

**Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**

Witness Statement of

AAS  
[REDACTED]

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is AAS [REDACTED] My maiden name was AAS [REDACTED] I was known by my foster parents' surname, EHL-EHM [REDACTED] from about the age of ten. My date of birth is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 1949. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

**Background**

2. My mother's name was [REDACTED] She and my father, [REDACTED] were married and later divorced. I've been told that my mother and father were no longer in a relationship when I was conceived. They both had new partners. They bumped into each other on a Christmas night out and got together for old times' sake. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
3. My mother and father are deceased. I never met my father. According to my brother, [REDACTED], my father never recognised me as his. [REDACTED] was my only full sibling. He was five years older than me. He's now deceased. I have six half-siblings, who are my mother's children.
4. I don't know the circumstances of how I ended up in care. I was born in an ex-army hut in [REDACTED] It was a place where prisoners of war had been kept. It was called [REDACTED] People had started to live there after the prisoners were repatriated. I visited the site as an adult. The huts were gone. It was so small. You'd miss it, if you blinked as you went through it. It was really just a field. I was

speaking about it recently to a friend, and he produced a photograph of himself standing at the site. You can see the huts in the background.

5. I don't know who was living in the hut with my mother. I believe people squatted in them, but I don't know whether my mother was squatting or lived there officially.
6. In later years, I met up with my mother's sister, [REDACTED] and she told me that I was about two when I went into Smyllum. She said that my mother couldn't care for me. She had taken me down to London and then brought me back, because she just couldn't cope.
7. I also found out that my mother's two sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had wanted to look after me. My mum refused to allow my Aunt [REDACTED] to take me. Aunt [REDACTED] lived in Nottingham and drove all the way up to ask if she could have me. She had one daughter, who was five years older than me, and was quite affluent. I wish I had gone down there. I would've had a better life. I've been told that my mum was a bit jealous of [REDACTED] and that's why she refused to let me go with her.
8. My Aunt [REDACTED] was told by the welfare officer, Miss McKendrick, that she couldn't have me because she had two children of her own. Miss McKendrick's office was at 64 Union Street in Hamilton. She was the chief welfare officer. I met her for the first time when I was about five.
9. I don't know whether there was a court hearing for me to be taken into care, or whether it was done voluntarily.

#### **Smyllum Park Orphanage, Lanark**

10. Given how young I was, I have no memory of going into Smyllum. My baptism certificate shows that I was baptised in St Mary's Church in Lanark, so I was obviously baptised after I went into Smyllum. That just dawned on me when I was looking at the certificate last night. St Mary's was next to Smyllum. I was baptised on

██████████ 1952. I was two and half years old. That helps to confirm when I went into the home.

11. Smyllum was run by nuns. I don't know what the religious order was. They wore great big headdresses in those days. They frightened the wits out of me. I don't remember any of the nuns' names. That's one thing I regret.
12. My very first memory of Smyllum is getting moved to another part of the building, which I think was around the time I was to start school. I think I was about 4 or 5. I can't be specific about what age I was when things happened, or how long I was in places.
13. I remember being taken into a cloakroom, which had stone walls and floors, and a nun took my hat and coat off. There were a lot of people around me. I was so shy. My head was always down. I wouldn't have looked at anybody. I was then taken up a set of stairs into a room, which I call the play area. This is the place where I spent most of my time. When I think back to it, I feel that I was always in that wee room, never anywhere else.
14. I don't know how many children were there, or the age range. I think I was one of the younger ones. I only ever saw girls in Smyllum, except on one occasion. I found out many years later that boys had been in Smyllum too, so they must have had their own areas.
15. It was a huge old house, with a large entrance hall. It had been standing since the 1800s. I don't think it had been updated in all those years. I've got a book which has old pictures of Smyllum in it. The pictures are just as I remember it. I went back to visit with my two daughters when I was in my thirties. We took sweets and fruit but it was boarded up. We were told it got boarded up just two years before.

## **Routine at Smyllum**

### *Mornings and bedtime*

16. The dormitory was right next door to the play area. There were rows and rows of beds. It always seemed so overcrowded.
17. We got out of bed and washed ourselves in the morning. We then lined up to go into the food hall. The food hall was along the same corridor as the dormitory. We all walked in a straight line, in silence, into the food hall.
18. We'd go back to the play area after the food hall and then run up the wee hill to the school.
19. I drew a picture of the play area some years ago which shows the layout of the room. There were little cupboards along one of the walls, with windows above looking out to the outside play area. All of the children had a cupboard each and a key. There were windows on the opposite wall and a big fire against another wall, with a fireguard from floor to ceiling in front of it. The communal bathroom was at one side of the fire, and there was a cupboard full of jars and sweeties on the other side. There was an area at the other side of the room with toys, such as prams, dolls and dolls' houses. It had rope barriers round it. We could see the toys but weren't allowed to play with them.
20. We got a sweetie at 6 o'clock before we went to bed. It was always a liquorice allsort, which are still my favourite. When I went back as an adult to visit, I was told that a local cafe used to donate sweets to the home, so that's probably where my liquorice allsorts came from.

*Leisure time*

21. I spent most of my time in the play area. I don't remember how many kids were in there with me. I just remember us all playing about in this horrible room. We weren't allowed to play with the toys, so we just ran about in the room and amused ourselves.
22. I didn't have any special friends. The other kids didn't want to know me. I was so quiet. I was very, very shy. I noticed that some kids had friends. They were probably a bit more talkative than me.
23. We wore a uniform, which was a black dress with a white pinafore over it. We all had the same haircut. It was a bowl haircut above the ears – not very stylish. It was so regimented. Everybody was the same.
24. As I said, we all had a cupboard and a key, but we didn't have anything to put in them. I remember deciding to save up my liquorice allsorts. I put them in the cupboard until I had ten. I took them out one night and put them on my wee pinny. I was sitting with my sweeties on my lap and kids came running up to me, saying they'd be my friends forever if I gave them a sweetie. I gave all my sweeties away so they'd be my friends.
25. There were wee steps from the play area which led down to a tiny door. The door opened out to the front of the building, where there was a small square playground with swings and a roundabout. There was one other thing in the playground, but I can't remember what it was. We played out there sometimes. We didn't get out every day, only on rare occasions.
26. The nuns didn't read us stories, nor did we have access to books or comics. I don't remember there being a radio, but I remember we used to sing a song which was a Eurovision song, sung by someone called Teddy. The words were "There's a bird in the tree, there's a tree in the meadow..." I don't know where I had heard it. We

sang another song: "Where will the baby's dimple be?", which was my wee party piece when I got older. I think we sang these songs just to amuse ourselves.

