

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

FVZ

Support person present: No

1. My name is FVZ I was previously known as FVZ My date of birth is the 1973. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Irvine, my mother's name was and my father was I stayed at first with my father's parents on a farm in Cheshire, although it may have been Beverley. I then moved at the age of three to Springburn in Glasgow to live with my nanna. My nanna's partner died of cancer, my nanna hit the drink and my mother turned up and took me to live with her in a tower block in Sighthill in Glasgow with her partner I have a sister who is six years younger than me, and a brother who is eight years younger than me, they are both deceased.
3. After only three weeks was telling me to call him dad. There was lots of arguing between my mum and dad. My mum was an alcoholic but I didn't realise this until I was older and all dad thought about was working at the shipyard. He was also an alcoholic. I attended at Sighthill Primary school at the time.
4. At the age of six I was sent to live with two of my mum's friends in Dewsbury, they were a lovely couple and I was there for six months and I attended school whilst I was there.

5. When I eventually returned home my mum had given birth to my sister. Dad had been made redundant from the shipyard and we moved to Cumbernauld.
6. Mum was totally isolated and miserable in Cumbernauld as she didn't know anyone and dad was always working. My mum again turned to drink.
7. Dad was a workaholic and he decided that we should be taken into care, and my sister and I went into the care of a lady in [REDACTED] in Cumbernauld.

Foster Care in [REDACTED]

8. The lady whose name I cannot recall was lovely and I can remember thinking that I never wanted to go home. The lady had a wee boy. The lady introduced me to "toast toppers" which were absolutely beautiful and hot orange juice. The lady was a calm woman and I felt much loved. I remember going through the school enrolment process for [REDACTED] Primary School but by the time I was ready to attend I was sent back home. On arriving home in 1981 my brother had been born and we had moved to a huge house in Cumbernauld.
9. Whilst we were in the house at Cumbernauld there was an incident with my nanna's new boyfriend [REDACTED] [REDACTED] used to steal plants for his garden. [REDACTED] took me into the bushes on a roundabout in Rutherglen and he was digging up this fir tree and he touched me sexually. The police turned up and confronted [REDACTED] as to what he was doing to me, and he told the police that he was digging up plants and being only a little girl confirmed that he was digging up the tree. The police turned up at [REDACTED]'s house and asked him what he was doing. I remember mum quizzing me around the kitchen table about him touching me, and I again said that we were digging up plants. I don't remember going round to his house again. I do remember people coming in and asking me questions, but I didn't know at the time if they were social workers.
10. Mum again hit the drink and she had numerous suicide attempts and she became quite ill. We were sent to a new foster home.

Foster Home in Cumbernauld

11. We were at the foster parent's home for a couple of weeks and their daughter, who was a punk, hated me because she had to give up her bedroom. They also had a foster son who they were going through the process of adopting and he became a really good pal. I was only there for weeks, it wasn't long term.
12. Eventually we returned home and we ended up living in a room and kitchen in Dennistoun where my siblings and I slept in a bed in the kitchen and mum and dad slept in a bed in the living room. Dad just went to work. My mum would regularly say that the place was cursed and we would regularly move home.
13. We moved back to Glasgow and I attended at Haghill Primary school, and my brother and sister attended nursery. Life at home was chaotic as my mum had no support. I remember that my mum punched a glass panel in the kitchen and injured herself. Dad told me to ring our social worker Eric Walker. I remember always going to the office at Cow Point road to see him. I phoned Eric Walker and told him my mum had injured herself and that Dad was going to work. They came and we were taken away and I have a fleeting memory of a children's panel. I ended up at the age of eight being taken to Eglinton Children's Home and my brother and sister went into foster care at Largs.
14. Life was chaotic, my mum did the best she could and she had a crap upbringing herself. Dad didn't know how to be a dad, he had grown up in the West of Scotland and the men just went to work.

Eglinton Children's Home, Clevedon Gardens, Glasgow

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

21.

22.

23.

24.

25.

26.

27.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Eglinton

28. I used to have a Social Worker called Margery King who drove a Citroen CS with a gear stick like an umbrella handle, I was fascinated by it. I remember that Margery came and picked me up from Eglinton and I was sat in the front of the car and my sister and brother were in the back. We returned home which was now in [REDACTED], Dennistoun and I could see that my mum wasn't pleased to have us back. My mum sent me into a rage by immediately taking out my new clothes from my bag and she took them back to M&S. I didn't want to be back home.
29. I went back to school and we eventually got a bigger council house in Dennistoun.
30. Things became very bad at home and there was a lot of involvement with social services. Dorothy Hanley was the social worker involved with us and she took us to nice places like the Spaghetti Factory restaurant in Gibson Street. Whilst I was in the company of Dorothy I told her how much I was doing in the house and she must have spoken to my mum about it. On returning home from school a couple of weeks later I was confronted by my mum over what I had been saying to social workers, she went ballistic.
31. At one point I went to stay in Easterhouse with my mum's friend. Mum was drinking heavily and I had taken over the caring of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and I was avoiding school and the authorities.
32. My mum was eventually sectioned because of her mental health and she was placed into Duke Street Hospital. Dorothy Hanley got involved and she took [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I back to Eglinton in her car. I was very calm and relaxed at the prospect of going back as I believed that it was a nice place from my previous experience. I was nearly nine years old.

