen table. There was a plate of mince pie, beans and chips. It was a feast. My brother and I looked at this and thought, "Wow, this is great." That's my first memory of the foster family.

Mornings and Bedtime

47. Mr and Mrs EHU-SPO slept in the back living room at EHU-SPO. Their son and daughter had their own rooms and there were four of us in another room. My brother and I shared a room with the two older foster kids, EHU and EHU. EHU moved out shortly after we arrived.
48. On school days, we got up at about 7:00 am. We walked to the school, which was probably about two miles away. At the weekend, I think we were encouraged not to be in bed later than 8:00 am. We were normally in our beds for 8:00 pm. As a special treat, we would be allowed to stay up to watch *Bonanza* or *The Wagon Train*, which started at 8:00 pm. If we weren't squeaky clean when it came to our behaviour, we got sent off to bed and we weren't allowed to see these programmes.

Mealtimes/food

49. The food wasn't anything posh, but we were well fed. Pie, chips and beans, stew and tatties and old-fashioned mince and tatties were the sort of things we were fed. We had enough to eat. I can't remember exactly what we had for breakfast, but we did get it. It was probably tea and toast or cereal. I think we got school dinners for lunch. I don't remember there being any issues with food that I didn't like at the EHU-SPO. I think we just told Mrs EHU if we didn't like something so I don't think I was given food that I didn't want to eat.

50. When Mrs ^{EHU} got older, she would give me money to go down to the shop and buy my own dinner. She couldn't be bothered making Sunday dinner. I would go down and get a can of mince and peas.

Washing and bathing

51. There was no shower, but we got a bath at least once a week. I think I had a bath with my brother. I think we were just told to go and have it. Our clothes were washed and cleaned. I think Mrs ^{EHU} encouraged cleanliness. She would shout on me and ask me to bend down and pick one of my shirts up. I would get a cuff on the ear and she'd say, "How many times have I told you to undo your buttons?" I think that was the sort of thing a mother would do. The washing was hard enough without having to undo all the buttons on the shirts.

Clothing

52. Mrs ^{EHU} bought our clothes, but I think she got a grant from the council in Edinburgh. I only know about that because we went through to Slater's in Glasgow when I was sixteen. A suit was picked out for me. I was sixteen and it was the sixties. It was a drab, brown suit and I said that I didn't like it. Mrs ^{EHU} said it was that or nothing. She said that if I wanted my own clothes, I'd have to pay for them myself. After that, I started to keep my own money and pay her digs.

School

53. Edinburgh education was a bit more advanced than the education in West Lothian. You were in the class behind so you had longer in primary school. I went to Primary School, which was in the outskirts of Blackburn. I was only in West Lothian for about six months before I had to sit my eleven plus for secondary school. That pre-empted my secondary education because I was put into a lesser secondary school than I wanted to go to. Bathgate Academy was for the brightest children, Lindsay High School was intermediate level and then there was Torphichen Street in Bathgate. Whitburn Academy was for children who were a level below Torphichen Street.

54. I was in the third tier, which I wasn't in favour of. The education system in Edinburgh was different and I felt that I was about a year behind. After being in Torphichen Street for my first year, I was pulled into the headmaster's office. I was told that I could go to Lindsay High School, but I would have to start back in first year. I decided to stay where I was. I left school at fifteen with a leaving certificate.

Chores

55. We were given things to do in the house when we came in from school. I can't remember exactly what the chores were. After the chores, we were allowed our own free time. The [EHU-SPO] son, [REDACTED] lived with his wife in another part of Blackburn. On Saturday mornings, I had to take the wheelbarrow over to his house and get a sack of tatties or whatever vegetables were on the go. I looked forward to going because I quite liked [REDACTED] and his family.