### *Food*

27. The food hall was exactly like the photo in my book. There were rows and rows of tables and benches. There seemed to me to be hundreds of kids in the room. I don't know where they all came from. We had to be quiet during meals. The nuns would walk up and down the whole time, watching what you were doing, waiting to reprimand you.
28. I don't ever remember getting a good dinner. The food was awful. I used to pass it on to someone else when I couldn't eat it. There was always someone hungry. I didn't eat very much. I remember eating the bread. It always nipped my tongue. I used to wonder why. I know now it was because of the blue mould on it.

### *School*

29. I got introduced to school not long after I got moved to the building where the play area was. We'd go down the stairs in the play area, out the back of the building and walk up a wee hill to school. I might be wrong but that's how I remember it.
30. I think the school was just for the children in Smyllum. We all wore the black dress and white pinafore. The teachers were nuns. The school was just like the pictures in the book I've got. I remember the classroom so well. There were rows and rows of desks and glass partitions between the classes. You could see through to the other side.
31. I remember watching the teacher writing numbers on the board one day, and we had to copy them down. I used to do the figure 8 by putting 2 noughts together. The teacher saw me doing it and hit me across the fingers with a ruler. It was so sore. The ruler came down so hard on me. I was crying.

32. I used to write with my left hand. They knocked that out of me by constantly hitting me over the hands with a ruler. I remember the nun saying, "This is evil". When I left the orphanage and went to an outside school, my first teacher there was the same. She hated anyone writing with their left hand. For some reason, it seemed to be a problem back then.
33. So, that's what I remember of school at the orphanage. I was always getting chastised for trying to write with my left hand. I was a good wee girl too. I would never have crossed the line. I always did what I was told. I was so scared of the nuns.

#### *Holidays/trips*

34. I have a memory of walking along a jetty with a tall man, who was wearing a long coat and hat. I don't know if it was a trip out. We walked to the end of the jetty and the water was up to the same height as the jetty. I remember thinking we were going to walk into the water. I was so scared. I can still remember how frightened I was. I was hiding behind the man. I don't remember any females being there. There were other people around, but I don't know who they were. I was always going about with my head down.
35. I have another memory of walking up the stairs on the outside of a house, and then going into the house. I don't know if it's connected to the memory of being on the jetty, or whether that was a different day altogether.
36. The only other time I remember being out was when we were taken to Lanark for Lanimer day. There's a picture of Lanimer day in my book. I remember seeing all the floats going past and waving the wee flag I'd been given.

#### *Birthdays and Christmas*

37. I think it was Christmas when I got a bottle of fizzy juice for the first time. I drank it through a straw and it went up my nose and gave me such a fright. I never drank it

again for years, because I was frightened of that sensation. I don't remember getting presents for Christmas or ever seeing a Christmas tree.

38. I don't think they celebrated birthdays. There were probably too many of us.

*Religious instruction*

39. The church was right next door to the orphanage. It was very small. I don't know if it was really just for the nuns. We used to go on Sundays. I was baptised in there. We said our prayers before and after meals. We also knelt down by our beds and said prayers at bedtime.

*Meeting prospective foster carers*

40. I remember the Mother Superior coming up to me one day. I assume she was the Mother Superior. She was so scary. I don't know how long I'd been in Smyllum when this happened. She took me to the dormitory and got me dressed in a blue, scratchy dress. I then followed her along parts of the orphanage I'd never seen before.
41. I remember looking all around me as I walked behind her. Everything seemed so big to me. The floors and walls were wooden. The floor was highly polished and so shiny. You could eat your dinner off it. We got to a set of double doors, and the Mother Superior suddenly stopped and gave me a lecture. She was very stern. She put her face right into mine. It was very frightening. She said, "Now, I don't want you to talk unless you're spoken to. Be on your best behaviour". I wouldn't have said "boo" to anybody at that point in time.
42. She opened the double doors, and I just stood there. I saw all these children lined up. They were all lovely wee girls in pretty dresses and ribbons. I don't know where these kids came from. They certainly weren't from Smyllum. I had never seen any of them before. All the kids in Smyllum wore a uniform and had bowl haircuts. These wee girls looked so out of place.



43. I was put right in the middle of all the wee girls, and we were all spoken to, more or less in the same way the Mother Superior had spoken to me earlier. There were other nuns in the room too.
44. After they got us all sorted, the doors opened and lots of men and women came in. They started inspecting all of us. They went through our hair looking for nits, looked in our ears and checked our teeth. It was like a cattle market. Every time I think back to it now, I remember how terrible it was. It was so humiliating. I just stood there. I didn't know what was going on. Nobody explained to me what was happening.
45. All the wee ones in the pretty dresses got paired off with people. And there was me, the typical wee orphan, left standing alone. Eventually, the people who later became my foster parents, Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] came up to me. I would later call them "Mum" and "Dad". My mum tapped me on the shoulder and said something like "Come on darling, you come with me". I'll never forget it.
46. I walked out into the hallway and the big front doors were open. I went out to the steps and saw a lady, Miss McKendrick, and a car with a chauffeur. It was a beautiful big limousine. It was Miss McKendrick's car. We all went to my mum and dad's house in the car. That was them taking me home for a trial weekend. I think it was a weekend. It was a few days anyway.
47. We were dropped off at the house, and I still didn't know what was going on. It would have been nice if it had been explained to me. I was about five, but I was bright for my age. I was very aware of things. I've always been very aware of people. I judge them right away. I know what kind of people they are as soon as I see them. I've always been like that. I think it's down to the fear that's in me. I was always frightened of my own shadow.
48. The first thing my mum gave me was a bag of sweeties, all to myself. I couldn't believe it. I remember asking if they were all for me. I only ever got one sweetie a

day. That brought me round a wee bit and made me comfortable. I remember asking where my dorm was and she took me upstairs to a wee plain room with a bed in it.