33.

34.

35.

36.

37.

38.

39.

40.

41.

42.

43.

44.

45.

46.

47.

48.

49.

50.

51.

52.

53.

54.

55.

56.

57.

58.

59.

60.

61.

62.

63.

64.

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

65.

66.

67.

68.

69.

70.

71.

72.

73.

74.

75.

76.

77.

78.

79.

80.

81.

82.

83.

84.

85.

86.

87.

88.

89.

90.

91.

92.

93. The social work arranged for us to be in a bigger home because of where we were all sleeping. Just before we moved, I remember that mum was drunk and dad said ring the social. I rang them and we were moved to a foster home in Milngavie. I think we went to Milngavie in May as I remember having a conversation with the social worker about it being too soon to start school because of the summer holidays. The home was run by FWA-FWB who were aged in their late thirties early forty's.

FWA-FWB Milngavie

94. FWA-FWB had a three bedroom house. She had a daughter called and two sons and a child that she was long term fostering called She also child minded two kids during the day, one was a boy called and there was a girl and us three. and were in the bedroom with their middle son they had pull down beds in the attic. The foster daughter was in a bedroom on her own. The other son had his own room. Me and shared a room.
95. FWB was a bully and he would belittle in front of us. He worked as a chef and stole large bags of pasta which we lived off. The FWA-FWB were a money making machine. I can remember not attending school and being sat in their garden all day whilst FWA child minded. FWB idolized his daughter but he physically bullied FWB wouldn't allow us to sit in the living room when he was home from work. He would just sit smoking a cigar.
96. I can recall being there for the whole of the summer because they took us on holiday to Oban with them.
97. I can remember that and started to wet the bed and the FWA-FWB started smacking them. I recall challenging FWA about the smacking and she replied that my dad had given permission for them to do it. I also remember seeing a piece of paper which showed that the FWA-FWB were getting £300 a week for our care. The older daughter didn't want us there and she was nasty. I can understand why she was being nasty because they weren't getting any of the attention.

98. I remember complaining to our social worker Dorothy Hanley about our treatment and that I didn't want to be there. Dorothy responded by saying that both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were happy to stay. I said that I didn't want to leave them and Dorothy said that there were very few foster parents who would take three children. Dorothy said that we wouldn't be with the FWA-FWB [REDACTED] for long and I should just tough it out.

Leaving Milngavie

99. I don't remember what my mum was doing but I do know that her and my dad had got back together again. Dad was coming to visit on a Saturday and we returned to live in the big house in Dennistoun. I had my own bedroom which was amazing.
100. At the age of thirteen I recall attending a big children's panel meeting. [REDACTED] wore her school uniform. I had no further social worker involvement and I was effectively caring for my brother and sister full time.

Life after being in care

101. Mum continued to be very troubled. She was a very convincing and manipulative woman. Mum would convince us that she was a great mum and she would convince herself, and we had a blind love for her.
102. I became the full time carer of my brother and sister and I avoided school. My mum separated from Dad and we moved house to Cranhill. Mum hated it and fell out with the neighbours. I was at secondary school in the West End of Glasgow, no matter where we moved I would stay at the same school because I wanted to be with my friends I'd made at Eglinton. We then moved to Springburn and then to Sighthill and mum tried to kill herself. I took time off school to look after the kids until mum was well. We moved back to Springburn to be back with my dad and mum tried to kill herself again. Mum and dad's relationship was on and off.

103. I got thrown out of home and lived with friends, but Dad came and got me and told me to look after my brother and sister.
104. Mum and dad separated again and she was now living in a homeless flat and she tried to marry me off to a Muslim doctor. Mum had a massive stroke and was in hospital and I left school then at fifteen to look after the children. I didn't get the social work involved.
105. We were living with dad in a two bedroom caravan at Bishopbriggs. Eventually, after trying to go back to school and having no money, I went back to live with my mother. She was still drinking and trying to take her life. She eventually got her life together for a year but she suffered a stroke when trying to come off the drink. She didn't want social work involved and was trying to do it herself. At that time we were in a homeless flat in Dennistoun.
106. I eventually took a flat in Sighthill and I tried to go to school but I had no money and I had to shoplift for food. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] came to live with me. We plodded along but eventually we went back to live with my mum. She was still drinking and trying to kill herself. She eventually got her act together but then suffered another stroke. I was attending nursing college but had to drop out to care for the kids. [REDACTED] had gone off the rails and was dodging school and he was a very angry child. [REDACTED] was ok as she was very academic.
107. Dad retired and he started drinking heavily because he missed work. Everything pottered along. I left home and got a flat in Townhead and [REDACTED] came to live with me and I was working. [REDACTED] committed suicide at the age of fourteen and [REDACTED] was diagnosed with MS a year later. I started drinking heavily and lost everything, I was a functional alcoholic. I have been sober for ten years.
108. I ended up in an abusive relationship and had a son. My partner died.
109. All of my family are now deceased.