Leisure time

56. The house was right at the back of a big field. I remember meeting kids to play football. There was nothing else. We had to be back to be in our beds by 8:00 pm. On Saturdays, we were just left to ourselves. We just went out and played until we were shouted in for our dinner.
57. I didn't have a clue about football. I had never been taken to football matches. I was two years in the hospital, didn't have a clue what life was all about and then in a children's home until I was nine or ten. There were no big siblings to take me to football. [REDACTED] asked me which football team I supported. At the time, I was reading a book about Hearts and Rangers. I said that I was a Hearts supporter because I was from Edinburgh. He was pleased because he was a Hearts supporter too. The rest of the family were Rangers supporters.
58. [REDACTED] was always a bit more harem scarem than I was. My arm didn't really bother me when I was in Redhall. I didn't get the chance to think about it in there. Out in the big, wide world it was picked up on a lot. There were a lot of things that I couldn't do and

a lot of things that other kids picked up on. It did affect my life a lot more in foster care than it had in Redhall.

59. I wasn't encouraged to have friends coming back to the house. I recollect kids inviting me back to their house. It wasn't reciprocated so it didn't happen very often. I think Mrs EHU was too old by the time she fostered us.

Trips and Holidays

60. We did go on holidays. We went to Southport every year until I was about sixteen. We would get a minibus and drive all the way to Southport. There were no motorways then. We had a good time. I did enjoy myself in Southport. That was where I learned how to play golf. I went to the pitch and putt course and learned how to hit a ball. I was quite surprised that I was able to coordinate my swing and hit a ball. When I was fifteen, I did that almost every day of the holiday. There weren't really any other family outings.

Birthdays and Christmas

61. Christmas was there, it was happening but I can't really remember anything special happening. We got presents, but I can't remember any one present that stuck out. I can't remember birthdays being anything special either.

Religious instruction

62. Sunday was "Hallelujah" day. Mrs EHU belonged to the Pentecostal Church. She went to church and we had to go too. The family were very blue. They had pictures of King Billy and white horses all over the walls. There was a lot about William of Orange. There was a big walk in Blackburn on 12th July. When I was walking down the street, a boy from school asked me if I was going to the Orange Walk. I didn't have a clue what he was talking about. It was never spoken about when I was growing up in Edinburgh, but it was a big thing in Blackburn which I think is sad.

Visits/contact with family

63. My brother stayed with me at the [EHU-SPO] until he was about nineteen. I didn't see any of my other siblings at all in that time. When my brother and I were fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old we would go through to Edinburgh on Sunday. We used to get the bus through to Edinburgh and stay at my mum's on Sunday afternoon. We would get the last bus home again at about 7:00 pm. That was a ritual up until [REDACTED] left. It fell away after that. I'd miss a week, miss two weeks, miss a month and it just slowly disappeared.
64. My mum never came to visit me in Blackburn at all. Nobody ever came to visit. I have no recollection of anybody from the council sitting down with me or my brother, asking us how we were managing or how we were getting on. It just wasn't there. It's possible they had meetings with Mrs [EHU] but from 1959 until I left nobody from the council ever checked up on me. It didn't strike me as odd back then because I didn't know people like that existed.

Relationship with foster family

65. Mr [REDACTED] was killed in a road accident when he was 65 in 1965. I was seventeen at the time. It didn't really change anything in the house. Mrs [EHU] was the boss. Mr [REDACTED] was a very mild, meek sort of guy. In the six years that I was there before he died, I can't remember him sitting down and having a chat with us. It just wasn't that kind of relationship.
66. Mrs [EHU] was a disciplinarian. We had to tow the line and do the chores if we wanted anything extra, like an extra hour of the telly. We had to make sure everything was done properly. The house didn't have any love in it as far as me and my brother were concerned. There was a big difference between the way Mrs [EHU] treated us and the way she treated her own children. She wasn't bad bad, but there was no love, no cuddles, no, "How are you feeling today?" It was as if we were commodities for her.