49. My mum went out early the next day and bought me a doll and a nice new dress. She realised how uncomfortable I was in the scratchy one. I played with the doll all weekend. She also gave me a little ring that'd been hers when she was a little girl. It was a rose gold signet ring. It fitted me perfectly. I wore it the whole weekend. I was so proud of it.
50. Everything was fine during the visit. I remember my dad talking and playing with me. I can't remember much more, other than being taken back to Smyllum in the chauffeur-driven car.
51. When I went back to the orphanage, the nuns took my nice dress off and put my uniform back on me. They took the ring and doll from me, both of which were never seen again.

#### *Visits/Inspections*

52. My brother, [REDACTED] was in Smyllum when I was there. That's where I met him for the first time. I don't know when he went in. It might have been the same time as me. I know that he wasn't in long. My father took him out and raised him.
53. I met [REDACTED] when we were all taken out one day to play in one of the fields. The field was part of the premises. There were trees around it and lots of other trees beyond it. It looked lovely. All the kids were running around playing, and [REDACTED] approached me. He must have recognised me. I didn't notice if there were other boys around at the time.
54. I didn't know [REDACTED] I remember he had a wee badge on the lapel of his jacket and wore short trousers and woolly socks. He told me he was my brother, and I said he wasn't. I asked him for his badge, but he wouldn't give it to me. There were no adults present. It was just me and him. It only lasted about 5 or 10 minutes.

55. I think the meeting was set up by the nuns. That was the one and only occasion we were taken out to that field. I never saw another boy in Smyllum the whole time I was there. I never saw [REDACTED] again until I met up with my mother and siblings when I was about sixteen.
56. I had one visit from my mother in Smyllum. That was another occasion when I was put into the blue, scratchy dress. The Mother Superior came and got me again. She took me down to a big hall full of folded up tables and chairs. I've since thought that maybe that was the food hall for the boys.
57. I saw a lady sitting by herself. She was wearing a black and white suit and a wee hat. She was very smartly dressed. She had two white buttons in her ears. I didn't know what earrings were, so that's what I thought they were. I can't remember everything we talked about, but I do remember her saying that I was getting big and that she was my mum. I said to her "Are you going to take me home to yours?". She gave me a tube of Smarties, which I ate straight away as I knew I wouldn't get to keep them.
58. I now wonder if that was her coming to see me because she knew that I'd soon be getting fostered. That was maybe her last chance to see me. That's what I do: I think about all these things now and surmise what was going on. I don't know for sure.
59. I don't know why nobody else ever visited me. Seemingly, my aunts knew that I was in there.
60. I was never visited by Miss McKendrick. I didn't go home with the EHL-EHM [REDACTED] until quite a while after I'd met them. I had no ongoing contact with them after the first meeting. I never saw them again until I went to live with them permanently.

**Abuse at Smyllum**

61. I got the impression that the nuns were frustrated at having to be there. I don't think they wanted to be looking after kids. We were always being told to be quiet. Children were to be seen and not heard. I always remember the nuns being so cold towards us and chastising us all the time.
62. You'd get smacked and put to bed if you spoke in the food hall. I remember kids being dragged out of there by the neck for speaking, or doing something else the nuns didn't like.
63. The nuns never showed any concern, warmth or love for us. They weren't nice or caring. There were no cuddles. In some ways, I think it taught me some lessons in how to be a good mother. I gave my kids what I never had. I loved my kids to bits and was always kissing and cuddling them. I respected them. If they weren't happy about something, I'd explain it to them. The nuns never explained things to me. They were just so cold.
64. We got smacked and sent to bed without dinner if we got caught playing with the toys in the play area. I think I did it only once or twice. Whether you got told off or smacked and sent to bed, depended on the mood they were in.
65. We were smacked and sent to bed without dinner, for one thing or another, on numerous occasions. We were playing in the play area one day and a kid found a potty and did a pee in it. We all found it funny. One of the nuns came in and went spare. We wouldn't say who had done it at first, and then someone must have said who it was. The wee girl got smacked and put to bed. I could hear her screaming in the dormitory. Everybody was frightened. We all got lectured and put to bed for not having spoken up.
66. We used to line up for our bath in the communal bathroom. I was first in the queue one day. I could see the steam rising from the bath and didn't want to get in. It was obvious, even to me as a kid, that it was too hot. I remember holding back and

saying something like, "No. Burny". The nun smacked me and told me to get in. I had to get in. I remember screaming with the pain. The water must have come up to the top of my legs. I had marks there for a long time. I don't know what happened after that. I don't know if I was left in there. I might have blacked out. I don't know whether I got taken to the hospital, but I do remember the pain. You'd expect an injury like that to be documented somewhere. I don't know if they did that.

67. There was an incident when I wet the bed. I remember the nun coming through to the play area, shouting my name out and then dragging me by the scruff of the neck into the dormitory. She took me to my bed and shouted, "Did you do that?". I was so scared. She then pushed my head down and rubbed my face into the wet sheet. I was then made to stand with the wet sheet over my head. I don't know how long I stood there with the urine-soaked sheet on me. I cried and cried. It was terrible. I don't remember ever wetting the bed again. I saw other kids being chastised in the same way.

### **Leaving Smyllum**

68. I remember the day I left Smyllum for good. I think I was about five or six. I was taken by a nun from the play area to get dressed in the blue, scratchy dress again. I remember my mum was upset that I didn't come out with the things she'd given me. She knew the blue dress irritated me and asked the nun why I was wearing it. She then asked about the doll, dress and ring she'd given me. They said they didn't know where they were. I was crying when I realised I wasn't getting these things. I had forgotten about them. I was then taken home in Miss McKendrick's chauffeur-driven car.