Impact

110. I connect drinking to my time in care, I felt completely useless at the age of fourteen. I have always felt immense guilt that I haven't told anyone about the abuse.

111. I have always felt worthless and I have trust issues. I have felt that all men are paedophiles and I have always felt safe having male friends who are gay.

112. Secondary Institutions - to be published later




113.

114. I was afraid to let my son go to football because I was afraid he would come into contact with paedophiles. I allowed for my son's bad behaviour because he wasn't being sexually abused which I thought of as me having won a gold medal. He took advantage of my inability to reprimand him and would run around with gangs and speak back to me in any way he wanted.

115. The abuse has affected my mental health. I am very angry and I suffer from depression, anxiety, trust issues and paranoia. I don't like to draw attention to myself, I like being invisible. I like being the age that I am now, nobody looks at me.

116. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

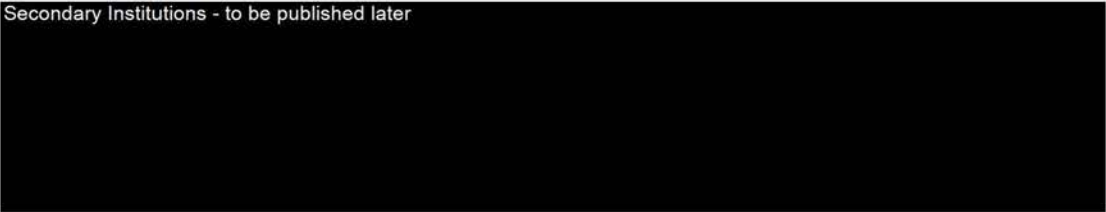


Treatment and support

117. My doctor is aware of everything that has happened to me and she has offered counselling. I think that talking to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is more therapeutic because something is being done. I'd rather help others than myself and it is helping me. I have resigned myself to the abuse I have suffered.

Reporting of Abuse

118. I have never reported the abuse to anyone in authority but I have told friends. My friend was abused in care in England and another friend was abused and we laugh it off by saying that we must attract the paedophiles. I couldn't have told my mum because she would have over reacted and tried to commit suicide or drink more.

119. Secondary Institutions - to be published later
- 

Records

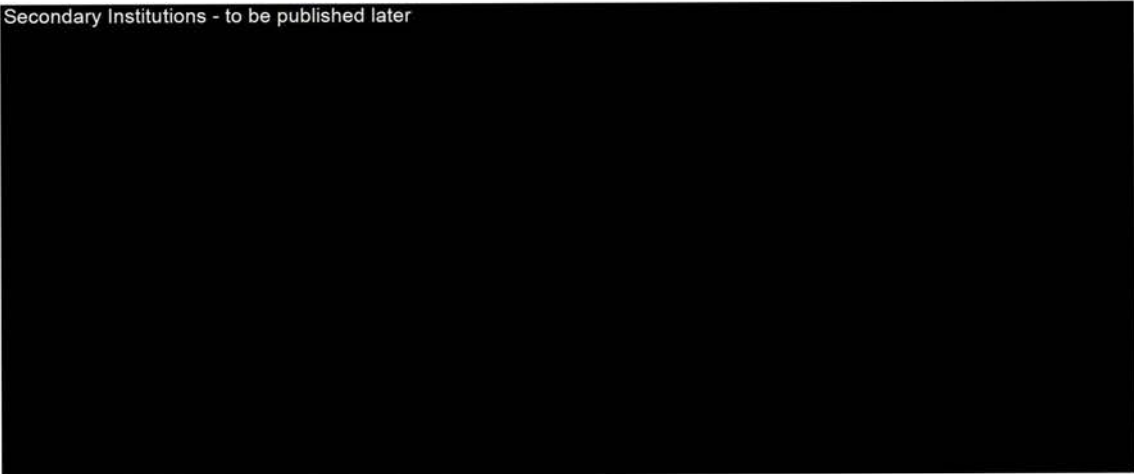
120. I have registered with Birthlink to receive my records but they say they are busy at the moment. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institution I remember at school the teacher said I was an attention seeker and that's the reason that I don't draw attention to myself. Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Lessons to be learned

121. I don't think that people should go into foster care with families who have their own children. The family's children will resent the foster kids because their parent's attention will be taken away from them and this should never have been allowed.

122.  Secondary Institutions - to be published later

123. 

124. 

125. 

126. Hopefully there will be a time when kids don't have to be in care and the families are supported better.

Hopes for the Inquiry

127. There should be spot checks on any establishment and the people doing the spot checks should arrive unannounced.
128. You can get all the training in the world but after six months it's all forgotten, so there should be an ongoing evaluation of establishment and staff.
129. The person who is in charge of these places, should be held responsible for the wrong doing, and criminal charges should be brought against them if things aren't followed through.
130. There should be a safer whistle blowing policy.

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.

FVZ

Signed.

Dated.....

9/10/20