67. The daughter was an absolute rotter. She was about ten years older than me. If we were watching telly and she came in from her work, she would switch it off or over to something else and walk away. We weren't allowed to switch it back over again because she was the family. She would tell us what to do, "I'm [REDACTED] and you do as I tell you." She was an absolute horror.
68. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] the sons, were very good to me and [REDACTED] Later on, [REDACTED] used to take me up to the local clubs on a Sunday night. He knew I wasn't making a lot of money. He used to slip me £1 or ten shillings. He was kind to me. He never got married. He didn't have a way to talk to people. It was the old-fashioned way, taken from his father, and he couldn't speak to people very well.
69. I think Mrs EHU [REDACTED]'s lifestyle was generated by money. When we stayed at [REDACTED] there were eight of us in the house. [REDACTED] left soon afterwards, but [REDACTED] stayed for two or three more years until he met a girl and got married. When we moved from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] it was a four bedroomed house. The daughter, [REDACTED] and the son, [REDACTED] were still staying there. [REDACTED] and I were there too. She actually took a lodger in from the outside, a complete stranger. She rented him a bedroom. [REDACTED] and I never, ever had a bedroom to ourselves, not even the two of us sharing. The lodger, [REDACTED] was twenty years old. When we stayed in [REDACTED] she also took two [REDACTED] in as well. They shared a room together. Whenever she had a spare room, she never offered [REDACTED] and me a room to ourselves. She always took another lodger in.
70. When I look back on my time in foster care, it was a sad time for me. I never really had much to do. Even when I was older and I could go out, I would go out every single night. I would go to the pub to get out. There was nothing in the house. If I didn't have any money, I would just go and lie in my bedroom and play music. I can't really remember a time when I would have told Mrs EHU [REDACTED] that something was wrong and asked her for help. There just wasn't that kind of understanding. I wouldn't describe the EHU-SPO [REDACTED] as abusive, but there was no love whatsoever there. There was no way you could have a conversation or discuss your feelings or find out what to do next.

Healthcare

71. I don't remember being registered with a dentist, but I was definitely registered with the health centre in Blackburn. We had access to a doctor if we needed one.
72. In the summer of 1960, I was in Princess Margaret Rose Hospital for about six months. I don't know whether the local authority or Mrs EHU encouraged that. I had three different operations on my arm. I had to wear a plaster cast for quite a lengthy period. I was allowed to go home, but I missed a couple of months of my first year at secondary school. It turned out that the education was better in the hospital than it was in the school so I was more advanced than the kids at school when I went back. There was one teacher to two or three children in the hospital so it was a better standard of teaching.
73. I can't really remember Mrs EHU encouraging me to continue with my treatment for polio. After the surgery, I didn't get any further treatment until I was sixteen and I went to Princess Margaret Rose Hospital for a check-up. I was asked if I wanted an operation, but I thought it would be detrimental to the rest of my life. I was going to get my shoulder fused, but it would then be stuck in one position so I said that I didn't want the surgery. That was it for the rest of my life as far as my arm was concerned. There were no further reviews.

Leaving foster care

74. My brother left the EHU-SPO when he was nineteen. was more confident than me in his outlook in life. Maybe it was because he had two arms and he could put himself to any type of work. There were only certain jobs that I could do, but my brother had no compulsion when it came to leaving. It was all down to the length of his hair. Mrs EHU told him to get a haircut. He wouldn't so he left. He went back to stay with our mother.

75. I don't really know when the foster care came to an end. It probably came to an end when I got a job. I got a job working for a local builder, [REDACTED]. There was a lot of building for the Glasgow overspill. Mrs EHU [REDACTED] actually came along to the job interview at [REDACTED] with me. I was sixteen years old and she came into the contract manager's office with me. She wanted to make sure I got the job. My first wage was £3 and 15 shillings. I gave Mrs EHU [REDACTED] my entire wage and she gave me ten shillings pocket money back. I don't know whether she was still getting money from the local authority for me, but I think I probably became a lodger at that point rather than being in foster care. Nobody from the local authority ever told me what was going on. I couldn't even tell you where the council offices were in West Lothian.
76. I stayed in that job at [REDACTED] until I got married. I was so insecure and I didn't know what to do with my life. I ended up staying until I was 25. I didn't want to leave Mrs EHU [REDACTED]'s and not have somewhere else to go. I did leave once and stayed in lodgings with Mrs EHU [REDACTED]'s daughter.