Foster care – EHL-EHM ██████████ South Lanarkshire

69. My mum and dad were known as EHL-EHM ██████████. I think my mum was in her early thirties when I went to live with them. My mum was born in 1923. My dad was born in 1913. I was in their care for around 14 years. They were both Protestants, as were all their relations, but I was brought up as a Catholic. My mum died in 1977, and my dad died 5 years later.
70. I was well aware they weren't my parents. They used to talk to me about things. I always remember my mum telling me about how disgusted she was at the "cattle market" day in Smyllum. That was when I realised what that day was all about. The purpose was for people to see whether they wanted to foster or adopt any of us.
71. My name got changed to AAS ██████████ I think I started school as AAS ██████████ and it was changed when I went to a new school. My mum and Miss McKendrick asked me if I would like to be known as AAS ██████████ I think I was about ten at the time. They said it would save a lot of questions. I was a kid, so I just went with it. I never reverted back to my own name.
72. The first house we lived in was a council house at ██████████ ██████████ It was on the outskirts of Larkhall, next to a village called ██████████ We were there for quite a few years. My dad worked as a gardener for a private house in Hamilton. My mum did general housework for the couple who owned the house. She only worked part-time. She didn't work as a rule after that.
73. My dad was always changing jobs, which meant that we moved house several times. We always lived in South Lanarkshire. I was about 9 or 10 when we moved from ██████████ We ended up living in a lot of tied houses because my dad took on jobs on farms.
74. We moved the first time to ██████████ in Hamilton. I can't put all the moves in date order. I remember my dad working in the pits at ██████████ We lived in the miners' houses. We also lived on farms outside Biggar and ██████████

75. The last two houses we lived in were in Blantyre. We lived as lodgers in a house on [REDACTED] Blantyre. It was an old Victorian house at the end of the avenue, next to a wall where the train station was. It was owned by a Mrs [REDACTED] and her son, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was a bookmaker. I think he was the actual owner. Mrs [REDACTED] dealt with the lodgers and made meals for them. Mrs [REDACTED] had her own private quarters in the house.
76. The [REDACTED] had another house on the avenue. All the lodgers were families in that house. That wasn't the case in our house. There were around four single men sharing a room in the bedroom above us.
77. We only had one small room in the house when we first moved to the [REDACTED] It was so small, you couldn't swing a cat in it. The three of us slept in there. There was one bed with a mattress underneath it. As time went on, we got a bigger room on the ground floor. It was quite big. We had a cooker in the room. My mum had a bed at the bay window. The couch came down into a bed and I slept there with my dad. I was never allowed to go near the fire. I was always freezing.
78. We moved from the [REDACTED] house into a house with another lodger called [REDACTED] He was a lovely wee man. He'd been lodging at the [REDACTED] and then got a council house at [REDACTED] Blantyre. We moved in with him and took over some of the rooms in the house. I lived there until I got married.
79. I don't understand why the welfare office put up with all the moves or the places we were sometimes living in. You'd think they would have taken me off them.
80. My dad was a drinker. I'd say that alcohol was a problem for him. He suffered from ulcers and was always in agony on a Sunday morning after drinking. I witnessed domestic violence between my mum and dad when he came home drunk.
81. I didn't get love and affection from my mum and dad. That's not how it was back in those days. It wasn't like nowadays when kids get hugs and read stories. I loved my

dad. He hit me, but I loved him. I didn't know any better. My mum was always on my back. It wasn't that way in the beginning. I was there a wee while before it started.

82. My mum and dad didn't provide for me out of their own pocket. They got good money - £9 and 10 shillings - to look after me, but they were always short of money.
83. I was always sent to the welfare office in Hamilton, regardless of how far away we lived, to ask for stuff like socks, underwear, shoes, school uniform – anything I needed. I think they couldn't face going in themselves in case they got into trouble. The office in Hamilton had a big stockroom full of clothes and other things. They didn't always give you stuff from the stockroom. You got a chitty to take to a shop in Hamilton for things like shoes.
84. My dad used to pawn some of the stuff. He'd say "I'm away to my uncle's in Hamilton". That was his nickname for the pawn shop. I got to keep the shoes and school clothes because I needed those, but he'd pawn the other things.
85. I always remember being sent for a new coat for chapel for the first Sunday in May. You had to wear something on your head in chapel in those days, so I got a lovely green coat and a hat to match. Miss McKendrick also gave me a wee Mickey Mouse watch as a present. My dad pawned the watch and the clothes to get money for drinking.
86. They took in another foster child called [REDACTED] I'm not sure when he came to live with us. My dad used to get him to do jobs on the farm for him. I've got a letter which was sent from Miss McKendrick to my mum and dad in 1961. It was to do with the ten-year census. It states that my mum and dad were foster carers for two "boarded out" children, so [REDACTED] was with us then. I remember he was living with us when Prince Andrew was born.



87. [REDACTED] date of birth is shown on the letter as [REDACTED] 1944. He was from Hamilton. His foster care placement was arranged by Miss McKendrick. Her job title on the letter is shown as "children's officer" and her first name appears to be Isa.
88. I have another letter which shows that the EHL-EHM [REDACTED] tried to adopt me. It's dated 22 May 1958. It's got the address of a firm of solicitors on it. I came across the letter when my mum and dad died. My mother, and her husband at the time, refused to allow me to be adopted. My mother had remarried and had had other kids, yet she refused to allow me the opportunity to be adopted. I don't know why she did that. Obviously, there were no prospects of her ever taking me on.

#### Routine at EHL-EHM [REDACTED]

89. I never slept in a bed on my own. My mum was really bad with rheumatoid arthritis, so she slept in a bed on her own. I was always making up poultices to put on her hands and knees. She never complained.
90. I had to sleep with my dad. I didn't start sleeping with my mum until we moved to wee [REDACTED]'s council house in Blantyre. I used to stay overnight sometimes with Mrs [REDACTED] when we lived in her house. She was always nice to me. I slept in her bed with her. I hated it. I never had a bed to myself, ever.
91. I got up in the mornings, washed myself, put on the clothes I had on the day before, and then had breakfast.

#### *Hygiene*

92. When bringing up kids, you'd expect there to be a routine for getting washed and brushing your teeth, but I don't remember anything like that.
93. I got a bath occasionally. It was always cold, as they'd never turn the immersion heater on. I remember being frightened at first to have a bath, because of what had

happened in Smyllum. I always remember asking for soap and being told that there was only enough for my dad. It was the same with other things, like biscuits. I'd be told there was only enough for my dad's piece. I used to think they'd keep daylight off me if they could.

94. There was a girl in my class, when I was in Room 3 at [REDACTED] who came from a big family and was always off school. She came back one time wearing a wee hat. Her hair had been shaved off because she had beasties in it. She ended up being my best pal. I think we hit it off because we were kind of downtrodden kids.
95. I was off secondary school one time for about 3 or 4 weeks because I had nits. I always had them. It was a form of neglect. I know that now. I was really bad with them this time. The school nit nurse had been and I got sent home. I was told in front of the whole class. It was so embarrassing.
96. I think we were living in Blantyre at the time. I remember coming home and my mum spreading a newspaper out on the table. My mum and I had fine bone combs and both combed our hair over the newspaper. She had as many as I had. The paper was covered. It was disgusting. I got my hair cut really short. My mum used to cut it. I never went to the hairdressers. I think they were frightened to take me.
97. I remember another really embarrassing incident at school. The teacher was talking to us about personal hygiene. She was actually our cookery teacher. She said to me in front of the whole class, "Do you ever wash your neck?". I remember going really red. I was so embarrassed. I used to blush all the time. I burst out crying and ran out of the class. I ran to the toilets and scrubbed my neck with paper towels and carbolic soap. I was going to go back to the class, but I just couldn't face it. A lot of hurtful things like that happened to me in school.

### *Food*

98. My mum and dad loved their porridge. I hated it. They'd try to bribe me with a thrupence to eat it. I did eat it and got the money one day, but I was as sick as a

dog. I lived on toast. My mum did the cooking. We got plain food like mince and potatoes, nothing special.

### *Chores and washing*

99. I had chores to do when I was older. I loved housework. My mum bought a Hoover from a door-to-door salesman, but I was never allowed to use it in case I broke it. I just used the brush. I'd brush the carpets, dust and clean. I think I was asked to do it and just got on with it. It gave me something to do. I didn't get pocket money for doing chores. You didn't get pocket money in those days. I never got any treats. My dad bought me a bike once, but it was too big for me. I didn't have it for long. My dad took it to work. It was really for him.
100. I washed my own clothes when I got a bit older. I don't remember my mum ever washing my clothes for me. Mrs [REDACTED] had a kind of outhouse at the back of the house with a big washing tub. I saw my mum in there washing my dad's things sometimes, but she never washed mine.
101. I used to wash my school shirt with the soap left by the lodgers in the [REDACTED] house. I washed it in cold water in the bath. The embarrassing experience at school made me determined it wouldn't happen again. I'd sometimes forget to wash my ankle socks at night, so I'd run upstairs in the morning and wash them in cold water. I'd put them on wet and they'd be dry by the time I got to school. I'm sure I started doing that when I was still at primary school.
102. There were never any rules laid down. My mum and dad's way of disciplining me was to hit me.

### *Religion*

103. Religion wasn't a big feature in my life. I always went to Catholic schools, except when we lived in Biggar. I got religious instruction at school. I sometimes went to

church outwith school, because I had a really strict teacher at one point who'd give you the belt if you didn't go.

### *Leisure time*

104. I wasn't allowed out to play when I first went to live with them. I think I wore my mum down. I got the kids in the street to come to the door for me. I was then allowed out to play in the street. I used to play on my own a lot when I lived on the farms. I was out in the country, so there were no kids about. I was always a loner.
105. I did make friends when we moved to Blantyre. They were all Protestants and I wasn't supposed to play with them. The school used to say that to us. I used to play in the woods at the back of the house. The River Clyde was down there. We used to go on wee adventures in the school holidays and have picnics down in the woods.
106. I used to ask everybody in the [REDACTED] house if they wanted anything from the shops. They'd give me thrupence for going and I'd buy the Bunty and Judy comics. I saved up sometimes and bought myself new ankle socks.

### *School*

107. I had to move school nearly every time we moved house. I must have gone to about ten different schools. I always went to school. I think that's because I was under the care of the welfare officer.
108. I was like a ragamuffin going to school. I fitted in a wee bit better once I started to get uniforms from Miss McKendrick.
109. I went to [REDACTED] Primary School in Larkhall when I came out of Smyllum. I had my First Holy Communion and Confirmation in the wee chapel next to it. They still had records for me when I went back to visit. I still went to [REDACTED] when we moved to [REDACTED] in Hamilton. I had to walk three miles on the country roads to get there.

110. Miss <sup>EHN</sup> was my teacher in Room 1 at [REDACTED]. She was the spitting image of Queen Elizabeth I, with her red hair and lipstick. She was an old witch. If you got something wrong or were naughty, she took your pants down and put you over her knee and smacked you. It seemed like she did it for any reason at all. It was so degrading.
111. She hit me really hard over the head with a ruler one time. I told my mum, and she took a bus to Larkhall the next day and gave her a bit of a battering in the playground.
112. I can't remember the names of all the primary schools I went to. I was in a Protestant school when I lived in Biggar, but they put aside time for me to get religious instruction. I ended up at St Joseph's Primary School in Blantyre and went from there to St Joseph's Secondary School.
113. I was very slow in class. I used to sit and daydream. I never got any encouragement from my mum and dad to do well at school. I was always shy at school. I never had any friends and used to stand about on my own. The kids would be running about playing tig, and I'd try to join in, but they wouldn't let me. I think kids sense when something is wrong, especially if you're not clean.
114. My general feeling at school was that I felt left out. When I think back to it, it would have been obvious to the staff that I was being neglected, but they had a go at me anyway. I couldn't help how I was.

*Birthdays and Christmas*

115. Christmas was celebrated, but there was never a big fuss. I used to make decorations. I remember getting a school bag wrapped in silver paper. I was so disappointed as everybody else had a satchel and I got a case. I also got a post office set and wee desk and chair, which kept breaking because I was too heavy.