Life after leaving care

77. The period after my brother left the EHU-SPO [REDACTED] was the darkest period in my life. My brother left and there was nobody else there. I always remember the typical week for me was working Monday to Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, I would lie in front of the telly. I would go down to the local sweetie shop, aged eighteen, and buy a bag of sweeties. There was nothing. I had no friends. There was no encouragement to get friends. I wasn't allowed to bring pals back to the house at all.
78. I remember when I turned 21. I didn't have one person to celebrate with on that birthday. I got a lift into Edinburgh from Mrs EHU [REDACTED]'s niece. My brother had moved to Edinburgh by that time. I went to see him and he wasn't in. I was walking about the streets of Edinburgh, feeling sorry for myself.
79. There were a lot of bright and well-educated kids coming through at [REDACTED]. I didn't really jump up through the ranks. I was a bonus clerk, a bonus surveyor. I was 21 and

I wasn't even on £20 a week. I had to phone up the head office and protest. I eventually got a wage rise. I didn't have a lot of money and I had to pay dig money, so I didn't have a lot of money left. I didn't have money to go out to the dancing. When I met my future wife, she would say that she hadn't seen me out at the dancing. I missed out on those things growing up.

80. When we moved to [REDACTED] the local community centre was about three hundred yards along the road. I was about twenty years old by this time. I didn't know anybody and I didn't have any friends. I didn't know what to do with my life. I plucked up the courage to go along. There was a group of kids of about fifteen, sixteen years old. Although I was twenty, I looked so much younger. I was quite small built and young looking so they just thought that I was their age group. I joined in a game, kicking the ball about the big hall. After about half an hour, I was leaning over a goalpost, retching up. I was so unfit. I had done nothing since leaving school. It gave me the encouragement that I needed to go along to the community centre every week. I met different people and I got friends. I joined the local five-a-side football games. My life completely blossomed. I think the community centre went a long way towards making a better life for me.
81. I didn't really start enjoying my work until I reached my forties. I was terrified to leave the job I had got when I was sixteen. There was no back up. There was nobody I could talk to about the fact that I wasn't happy. There was nobody to tell me that my digs could wait if I didn't get a job straight away. It wasn't until I was about forty years old that I was made redundant from a job in Glasgow. In 1988, [REDACTED] Engineering were advertising for an office manager. It was completely different from what I was doing. I went along to the interview and got the job. From then on in, it just completely changed my outlook. It was a far better job and I enjoyed it a lot more. It was still hard because I had to get from West Lothian to Stoneyburn and I still couldn't drive.
82. [REDACTED] was such a gentleman. He remembered my daughter's birthdays and would send her cards. I didn't really have contact with Mrs EHU [REDACTED] or my mum after I left foster care. My mum died when she was 71 and Mrs EHU [REDACTED] died in the late seventies. It was hard, having all these angry thoughts about why I had been left

and why did certain things happen and why there was no communication. I think it got to a stage where I just got on with my life.

83. My brother spent ten years in care and then he managed to leave. In saying that, my lifestyle is far better than his. He went back to an environment I didn't want to go back to. I didn't want to go back to Craigmillar, Bingham or Pilton. I didn't want to go back and stay in a council house in these areas. My brother went back to Edinburgh at the age of nineteen, twenty. He didn't have the tools to speak to females. He got married before he turned 21. He has four kids. Two of them are drug abusers. I don't think he's got a happy life. He never got out of [REDACTED] He might be happy, but I wouldn't have had the tools to survive in these environments. Looking back on my life, it wasn't a happy decision to stay in West Lothian when I left care but I didn't have anything else to fall back on. Staying where I stayed meant that I met the person I met and having the lifestyle I've had afterwards has given me a better lifestyle.
84. My wife's name was [REDACTED] We got married in Blackburn 1974 and moved to Stoneyburn. She died very young, when she was only 43. We had one child, my daughter [REDACTED] My wife died when [REDACTED] was only sixteen. That made the two of us so close. You couldn't get a £1 note between us. It makes us the family that we are. I've got a beautiful daughter and two grandchildren. My life is a lot happier now than it was when I was the age of my grandchildren.