116. I don't remember much about birthdays. I possibly did get something, but I don't remember.

*Visits/inspections*

117. Miss McKendrick came out to see me on a monthly basis throughout my time in foster care. She visited every place we lived in. They'd tidy the place up and tidy me up when they knew she was coming.
118. She visited us when we lived in the [REDACTED] house. My mum lied to her and told her that the small room we were in when we first moved there was my bedroom.
119. Miss McKendrick would ask me how I was doing and how school was – it was just a formality. She never spoke to me on my own. My mum was always there. My dad wasn't. I think he was always working when she visited. I spent most of the time in the kitchen eating biscuits with the chauffeur, John. He was a lovely man. I was sent through to the kitchen to give them time to talk.
120. I remember making shortbread for Miss McKendrick one time. I think she thought everything was rosy in the garden.
121. I don't think I would have told her how things were had she spoken to me on my own. I think I would've been too scared of what the consequences might be.

*Healthcare*

122. My mum and dad would patch me up if I got injured when they hit me. I've got a mark on my head from when my dad hit me. I didn't see a doctor for that.
123. My mum didn't buy me toothpaste. My mum and dad had false teeth, so they didn't need it. I used to clean my teeth with soap. It didn't bother me. I just spat it out, just as you do with toothpaste. My teeth did suffer for it.

124. St Joseph's in Blantyre had a wee dental surgery on the school premises. I was never out of there. They gave me toothbrushes and toothpaste. They gave me a gold filling once, which kept falling out. My teeth rotted because of that, and possibly also because they hadn't been cleaned properly.
125. Because I was under welfare, all my doctor appointments were privately funded. I used to get a full medical examination once a year. The various doctors would report back their findings to the welfare office. Most of the doctors found nits and lice, but they never reported it. I remember the doctors saying that they wouldn't include it in the report, and my mum saying that she'd get it sorted.
126. I only remember one doctor doing anything about it. I think we were living on a farm, just outside Motherwell at the time. The doctor was very stern looking. He had found nits and lice and was very abrupt with my mum. He reported it. I don't know what became of that report. The welfare office must have known about it.

#### **Abuse in foster care**

127. My dad was always coming home drunk. I remember hearing my mum and him arguing about money one night. I woke up the next morning and saw all the paintwork covered in blood. He had obviously given my mum a bit of a beating. That happened not long after I went to live with them. I don't know what age I was. We were still in [REDACTED] That's when he started hitting me as well.
128. I was hit throughout my time with them. My dad had hands like leather. He used his hands mainly. He used a belt a few times when he was drunk.
129. My mum hit me too, but I think it would have been out of sheer frustration with my dad. She had a hard life with my dad. She put up with it because she loved him so much.

130. I was always getting smacked for something. I got a beating one day when I was playing with a pencil and swore when it fell. I didn't know what I had done wrong. I'd obviously been hearing that language.
131. I remember waking up screaming one night when I was about eight. I felt a hot pain. My dad was raping me. My mum came running through to the bedroom, and he told her that I was just having a bad dream. He warned me not to say anything. It was never spoken about again.
132. He raped me again when I was about 13 or 14. We were living in the [REDACTED] house in Blantyre. I was sleeping with my dad on the couch. I was still very innocent then, but I knew what he was doing wasn't right. I remember telling him to get off me and leave me alone. My mum was in her bed at the bay window. She didn't even get up that time. I'm almost certain she knew what was happening.
133. I had some bad experiences with some of the men who lived in the [REDACTED] house. It was as if they all knew I was vulnerable.
134. Mrs [REDACTED]'s other son was called [REDACTED]<sup>EHP</sup>. He used to take epileptic fits. He worked with [REDACTED]. My mum and dad were down at the village pub with Mrs [REDACTED] one night. I went out for some sweets to watch TV and saw [REDACTED]<sup>EHP</sup> walking up behind me. There was something about him that scared me. I got home and locked the room door. He came into the house behind me, knocked on the room door and then pushed it open. He pushed me down onto the floor and tried to have his way with me. He stopped because I screamed so much. He said he'd kill me if I told my mum and dad. I think I was about 13 or 14. It's hard to be exact about what age I was when things happened. I was at secondary school. [REDACTED]<sup>EHP</sup> was in his twenties.
135. A man named [REDACTED]<sup>EHQ</sup> was another lodger in the [REDACTED] house. He seemed a nice man. He was always well-dressed and smelt of Old Spice aftershave. He used Cussons Imperial Leather soap. He was always so clean and nice, and I trusted him.



136. He used to come downstairs and speak to my mum and dad. He was quite an intelligent man. He had a crystal radio set. He was a big fan and got me interested in it. He could get Radio Caroline and Radio Luxembourg. He used to show me cards he'd got from people all over the world. I think he was trying to win my trust.
137. I knocked on his door one day to see if he wanted anything at the shops. He told me to come in, and then tried it on with me. I screamed and ran out the door.
138. I went into Mrs [REDACTED]'s living area one day. [REDACTED] was there with some of his pals. He didn't live in the room with us. He shared the bedroom upstairs with the other single men. He was sprawled out on the couch. I sat down on the edge of the couch, trying to hang out with them. He grabbed me in front of all his pals and tried to get me to lie on top of him. I ran away again. He warned me not to tell my mum.
139. I never did tell my mum and dad about any of these men. I was always scared. [REDACTED] didn't come with us when we moved out of the [REDACTED] house. The next time I heard about him, he was in Barlinnie. He was a bad one. My mum, dad and I went to visit him once in prison.
140. The same sort of thing happened with my dad's brother, <sup>EHS</sup>[REDACTED]. He was great when I was a kid. He came to visit one night when we lived in wee [REDACTED]'s house in Blantyre. I was about 15 or 16 and was getting ready to go out to the dancing. He came into my room and chased me round the bedroom. I screamed and he left. That always seemed to work.
141. My mum's dad used to visit us at the [REDACTED] house. His surname was <sup>EHT</sup>[REDACTED]. I don't remember his first name. He used to come when we were living in that wee room. He always expected to stay overnight. He was a dirty old man as well. My mum, dad and I would be in the bed and he'd sleep on the mattress. He was always trying to touch me.

### **Making contact with my family**

142. I was friendly with a girl called [REDACTED]. She had been at school with me and we started working in the same place in Blantyre. I was in stock control. She was a picker. We used to go to the dancing together. I loved going to [REDACTED]'s house. Her mother was a widow. She was a very educated woman. There was a good family atmosphere. I was treated like one of the bunch.
143. I stayed with [REDACTED] one night and told her about the [REDACTED] EHL-EHM not being my real parents. I was about sixteen at the time. I told her that my mother was called [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and that she lived in Musselburgh and was married to a man whose surname was [REDACTED]. The next day, [REDACTED]'s mother told me that she'd overheard what I'd said and asked me if I'd mind repeating it to her.
144. She told me that she thought she knew my family, who were also connected to her own family. She said she thought a woman called [REDACTED] was my aunt, and that she would talk to her at the bingo that night. She then came back and told me that [REDACTED] was my aunt, and that she'd made arrangements for me to go to [REDACTED]'s house the next day with [REDACTED]'s sister, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]'s house was not even five minutes from Blantyre on a bus. Her house was very close to Miss McKendrick's office.
145. I remember the bus journey to my aunt's. She actually got on the bus with her wee girls and sat opposite me and [REDACTED]. I'd never met them before, but I just knew they were related to me. They all had really bright blue eyes, like mine. They got off the bus and I made [REDACTED] hold back. I wanted a smoke before we went in. My mum and dad had encouraged me to start smoking when I was about 14 or 15.
146. My Aunt [REDACTED] told me that I had a granny and she lived just up the road in [REDACTED] Hamilton. She said she hadn't yet told her about me, but she was going to take me up in a taxi later that day. I remember her wee girls saying, "Our granny's going to be so excited".

147. We went up to [REDACTED] to see my granny. The old grandpa was sitting in a corner, puffing away on his pipe, taking everything in. My Aunt [REDACTED] asked my granny if she knew who [REDACTED] and I were. My granny was giving all these names, trying to guess who I was. The old wise grandpa then said, "I think I know who that is. That's our [REDACTED]'s lassie". My granny and Aunt [REDACTED] were shocked. Everybody started crying, including me.
148. My gran was someone else who verified that I went into the home when I was two. She got out a wee picture of me sitting on her knee when I was a baby. I must have been about 6 or 7 months. She told me I should never have been put into a home. She said that she would've loved to look after me, but she was getting too old to look after kids.
149. She also told me that both of my aunts had wanted me. She said that my Aunt [REDACTED] was a bit cleverer and more educated than my mother, and my mother didn't like her because of that. That was why I never went to my Aunt [REDACTED]
150. I met my Aunt [REDACTED] and her daughter, [REDACTED] when my gran died. My Aunt [REDACTED] told me how she really wanted to have me. She told me that she came up to Scotland on numerous occasions and she remembered me as a wee girl. She said to me, "You were a lovely wee baby. You never cried". She told me she used to bring me up dresses that [REDACTED] had outgrown, and I'd prance about in them. It was nice to hear all those stories. I never ever told any of my family my story. I think I was still too shy.
151. I started having contact with my family after I met them. They gave me my mother's address in Musselburgh. I wrote to her and got a letter back from my half-sister, [REDACTED] inviting me through to Musselburgh for a weekend.
152. I went to Musselburgh with my Aunt [REDACTED]'s oldest daughter, [REDACTED] I met my mum and three half-sisters, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My mother's house was very sparsely furnished. There were no carpets on any of the floors. She lived there with

her husband and six kids. He had taken the boys to Burnbank for the weekend. He obviously didn't want to meet me, which was fine with me.

153. My mother didn't speak much. The girls did most of the talking. I would describe her as very withdrawn and downtrodden. She told me wee bits and pieces about how she was married to my father for a while and then got divorced. She also told me the story about bumping into him on a Christmas night out.
154. My brother, [REDACTED] and his wife also came to visit that weekend. We didn't speak much. He said he remembered meeting me in Smyllum. I saw [REDACTED] again when my gran died. He was a bit more talkative then.
155. I didn't maintain a relationship with my mother on a regular basis, but I did come into contact with her from time to time over the years.
156. I kept in touch with my brother on the phone. I used to invite him through to mine but there were always excuses. I had a lot of conversations with him on the phone. It was him who told me that my father didn't recognise me as his. He asked me if I would like to meet him, and I said that I'd love to see him from afar before I actually met him. I just wanted to see what he was like.
157. I don't know if [REDACTED] took offence at that, or whether he was telling the truth, but that's when he said, "My father said you weren't his anyway". I was shocked. That was the first time I'd ever heard that he didn't acknowledge me as his.

### **Leaving foster care**

158. I lived with the [REDACTED] until I was 19, but I stopped being under the care of the welfare office when I turned 16.
159. I was asked to go into the office in Hamilton to see Miss McKendrick before she signed me off. That was a bit of an eye-opener. She said it'd been lovely to see me

blossom into a young woman and asked me if I'd been happy with Mr and Mrs EHL-EHM I said, "Yeah". I couldn't bring myself to bring any of this stuff out. She then told me that she was supposed to send me off with some money in a wee bank book, but there was nothing in mine because all my allowances had been used up each year. They must have had a yearly budget for me.

160. I don't think she was putting my mum and dad down. She asked me if they ever bought me anything. I reminded her that I always came to her if I needed anything. She then said, from what she saw, they never bought me anything.
161. I was dying to tell her that I never got to keep half the stuff she gave me because my dad pawned it. She then told me that she was going to put £10 in the bank book for me. She gave me that out of her own pocket. It was a lot of money in those days. That was the end of my involvement with Miss McKendrick.