Impact

85.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

86. It makes you feel unwanted. My mum could look after my half-brother, [REDACTED] but she couldn't look after me. There was never an olive branch or an invitation to me to go and stay with her. I don't know if it was my own fortitude that got me through it. There was no help from the outside world at all. Nobody sat me down and pointed me in the right direction of where I was to go or what I was to do or how I should go about it. Nobody told me that I could get help for my arm or assistance. There was nothing. I never learned how to drive a car until I was 43. There were jobs I could have got later on in life, but I couldn't drive. I couldn't drive so I couldn't get better money. It was a Catch 22 situation. I couldn't earn enough to put money aside for driving lessons until I was in my forties. These are just the small things you miss out on when you're don't have a "normal" family life. After my wife died, I realised I had to get my driver's licence. That changed my outlook and the latter stages of my working life were far happier than the early years.
87. My big sister is 85. I still can't speak to her in the way I'd love to speak to her in case I offend her. I want to ask why she wasn't there when I was nine, ten years old and needed her help. I think she gets it now and again when she tells me stories, but we don't talk about family life very much. I've never really got to know my family the way a family should know each other. I talked to my daughter about it. We spoke about her cousin's children, who are seven and five. If anything ever happened to their parents, she said couldn't imagine leaving them. She would have to do something about it. That's what was going through my mind when I was six, seven years old and there was nothing happening. I had six or seven older siblings. It was different times and I try not to let it burden me too much.
88. One of the biggest impacts being in care had on me was communication. I didn't know how to go out there and physically meet people and get on. I was speaking to kids at school who would talk about going to the cinema and things like that. That never happened to me. I missed different things like that. I'd love to be able to go back and have a normal life growing up. I just feel that it was stolen away from me and I never had a chance to do that kind of thing.

89. When I left care, I didn't know where to go for support. I didn't have anybody to ask the questions. It was quite late on in life before I got help from a place in Broxburn. The man asked whether I'd had any help for the polio in my arm. He found it hard to believe that nobody had tried to contact me or offered any assistance. They helped me with small things, like doing my buttons up and gave me a contraption for putting socks on. The man there got me an electric bed that can move and support my back. Nobody had offered to help me with these things because I didn't know where to go and ask the questions.
90. It's as if I fell through a big crack in the world. At the time, I didn't think about it because I didn't know any better. Later on, I felt so angry about all the time that I'd missed out on. It wasn't really until I got married and had a family of my own that I could really put a stamp on my life. I'd missed all those years because I didn't have a normal family life where I could build my life up and go on to a better place. It just wasn't there. I wasn't encouraged to do these things. I wasn't encouraged to have friends coming back to the house. It did put me in a dark place when I came out of foster care.
91. It was as if I got lost in foster care. I don't know whether it was a fluke or how I came out of the black hole. I didn't know any better about what was happening in the outside world. I knew that I didn't know how to speak to girls. I didn't have a girlfriend all the way through my teens. It wasn't until I was 21, 22 and I learned to go through to the local community centre that I started to learn how to speak to people. There were other kids that I could talk to at the community centre. It put a whole new outlook on my life. I could go along there nearly every night. There was five-a-side football, badminton, tennis. It just let me get on with these things in an environment where it was encouraged. Before that, it was as if I was in a dark room by myself with nobody to speak to. It was a very dark period of my life and it could have gone any way. I'm not going to get those years back. I don't get melancholy. I don't sit down with a glass of whisky in my hand and think about these things. I get on with it and try and live for the people who I've got to look after nowadays.

Records

92. I've thought about trying to obtain my records, but I wouldn't even know where to start or where to go.

Lessons to be learned

93. There was no follow up. I slipped through the cracks. My niece is a foster parent. She's so wonderful at it. I don't know whether I was just unlucky. There must be check-ups for foster parents in this day and age. They must check that they're fit enough to look after children. I don't think there were checks when I was in care. It was like the kids who were sent to Australia. There was no thought put into that. They were just sent out there and then forty, fifty years old they realised that nobody had followed up on it. It was just something that happened in those days. I was in the hospital for six months and still nobody from the local authority came to see me.
94. I had many sad years after leaving care and it took me a long time to get over it. I hope that no other children have to go through what me and my brother went through.
95. 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.....

EFG

Dated.....

10 November 2020