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

162. I lived with my mum and dad until I was nineteen. I had left school at fifteen and just worked away in my job. I got £3 and 14 shillings in wages and they took £3 for digs money. I had to buy clothes and toiletries with what I had left. I was good at my job and was appreciated. I used to get overtime on a Saturday. My mum and dad asked me for extra money when I got a rise or did overtime, but I got wise to that and stopped telling them about any extra money.
163. Life was still the same living with them, but I was a bit older and wiser. I used to stay over at my pal's house quite often.
164. I married my husband, [REDACTED] just to get out of the house. It was an escape route. We lived in Glasgow at first and then moved to East Kilbride. We have two daughters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and seven grandchildren.

165. My mum and dad used to visit us. I was their only child. They came up on a regular basis to visit the kids. They were so good to the kids. It became like a kind of a competition between them and my parents-in-law to see who could give the kids the most presents. I'm not bitter about it. It was just so different to how I was treated.
166. I looked after my mum and dad as they got older and became ill. I used to do things like decorate and lay carpets for them. I was a good daughter.
167. I was married for 21 years. In those days, you made your bed and had to lie in it. [REDACTED] was very jealous. I was beginning to find my voice and he was jealous of that. We had arguments and fights. He'd hit me and I'd hit him back.
168. I left [REDACTED] in 1990 and later got divorced. I met a new partner and was with him until he died about six years ago. We were engaged to get married. He was the love of my life.
169. My dad died five years after my mum. I was on holiday at the time. A lot of relatives came out of the woodwork. They didn't even try to contact me. My daughter, who was only 7 or 8, answered the phone when we got back from holiday and was told to pass on the message that her papa had died. They'd already emptied my dad's house and handed in the keys. There were things in that house that I'd given my mum and dad over the years, and also paperwork such as letters from people when my dad was in the war. They burnt those in a fire.
170. The night before the funeral, an uncle asked me if I'd ever legally been adopted, and I told him I hadn't. I should have told him I had been. I was treated like muck the next day at the funeral. It was as if I had never been part of my mum and dad's lives. It was so hurtful.
171. I was sad when my mum and dad died. Any kid who's been through what I have will say the same: no matter what they did to you, they were your mum and dad. I was brought up with them as my mum and dad, and I did care for them. It was bad that I was treated like that at the end of their lives.

**Reporting abuse**

172. I've never made any reports to the police or any other authority.
173. It's taken me a long time to speak about my experiences. I've started to speak about it a bit more now. My friend, [REDACTED] has been helping me a lot. I've also spoken to another friend, [REDACTED] I've told my daughters some of it. I haven't given them the full details.
174. My husband was the first person I told. I didn't give him the full details. I think [REDACTED] is the only person I've told everything to. If you're a private person, you don't want everybody to know your business. Also, you blame yourself for being treated like that. You think you must have been bad, even though I know that I wasn't a bad person.
175. I think the Inquiry was the impetus I needed to start speaking about my own experiences. Other people were coming forward and it's a little bit easier knowing you're part of a group, that others have had similar experiences.
176. I've spoken to some people who are involved with the INCAS group, but I've not had any specific help or support from them.

**Impact**

177. My overall memory of Smyllum is that I was always frightened. I was frightened to speak. I wasn't good at conversations for a long time. I was just so shy, so frightened of doing wrong, even when I came out of there. I was so cowed. I think they knocked any confidence I had out of me. I never felt worthy. I don't think I've fully recovered from that. I think that feeling is still in me.
178. My experiences in Smyllum definitely affected me in my later years. I always remember thinking about it even after I left. I used to sit in school and think about

things that had happened. I couldn't concentrate on my lessons for thinking about things. It was just constantly there. It's followed me for a long, long time. I think the fact I was so afraid all the time explains my demeanour nowadays. I did eventually grow up and start speaking up for myself, but it took a long time to do that.

179. I think all the school moves when I was in foster care affected my education. That's one of my biggest regrets. I was always behind in class. I did do a bit better at the latter end of my secondary schooling, but probably not enough. I left school at fifteen and didn't go on to further education. I think I didn't have the tools to do it then.
180. I always felt that I wasn't intelligent and felt that I had to prove myself. I did that by working hard and doing well for my family. As my girls got older, I went out to work and did really well in the jobs I went into. I held management positions in retail and won performance awards from various employers, but I still feel that I didn't reach my full potential.
181. Also, it's not until you get older that you realise just how you were treated by the staff at school. I felt that the schools always had it in for me, because I was poor and maybe didn't look good. I always felt inferior. I was always frightened of teachers and doctors - anybody in authority, really. I never felt worthy. That was the case up until maybe only a few years ago.
182. I didn't dwell on my past too much when my kids were wee. As you get older, you think back and want answers as to how this was allowed to happen. I keep thinking back to my experiences in care and can't understand how somebody could be treated like that. I think about it a lot.
183. I'm really close to my grandkids. I look at them and think about what I went through as a child. I can't bear the thought of them ever being treated like that. My youngest granddaughter is four. I'd hate for anybody to touch her or chastise her, yet the people who were supposed to look after me had the right to do that to me.



184. I took my four year old granddaughter to see Santa and she didn't like him. You can see a change in her, even at that young age, when she doesn't like or trust somebody. I had that fear and mistrust all the time.
185. I've always been a very nervous person. I've tried to hide it. Friends would describe me as hyper. I've always got to be on the go. I've been on antidepressants for years. I sometimes feel that I'm lucky to have turned out the way I am. I know of kids who suffered more at the hands of nuns than me and didn't turn out to be good. They went down the wrong road. I always wanted to be better, always be good and do well, which I did in my later years.

### **Records**

186. It never occurred to me that it might be possible to get a copy of my records from South Lanarkshire Council. I intend to make enquiries now. Now that I'm talking about my life, I have even more questions I want answered.

### **Lessons learned**

187. Lessons must be learned so that no child goes through anything like that again. People need to be properly trained to work in children's homes. I don't suppose there was any such training available for the nuns in those days. They didn't even want to be there anyway. Children need to be loved and cared for by people who want to do the job.
188. I feel so let down by the welfare department. They saw the places I lived in and the number of schools I went to. They should have sussed my foster dad out a bit better. There needs to be a lot more scrutiny. I think they're much more strict when doing adoptions and fostering now. I hope the level of scrutiny is enough.

189. 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.

AAS  


Signed.....

Dated..... 21/8/2017.....